

LANGUAGE-AS-SKILL APPROACH IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION: A
PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to understand foreign language educators' lived experience of language-as-skill that focuses on language use. The central research question explored the foreign language educators' experiences and perspectives on the concept of language acquisition as a type of skill acquisition. In addition, the researcher investigated foreign language educators' language-as-knowledge and language-as-skill methodologies. This study also aimed to discover how the language-as-skill with advanced technology could be a way to address the contemporary challenges in foreign language education for learners and improve learners' communicative competence to thrive in a globalized world with diversity. A transcendental phenomenological study design was selected to explicate the essence of human understanding. At this stage in the research, skill acquisition views Language learning as other cognitive skills development, such as how people learn to play the piano or drive a car. The theory guiding this study was DeKeyser's skill acquisition theory, which explained the relationship between skill development and Language acquisition. In this study, 10 foreign language teachers from a local language training school became participants in semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Data that were collected from the interviews, documentation, and observations were reviewed, grouped, coded, and reported as faithfully as possible to the participants' experiences and perceptions of this phenomenological study.

Keywords: foreign language education, knowledge, skill, competence, practice, feedback, technology

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List of Abbreviations

Adaptive Control of Thought (ACT)

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Audiolingual-Lingual Method (ALM)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

Foreign language Teaching Practice (FLTP)

Second Language (L2)

Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Universal Grammar (UG)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Knowing and doing are fundamentally different. Knowing every part of a vehicle does not make someone a skillful driver. Knowing all the teams and players does not make someone an athlete. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to gain insights into foreign language learning from the skill acquisition perspective to help language learners meet the contemporary trend of globalization and internationalization challenges. The problem was that many people have been learning a foreign language for years but fail to reach the communicative and linguistically fluent level they aim to achieve (Looney & Lusin, 2018; Malovrh & Benati, 2018). Similarly, for Language education, having only the knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical structure does not give a second language learner the ability to communicate fluently with the targeted Language (Chater & Christiansen, 2018; Malvrh & Benati, 2018; VanPatten, 2010). Knowledge about a foreign language is a prerequisite for Language skill development but not an end in itself and should not be solely focused on at the expense of language skill development (Aljumah, 2020; Cornford, 1996; East, 2016; Malovrh & Benati, 2018). The research study aimed to gain insight into the concept of language-as-skill by examining foreign language teachers' perspectives and lived experiences. Chapter one presented a background and a problem why being knowledgeable about a foreign language alone was no longer sufficient in the age of globalization. Then, this chapter introduced the study's purpose and significance with research questions and a list of pertinent definitions of keywords. A summary of the chapter was also concluded.

Background

In an era of globalization and internationalization, there is an increasing linguistic and communicative competence demand: a wide range from sectors of business, education, and healthcare to industries of information technology and social services (Bravo-Agapito, 2020; Carlson et al., 2017; Păstae, 2018). Yet, despite the rapidly rising demand for foreign language skills, foreign language education in the United States is not reflecting an appreciation as the language class enrollment declines (ACTFL, 2019; Looney & Lusin, 2018; Stein-Smith, 2015; Mitchell, 2019). This foreign language deficit indicates the inefficiency of foreign language education (Mitchell, 2019; Stein-Smith, 2015). Therefore, it is imperative to re-examine foreign language instruction and explore practical approaches and structures to maintain learners' competitiveness in the global market. Furthermore, call upon a shift on re-considering the purpose of foreign language learning in a global context from knowledge about a language to using a language skillfully (Palpacuer Lee et al., 2018; Păstae, 2018).

With the advent of increasing globalization and technological innovation, the ground of traditional knowledge-based language learning and teaching method is shaking in global times. Globalization demands a more contemporary foreign language education that revolutionizes the learning process. It can be achieved through integrating advanced technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered tools and other multimedia-based educational systems to enhance learning (Baker & Smith, 2019; Ozfidan & Burlbaw, 2020; Pokrivčáková, 2019; Wang et al., 2019). Foreign language teachers can help students meet the critical need in economic, social, and political spheres in the information age era when the focus is more on language use than language learning. After all, language is a means of communication (Akilandeswari, 2020;

Sellars, 1969; Sirbu, 2015), and the purpose of language learning is not to analyze the target language but to use it for communication (Lyster & Sato, 2013; Savignon, 2018).

Historical Context

Foreign language education has been developed as a field of academic study since the 1800s. However, among different linguistic perspectives, a fundamental disagreement comes considering whether language acquisition is primarily a matter of skill learning or knowledge learning (Chater & Christiansen, 2018; Chomsky, 1959, 2015; Gregg, 2007; Roehr-Brackin, 2018). Knowledge-based learning methods mainly aim at inculcating an understanding of the language or the literature (Lems, 2017; Smith & Stansfield, 2016; Rivers, 2018). On the other hand, skill-based learning methods focus on developing learners' communicative proficiency and language use (Brown & Bown, 2014; VanPatten, 2010, 2017).

The grammar-translation method, for example, as one of the most traditional approaches in SLA, was introduced in the eighteenth century and is still widely used in many places (Nassaji, 2015). This method emphasizes grammatical rules, grammar translation, explanation, and error correction (Nassaji, 2015). Typical techniques for this method are a translation of a literary passage, reading comprehension questions, deductive application of a rule, and fill-in-the-blanks. It does not focus on speaking and listening skills (Lems et al., 2017). Therefore, communicative competence development is not the goal of this method. Rather, development of mental representation for linguistic competence. (East, 2016; Wang, 2019; VanPatten, 2010).

Toward the end of the late 1800s, modern foreign languages started to revolutionize language teaching philosophy. Due to the increasing demand for communication, language educators and researchers realized that the social purpose of language and meaning were

overlooked by the Grammar-Translation method and found it ineffective in developing communicative skills for learners. Chomsky (1965) first introduced the notion of competence and performance in language learning. In the 1970s, the discussion and research on language communicative competence in a global context have become one of the strongest advocates (Ritter, 2019; Savignon, 2018). Hymes (1972), for example, extended Chomsky's linguistic competence theory and proposed the concept of communicative competence. Hymes (1972) explained that communicative competence also involves knowing what to say to whom, when, and how. In other words, communicative competence enables learners to convey and interpret messages within specific contexts. Hymes' concept of communicative competence demonstrates that language learners should know both grammatical structures and norms of usage in given social contexts.

Developed from Hymes' theory, Canale and Swain (1980) further described communicative competence and divided it into four sub-competencies: Linguistic Competence, Sociolinguistic Competence, Discourse Competence, and Strategic Competence. These four areas focus on different aspects of language communicative competence. Specifically, Linguistic Competence focuses on using grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. On the other hand, Sociolinguistic Competence stresses using and responding to language appropriately. Similarly, Discourse Competence is about language interpretation and production. Furthermore, Strategic Competence is knowing how to break down, repair, and work around gaps in one's language knowledge (Canale & Swain, 1980).

In 2012, The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign language (ACTFL) published the language proficiency guidelines to reflect real-world assessment. The ACTFL guidelines profoundly impacted foreign language education and inspired language instructors to focus on

what learners could do with the language rather than what they knew about it (Brown & Bown, 2014). Therefore, a shift from learning a language to using a language has helped language educators and researchers pay more attention to the methods that emphasize communication and performance when using a target language. For example, the Natural Approach, the Communicative Approach, task-based learning, and computer-assisted learning are all methods that aim to improve learners' language skills and communicative competence (Campo, 2016).

Social Context

Imagine someone who has been learning to play the piano for years but cannot play one complete song or someone who can recite all recipes but cannot cook a meal. How about knowing many vocabulary words and grammar rules but not carrying on a simple conversation after learning a second language for many years? Students learn about the language (Declarative knowledge) and learn how to make a sentence and grammar rules (procedural learning), and then that is the end of the story (Anderson, 1983; Benati, 2017). However, educators can deliver language training as skill training (Charter et al., 2016; Chater & Christiansen, 2018; DeKeyser, 2007; VanPatten, 2017). Students cannot speak a language by just knowing the grammar rules or memorizing vocabulary. As Alsudais (2017) noted, "Language attainment does not require broad utilization of strict grammatical rules and does not need tedious instruments, but extended communications in the specific language -natural interaction" (p. 2). Practice and feedback are essential for skill acquisition (Brown & Bown, 2014; Dirksen, 2016; East, 2016; Malvrh & Benati, 2018; Nassaji, 2015).

Communicative competence means that learners can understand a language and use it effectively to communicate in an authentic social context, which is the primary goal for Second Language Acquisition (Ahmed & Pawar, 2018; King, 2017; Savignon, 1972). Learning a foreign

language can be considered skill-based learning, such as swimming or playing a musical instrument (Bengson & Moffett, 2012; DeKeyser, 2017; VanPatten, 1996, 2017). Having only the knowledge of vocabulary and grammar rules does not give a foreign language learner the ability to communicate fluently with the targeted language. With the increasing globalization and demand for international competence, foreign language learning has shifted from learning about the language as an academic subject to improving communicative competence as a skill subject (Ozverir et al., 2016; Kadota, 2019). From the perspective of skill acquisition, practice and feedback are two critical elements of language skills development (Crane, 2016; Husain, 2015). Teachers need to discern the differences between knowledge and skill to enhance second language learning. Having a skill is different from knowing, and knowledge alone is not enough for communication (Chater & Christiansen, 2018). More lectures are not adequate to help students achieve fluency levels (Baartman & Bruijin, 2011).

Theoretical Context

From cognitive-oriented theory to socially-oriented theory, second language acquisition research derives from various views. This study reviewed the skill acquisition framework to examine how learners acquire a second language using skill-based approaches. Related works of literature are on Vygotsky's (1987) sociocultural theory of cognitive development, language input and output theory, and Computer-assisted language learning theory.

Chater and Christiansen (2018) examined language acquisition from the language-as-skill framework. The authors explained language acquisition as skill acquisition from linguistic structures, including phonetics, phonemes, morphemes, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. According to Chater and Christiansen (2018), language learning could better explain the science behind using a language when viewed as a cognitive skill from both a developmental and

evolutionary standpoint. Chater and Christiansen (2018) concluded that skill learning requires practice, just as people learn to ride a bicycle, dance, or play the piano. Language skills are no different. The article relates to the research as it views language learning as practical, not theoretical. Widdowson's (1978) concept of communicative language teaching also considers language as both acquiring the knowledge and ability to use language for communication.

Problem Statement

In foreign language education, the language-as-knowledge approach that dominated Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in the 20th century is no longer adequate to meet the challenges encountered in the 21st century. As the world becomes more globalized and demands international competence, language learning has become a vehicle for communication purposes rather than functioning solely as a knowledge-based subject study (Kadota, 2019; Serrano, 2022). Yet, foreign language education is not keeping up with the accelerating trend of globalization – skills in using a language particularly (ACTFL, 2019; Chea & Lo, 2022; Looney & Lusin, 2018).

According to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign language's (ACTFL, 2019) research, there is a growing foreign language skill and communicative competence demand in the U.S. workforce, including a 64% increase in the healthcare and social assistance sector, 59% in trade, 57% in education services, 55% in technical services, and 54% in the construction sector. The New American Economy (2017) also reported that the global market accelerates the propagation of bilingual and multilingual talents to advance its development. The demand for workers who possess foreign language skills raised by 15.7%. Individuals with foreign language skills have a competitive edge and distinct advantage in career choices in the

global economy (Ritter, 2019; Stein-Smith, 2021). Therefore, the need for effective foreign language education is evident and critical.

However, language instruction is still delivered as an academic object of study, focusing on analyzing a target language instead of using it. Specifically, language teaching methods have primarily emphasized grammar, vocabulary, and input-based learning using rote memorizations for many decades. As a result, many people have been learning a foreign language for years but fail to reach the linguistic fluency level they aim for (Drozdowski, 2018; Kahng, 2020; Nematizadeh & Wood, 2019). Therefore, foreign language education fails to prepare learners to meet the increasing demand for language skills that society and the workplace need since it focuses on knowing rather than doing.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically challenged the traditional foreign language educational setting (Klimova, 2021; Stein-Smith, 2021). In response to the global pandemic, foreign language education, like many other educations, was forced to carry out online learning and implement different educational technology tools (Chen, 2022; Jin et al., 2021). The traditional ways teachers provide lectures, feedback, and assessment through a face-to-face setting have been significantly challenged (Lee, 2021). How industries stay ahead of the game is constantly experimenting and adjusting to stay relevant. In the era of information technology, it is no longer feasible to use yesterday's solutions in tomorrow's world.

Moreover, within the domain of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), most of the research calls upon improving learners' linguistic competence, which focuses on language comprehension and information processing. However, a gap exists in those studies that have neglected to view language acquisition as skill learning. Furthermore, skill acquisition is a

widely applied theory in sports and industry (Farrow & Robertson, 2017; Hodges & Williams, 2012; Powell et al., 2021; VanPatten et al., 2020), not in SLA.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to gain insight into the concept of language-as-skill by examining foreign language teachers' perspectives and lived experiences at a local language Training school in Virginia. In addition, this study aimed to understand the language-as-skill phenomenon and to discover how the language-as-skill method could be a way to address the contemporary challenges so that learners can improve their communicative competence to thrive in a globalized world with diversity. At this stage in the research, the skill is generally defined as "goal-directed, well-organized behavior that is acquired through practice and performed with effort" (Proctor & Dutta, 1995, p. 18) and the ability to do (VanPatten & Benati, 2010). Skill acquisition views language learning as other cognitive skills development, such as playing the piano or driving a car. It emphasizes the role of deliberate practice and practical feedback in meaningful learning (Anderson, 1982; DeKeyser, 2007; Dirksen, 2016). Many factors might impact second language learning, such as aptitude or cognitive differences (Roehr-Brackin, 2018), quality of input (VanPatten, 2017), opportunities to use the second language (Moore, 2018), and broader social contexts (Gregory & Carroll, 2018). This study explores language acquisition issues from the perspectives of language-as-knowledge and language-as-skill.

Significance of the Study

The growth of information technology and globalization have significantly changed how the world operates in almost every sphere. Foreign language education sits at the center of the educational mission to prepare multilingual and multicultural global citizens with global

competence to cope with the large scale of global change (Bravo-Agapito et al., 2020; Carlson et al., 2017; Hu, 2018). However, communication competence in using a language is a key lacking in the United States (Aljumah, 2020; Brown & Bown, 2014; East, 2016). The issue might be associated with the different perceptions of effective language pedagogy between language-as-knowledge and language-as-skill (East, 2016; Lindgren, 2018; Lyster & Sato, 2013; Malvrh & Benati, 2018; Nassaji, 2017). Teachers' perceptions of foreign language learning determine the differentiated learning, differentiated instruction, and differentiated assessment (VanPatten, 2010; Wang, 2019), thus crucial for language learning. The research study aimed to gain insight into the concept of language-as-skill by examining foreign language teachers' perspectives and lived experiences.

Theoretical

Significant SLA learning theories focus on specific cognitive and social aspects of individual phenomena, such as emotions in SLA (Khajavy et al., 2018, Teimouri et al., 2019), motivation (Suryasa et al., 2017; Saito et al., 2018), attitudes (Chan, 2016). Instructional methodologies mainly focus on the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct methods, Audio-linguicism, Communicative Language Teaching, and Task-based teaching (Liu, 2021; Nassaji, 2017; Ozfidan & Burlbaw, 2020; Wong, 2013). However, few studies examine language learning as language use from skill acquisition theory, which is commonly applied to sports and industry (Farrow & Robertson, 2017; Hodges & Williams, 2012; Powell et al., 2021). The knowledge, beliefs, and theories that an instructor holds about the teaching determine what language instruction would be for a language learner (Al-Balushi et al., 2019). The theoretical significance of this study lies in extending knowledge of these theories from the perspective of language-as-skill and its applications in ways that focus on language use.

Empirical

This research attempted to fill this literature gap by exploring knowledge and skill learning and examining how second language learning could be acquired from the skill-based and knowledge-based approaches. Understanding the distinction between knowledge-based learning and skill-based learning is essential when developing and assessing the effectiveness of language instructional practices and helping language learners become language users (Lindgren et al., 2018; Loewen & Sato, 2017; Schwieter, 2013). Furthermore, defining and distinguishing knowledge and skill could help language instructors identify learning outcomes and select the most practical pedagogical techniques accordingly (Wang, 2019; VanPatten, 2010). Though there are many communicative-based language research in SLA, this study provided a more in-depth review through personal interviews to add value and contribute to this topic in the literature from the skill acquisition perspective.

Practical

This study was to gain a new understanding of foreign language education from a contemporary perspective that focuses on the language in use. With the increasing globalization and demand for international competence, the concept of language learning, communication, and language pedagogy is not what it used to be (Ozfidan & Burlbaw, 2020; Jones, 2018; Wang et al., 2020). The need for foreign language learning has shifted from learning about the language as an academic subject to improving communicative competence as a skill subject (Ozverir et al., 2016). Knowledge about language alone is insufficient for the development of communicative competence. The current literature illustrates that language learning is multifaceted (DeKeyser, 2007; Chang & Hung, 2019; VanPatten, 2017), and language consists of knowledge (implicit

knowledge and explicit knowledge) and skill (the ability to use language). A gap exists in the literature relating to the two distinct language domains.

Research Questions

With the increasing globalization and demands of international competence, foreign language learning has shifted from learning about the language to improving communicative competence (Malovrh & Benati, 2018; Romanowski, 2017). Foreign language education needs to cope with the new challenges and opportunities. This study intended to discover the lived experiences of foreign language educators using skill acquisition methodologies in their classrooms and their perspectives on language-as-skill. Therefore, the research question focuses on the challenges and strategies of using the skill-based approach in foreign language education. The sub-questions further gathered the essence of participants' interpretations and experiences on language-as-skill methods that detail language learning through skill-based approaches.

Central Research Question

The central research question asked: What do foreign language Teachers consider the main challenges and strategies of using the skill-based approach in foreign language Education? This question provided insight into the concept and approach of language-as-skill in foreign language education through participants' experiences of teaching a foreign language. Language-as-skill methodology is different from the traditional language-as-knowledge methodology, including the learning objectives, instructional design, and assessment (Alston & Griffiths, 2015). It is important to gather information on foreign language educators' experience with the challenges they have encountered and strategies they have found effective when altering their teaching practice to fit the language-as-skill framework. It is also helpful for stakeholders to make sound decisions when implementing new teaching approaches in language education.

Sub-Question One

The second sub-research question explored: How do foreign language instructors perceive the role of practice and feedback? This question addressed the two main elements of skill acquisition in foreign language development: practice and feedback (Chater & Christiansen, 2018; Dirksen, 2016; Lyster & Sato, 2013). Skill-based learning is purpose-driven. Both practice and feedback need to be effective and promote competence rather than grades. Thus, it was crucial to gather information on these two elements to understand better the application of skill acquisition in foreign language education.

Sub-Question Two

The third sub-research question asked: How do foreign language educators apply skill acquisition in their teaching practice? This question was specific to skill acquisition implementation in foreign language education. Skill-based learning is built upon knowledge but does not end there. Knowledge-based teaching can only help learners be more knowledgeable about the language itself but not the extension to utilize it (Bengson & Moffett, 2012). This question explored how foreign language educators shift their practice from knowledge acquisition to communication-oriented skill acquisition, from academic proficiency to conversational proficiency, from knowing to performing, and from comprehension to production. It was essential to leave this question open-ended, focused, and detailed to the participants to better share and reflect on their experience on the research topic (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Current research has indicated that language learning could be viewed as skill learning, such as playing tennis or piano. This question beckoned foreign language educators to contemplate their teaching experience using skill-acquisition-related methods.

Definitions

1. *Communication* - the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning in a given context (VanPatten, 2013).
2. *Communicative competence* - the ability to "function in a truly communicative setting" (Savignon, 1972, p. 8). In SLA, it enables learners to convey and interpret messages and negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts (Hymes, 1972).
3. *Knowledge* - the two main types of knowledge are declarative knowledge, which is explanatory of facts or information, and procedural knowledge, which describes the procedures for conducting the performance or operation (Bialystok, 1981; DeKeyser, 2007).
4. *Linguistic competence* - knowing how to use the grammar, syntax, and vocabulary of a language (Hymes, 1972).
5. *Skill* – "goal-directed, well-organized behavior that is acquired through practice and performed with an economy of effort" (Proctor & Dutta, 1995, p.18). General skills and specific skills are the two main types of skills (Schunk, 2016).
6. *Skill Acquisition* - explains "how people progress in learning a variety of skills, from initial learning to advanced proficiency" (DeKeyser, 2007, p. 97).

Summary

This chapter presents an overview of a framework for skill acquisition in foreign language education. Within the domain of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in the past seventy years, teaching pedagogy has dramatically shifted from focusing on grammatical structures teaching, including phonemes, morphemes, and syntax, to communicative proficiency teaching (Enns-Kannan, 2016). However, students can learn all the grammar rules of a

language and learn all the facts of a language, but this only makes them knowledgeable about it; it does not make them good at using it since knowledge does not provide skills. Learning a foreign language is not only a progressive experience but also a progressive acquisition of skill (Rivers, 2018). Therefore, the role of language needs to be shifted from knowledge acquisition to communication-oriented skill acquisition, from academic proficiency to conversational proficiency (Ahmed & Pawar, 2018; King, 2017; Savignon, 1972); from knowing to performing; from comprehension to production (Lyster & Sato, 2013). This chapter presents the problem and the purpose of the language-as-knowledge methodology for foreign language education and explains the significance of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This chapter presents an articulate summary and background for skill acquisition theory and four related literature reviews in foreign language education. The literature review consists of four sections: The Overview, a Theoretical Framework section, a Related Literature section, and a Summary. DeKeyser's (2007) skill acquisition theory examines and explains how foreign language learners acquire language skills using skill-based approaches. The theory of skill acquisition is applicable in this research because of the connection to language acquisition and skill acquisition in foreign language education (DeKeyser, 2007). To further understand the current research, the second section provides an in-depth synthesis of the related theory and hypothesis of SLA research focusing on (a) Skill and Knowledge development, (b) Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development, (c) The Input, Interaction, and Output Hypothesis, (d) Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). By comparing and contrasting the different elements in SLA, the literature review examines the impact of knowledge-based and skill-based learning on second language teaching and learning.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical basis for this study is DeKeyser's (2007) skill acquisition theory. This theory lays a foundation for this research to explore the potential application of the skill acquisition approach in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and address the communicative competence issues encountered in the global age. According to DeKeyser (2007), knowing a language is very different from speaking a language. Language has been taught like any other knowledge-based subject matter: students are expected to learn grammar rules, memorize vocabulary lists, and then get tested on their knowledge through translation and fill-in-the-blanks

exercises (DeKeyser, 2017). Skill in using the language, on the other hand, has rarely been an issue (DeKeyser, 2007, 2017). Skill acquisition theory explains the distinction between knowledge and skill. It also takes a broader view of how people learn a skill, from initial learning to advanced proficiency.

Skill Acquisition Theory

In foreign language education, several theories have been developed based on models of skill acquisition in cognitive psychology. DeKeyser's (2007) skill acquisition theory which draws on Anderson's (1982) Adaptive Control of Thought (ACT), is a well-known skill-based theory model. Anderson's ACT theory explains how people organize knowledge to produce coherent cognition in the learning process. The ACT theory proposed a framework for skill acquisition that includes two major types of knowledge: declarative and procedural knowledge. Declarative knowledge interprets the factual information about the skill domain; procedural knowledge refers to the procedures for performing the skill (Anderson, 1982). Built upon Anderson's ACT theory, DeKeyser (2007) claims that the development of a wide range of skills shows a tremendous similarity from the initial acquisition stage of knowledge to the eventual highly skill stage, characterized as fluent, spontaneous, and effortless. This set of phenomena can be explained by a set of fundamental principles common to acquiring all skills.

In SLA, DeKeyser's (2007) skill acquisition theory explains how people progress in learning a skill from initial learning to advanced proficiency through practice and feedback in meaningful contexts. People develop their skills through task engagement and interactional activities in which learners strive to become skilled (VanPatten, 1996). DeKeyser (2007) illustrated that a person learns to play the piano by playing the piano. A person learns to cook not by memorizing all receipts but by making meals. Likewise, students need to practice speaking to

learn to speak a targeted language. VanPatten (1996) argued in a similar manner that teachers should not apply skill theory to grammar acquisition since grammar learning is part of language knowledge, not skill learning. Skill development occurs when students have opportunities to engage in task-appropriate practices (VanPatten, 1996).

In a language strategy instruction study, Plonsky (2011) conducted meta-analysis research that provides a quantitative measure of the effect of second language strategy instruction (SI) and how they are used in conjunction with other variables. The author explained how language learning strategies research has shifted from language study to communicative competence. Plonsky (2011) described several contextual variables hypothesized to moderate the effectiveness of SI, including proficiency, second versus foreign language, age, level of education, and classroom versus laboratory. Outcome variables, such as skill-specific outcome variables, are also discussed in the literature review. Through a meta-analysis of 95 samples for 61 primary studies, the author concluded that the findings indicate a small to medium overall effect of SI ($d=0.49$). In addition, SI is much more effective for specific skills than others. Overall, medium to large effects was obtained for treatment groups over comparison groups. Plonsky (2011) concluded that it is more efficient to spend time on the action of learning and to use the language than to deliver lectures on how to learn and use the language.

Related Literature

To further understand language learning from the skill acquisition perspective, this research provides a comprehensive synthesis of the related theories, including three stages of skill development, mental representation, keys for skill learning, the transformational learning from knowledge-based learning to skill-based learning, skill related approaches, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of cognitive development, the input and output processing theory, and

computer-assisted language learning (CALL), multimedia in SLA, and intelligence computer-assisted language learning (ICALL). These theories examine language learning from sociolinguistic, interculturality, and applied theoretical linguistic perspectives and advocate effective instructional approaches that are designed for using language in a social context rather than learning in a classroom or academic study context.

Skill

There are many versions of the definition of skill. Johnson and Proctor (2017) explained that acquiring skills requires goal-directed and well-organized behavior with practice and effort. Vanpatten & Benati (2010) suggested that skill refers to the ability to perform or execute rather than information acquisition or mental representation. VanPatten (1996) defined skill in language learning as three modes of communication: interpretation, expression, and negotiation. To some researchers and linguists, skill integrates prior knowledge stored in the mind and new knowledge obtained through social interactions (Güneş, 2018). One of the most detailed descriptions of skill is provided by Cornford (1996), with nine characteristics of 'skill' and 'skill performance' from a psychological perspective. These include:

- (1) skill is learned;
- (2) content knowledge and contextual knowledge are essential;
- (3) skilled performance is goal-directed and requires motivation;
- (4) a schema is a prerequisite;
- (5) problem-solving must be relevant to content and context;
- (6) skilled performance involves relative judgments with individual differences evident;
- (7) standards of excellence are important;
- (8) comparable replication is involved;
- (9) considerable periods of time are required to reach high levels of skill and then to improve (Cornford, 1996, p. 1).

Moreover, from a behaviorist perspective, skill is not behavior since it is not a set of reactions when given to a stimulant (Güneş, 2018). In essence, behaviors describe what one

needs to do, while skills describe how to perform in a practical setting (Koota et al., 2021; Tonkin, 2016). Therefore, when training content primarily provides *what* rather than *how*, it is hard for learners to attain an outcome.

Three Stages of Skill Development

Various domains have different technical terms regarding the three stages of skill development. Fitts and Posner (1967) called them cognitive, associative, and autonomous. Anderson (1982) named them declarative, procedural, and automatic. Also, Byrne (1986) used the terms presentation, practice, and production. Though these three stages are characterized differently in the nature of knowledge and its use, they all posit similar processes: (a) knowledge-building (acquire knowledge about a skill without using it); (b) knowledge use (act on knowledge); (c) and knowledge automatization (Anderson 1982; Byrne, 1986; Fitts & Posner, 1967; VanPatten et al., 2020). Suzuki (2018) *defined automation* as a "fast, ballistic, effortless, and unconscious process (p. 2).

Table 1

Fitts and Posner's (1967) Three stages of Skill Learning

	Goal of the learning stage	Key characteristics of the learning stage	Potential activities as applied to learning academic skills
1. Cognitive stage	Acquire the knowledge of what, how, and when to do the different tasks to achieve the goal of the skill	High degree of cognitive activity, including listening to instructions and receiving feedback about errors	Formal didactic courses, seminar; reading books and articles; informal advice from peers, mentors, and other researchers
2. Associative stage	Practice and performance improvement	Consciously translates cognitive knowledge into competence	Self-directed practice; conscious trial-and-error; self and peer review for refinement and improvement
3. Autonomous stage	Skill has become "second nature"	High level of proficiency, consistency, and confidence	Mastery of the skills as a part of routine

DeKeyser (1998) distinguishes three forms of knowledge: declarative, procedural, and automatized. To acquire knowledge in one specific field, learners must first go through the declarative knowledge stage (DeKeyser, 1998, 2007). Bialystok (1981) interpreted declarative

knowledge as explanatory facts or information. It is the knowledge of a concept that is encoded in memory (Lyster & Sato, 2013). In the second stage of skill development, procedural knowledge describes the procedures for conducting the performance or operation (Bialystok, 1981, DeKeyser, 2007). Lyster and Sato (2013) explained that procedural knowledge involves knowing how to do something. Grammar learning starts as declarative since it addresses facts and rules (DeKeyser, 2017). Therefore, it is not surprising that even when learners are aware of grammar rules and sentence structure, they cannot do with what they know unless they are given enough time to process the form and respond (DeKeyser, 2017). In the spirit of Gilbert Ryle's *Knowing How and Knowing That* theory (1945), Bengson and Moffett (2012) explained that *knowledge-that* is essentially cognitive and propositional, while knowledge-how is similar to skills, abilities, and capacities. The authors explained that *knowledge-how* (procedural knowledge) may or may not involve *knowledge-that* (*declarative knowledge*). From the linguistic competence perspective, Bengson and Moffet explained why it is essential for learners to have propositional knowledge about the language to be competent in a language. Automatized knowledge implies the accomplishment of automaticity. It is generally characterized as fast, effortless, and unconscious (Galian-Lopez, 2018; Rodgers, 2011).

When applied to language learning, declarative knowledge refers to the linguistic form that students can learn through memorization, such as grammar rules, lexis, and pragmatic and sociolinguistic conventions. In contrast, procedural knowledge refers to performative knowledge that enables learners to apply what they have learned in actual language use (Anderson, 1983; DeKeyser, 2007; Lyster & Sato, 2013). It is a stage where learners act on the knowledge and turn "knowledge that" into "knowledge how." (Bengson & Moffett, 2012; VanPatten et al., 2020). In other words, students are introduced to a skill and acquire it through explicit instruction or

observation in the declarative knowledge stage. Then in the procedural stage, the declarative knowledge is imparted through practice and turns into informed behaviors (DeKeyser, 2015). This stage does not demand arduous or time-consuming practice. The gradual automatization stage occurs when proceduralized behaviors become speedy and fluent through intensive practice. Further, Skill acquisition theory stresses that in the development of skill, intensive practice plays a crucial role in the gradual shift from the proceduralization stage to the automatization stage to execute the task. This practice leads to the third stage - a gradual automatization of knowledge (Anderson, 1982; Byrne, 1986; Fitts & Posner, 1967; VanPatten et al., 2020).

Mental Representation – Knowledge

Mental representation and skill are two broad domains in SLA (VanPatten, 2010). The notion of a mental representation is defined as "the abstract, implicit, and underlying linguistic system in a speaker's mind" (VanPatten & Benati, 2010, p. 107). It contains both standard features of language (e.g., syntax, phonology, lexicon-morphology) and the semantics related to structure (VanPatten, 2010). On the other hand, skill refers to language use, including interpretation, expression, and negotiation (VanPatten, 2010). From the distinction, VanPatten (2010) claims that grammar learning is a part of mental representation. Therefore, teaching or practicing grammar alone cannot help learners develop language skills.

The Development of Mental Representation. VanPatten (2010) posited that mental representation involves three factors: input, Universal Grammar, parsing and processing. Input in SLA refers to the exposure in communicative settings, including listening and reading (VanPatten, 1996). Chomsky (1986) describes Universal Grammar (UG) as the "system of categories, mechanisms, and constraints shared by all human language and considered to be

innate" (p.3). Finally, parsing and processing refer to real-time semantic comprehension (VanPatten, 2010). To clarify, UG, Parsers, and processor-related aspects of acquisition operate only on input data, not explicit error correction or output (Schwartz 1993; VanPatten, 2010).

Keys For Skill Learning: Practice and Feedback

Another central concept of the skill acquisition theory is the power law of learning. Skill acquisition theory suggests that through purposeful practice, declarative knowledge can be transferred into procedural knowledge (Anderson 1983, 2005; DeKeyser, 2007). It demonstrates that both reaction time and the error rate can decrease systematically through practice. DeKeyser (2007) defined the practice as engaging in activities that aim at improving. In the context of Second Language Acquisition, DeKeyser (2007) describes the practice as specific activities in the second language that are systematically and deliberately to develop knowledge of and skills. As a critical element in skill acquisition theory, the practice should be meaningful instead of repetitive. The utility of mechanical drills in second language learning is language-like behavior rather than language behavior (DeKeyser (2007). In this aspect, acquiring second language skills requires systematic activities, not just mere exposure to or unstructured interaction in the target language.

According to Dirksen (2016), it is a skill-related issue if someone cannot be proficient without practice. Dirksen argued that many learning experiences are just to introduce the skill, not to teach a skill. Even though an introduction familiarizes the learner with skills, it cannot get learners to some level of proficiency with a skill. Introducing a skill is not enough to get learners to some level of proficiency with a skill. Practice and effective feedback are the essential ingredients in skill learning (Chater & Christiansen, 2018; Dirksen, 2016; Lyster & Sato, 2013). Before developing proficiency, learners need to practice the relevant skills and information.

Skills are integrated sets of behaviors that are learned through practice, and skill learning requires practice (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). However, not all practices are efficient. Mindless repetitions and drill practices devoid of communicative purpose are ineffective in developing language skills (VanPatten, 2017). In other words, repetition alone cannot improve learners' performance (Ericsson & Pool, 2016). Repeating the same thing over and over does not guarantee an improvement but causes stagnation and gradual decline. (Ericsson & Pool, 2016). As VanPatten (2017) pointed out, language in the brain is not built from practice but from consistent and constant exposure to input.

Furthermore, when feedback is not appropriately provided, it might hinder or even be detrimental to the learning process (Kim, 2017; Nakata, 2015). Effective feedback can drive the brain to a better recall performance through meaningful and elaborative processing (Anderson, 2005). Furthermore, effective feedback is not just comments on the answer but the problem and mindset behind the answer (Ericsson & Pool, 2016). Feedback on performance, competence, and how learners can improve is the key (Watling & Ginsburg, 2019; Winstone & Carless, 2019).

Deliberate Practice. In a broad sense, practice in second language learning means utilizing the language as a tool for communication; in a narrower sense, practice means deliberate practice (DeKeyser, 2017). From the point of view of linguistic competence, DeKeyser (2017) defined the term practice in the context of Second Language Acquisition as specific activities that help develop knowledge and skill. Ericsson and Pool (2016) defined the note of deliberate practice as purposeful practice with the intention of what to achieve and how to achieve it. Deliberate practice means goal-directed practice and striving to go above and beyond the current level (Brown et al., 2014). Therefore, practice does not guarantee skill acquisition. Repetitive practice and drills do not necessarily improve performance. However,

engaging in deliberate practice has proven effective for skill-based performance activities (Wang & Zorek, 2016).

Deliberate practice has five characteristics: (1) effective training techniques have been established; (2) it takes place outside one's comfort zone; (3) it involves well-defined, specific goals; (4) it involves feedback and modification of efforts; (5) it goes hand in hand with mental representations (Ericsson & Pool, 2016). Further, the deliberate practice emphasizes skill instead of knowledge – what learners can do instead of what learners know. People obtain knowledge for the purpose of developing a skill, so knowledge should not be an end in itself (Ericsson & Pool, 2016). To apply it in foreign language education, teachers need to ensure that the learning objectives are more about what students should be able to do than what they should know. In addition, to help students make improvements, a practice needs to be carried out with sufficient time (Ericsson & Pool, 2016). Without sufficient practice, skill is just being introduced, not developed. Developing communication competence is not through the practice of language but through acts of communication of expression, interpretation, and negotiation with the targeted Language (VanPatten, 2013).

Feedback. Effective feedback is critical for language learning (Ai, 2017; Haristiani, 2019; Pokrivcakova, 2019), which explains why corrective feedback has received increasing attention in SLA (Bitchener & Storch, 2016; Papi et al., 2019). Practice without effective feedback might ingrain the incorrect language performance. In addition, without feedback, learners miss guidance on what to improve or how to achieve their learning goals. On the contrary, meaningful, and productive feedback promotes clarity, engagement, and specific skill development (Choi, 2016; Kim, 2017; Papi et al., 2019). Though instant feedback and corrective feedback contribute to language development, it is challenging for instructors to provide constant

and instant feedback to all learners, especially with a large number of students. While humans cannot physically assist students' practice at any time and place, instructors can take advantage of the advancement of technology in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation to solve the problem. As one of the most critical innovation technologies in this digital era (Marr & Ward, 2019), AI technologies have great potential to address foreign language education's challenges, promote personalized learning, and enhance skill learning in multiple ways.

The Transformational Learning from Knowledge-based Learning to Skill-based Learning

Jack Mezirow originally developed the Transformational Learning Theory. The concept of transformative learning aims to clarify how our expectations, which are structured within cultural presuppositions and assumptions, directly impact the meaning we assign to our experiences. Transformative learning theory has two primary kinds of learning: instrumental and communicative learning (Mezirow, 2000). Instrumental learning focuses on “learning through task-oriented problem solving and determining cause-and-effect relationships - learning to do, based on empirical-analytic discovery” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 16) . The phases of transformative learning include (1) a disorienting dilemma; (2) self-examination; (3) critical assessment of assumptions; (4) planning a course of action; (5) acquisition of knowledge or skills to carry out a new plan; (6) exploring and trying new roles; (7) building self-efficacy in new roles and relations (Mezirow, 2000). Mezirow defines transforming learning as using a previous interpretation to create a new or revised understanding of the significance of one's experience to direct future action (Mezirow, 1996).

Furthermore, DeKeyser (2017) explained a strong relationship between information being initially encoded and stored and how it is later retrieved. This processing is known as Transfer-appropriate processing. Specifically, procedural knowledge is requisite if someone wants to be

skilled at something; therefore, knowledge acquisition is necessary (DeKeyser, 2017, VanPatten, 1996). In the context of language learning, it is not sufficient to gain knowledge of grammar rules and vocabulary (DeKeyser, 2017; Charter & Christiansen, 2018; Smith, 2016). Declarative and procedural knowledge is necessary for learners to form communicative behavior. These two types of knowledge are prerequisites for developing successful skill performance (Kim et al., 2013). Fitts and Posner (1967) developed a three-stage continuum of practice model for mastering a skill: Cognitive (Early) Stage, Associative (Intermediate) Stage, and Autonomous (Late) Stage. In Second Language Acquisition, DeKeyser (2007) clarified automaticity as a transition from attentive to automatic. Anderson (1983) explained it as a process that moved from the controlled processing of declarative knowledge to efficient, unintentional, and effortless language processing. Practice plays a critical role in this automatic transition. Specifically, to transfer foreign language learning from knowledge-based to skill-based, a language educator needs to examine the following fields: the teaching objectives, the teaching organization forms, teaching context, and evaluation (Wang, 2019).

Skill Related Approaches

APA Dictionary of Psychology (n.d.) defined skill learning as "learning to perform a task with proficiency, as defined by ease, speed, and accuracy of performance, acquired through extensive practice." Seven well-known teaching methodologies exist in second language education: The Grammar-Translation Method, Direct Methods, Audio-linguicism, Situational Language Teaching, Communicative Language Teaching (CLA), Humanistic Approaches, and Task-based teaching.

Communicative Approach. Nowadays, the Communicative Approach is gaining much attention and is considered one of the most widely accepted methods for language learning

(Ozfidan & Burlbaw, 2020). This approach sheds light on the demand for interpersonal communication. In addition, the communicative approach emphasizes learning opportunities that students can interpret, express, and negotiate meaning in real-life situations (Wang et al., 2019). However, the communicative approach focuses on language use in a social context, unlike skill acquisition, which focuses on skill development through deliberate practice and feedback. In addition, skill acquisition includes the information process as part of language development, not solely communicative practice.

Audiolingual-Lingual Method. One widely used method in the 1960s was the Audiolingual-Lingual Method (ALM). Based on structural linguistics and behaviorist psychology, ALM emphasizes teaching listening and speaking via repetition and extensive drilling as the primary training techniques (Wong, 2013). A learner's first language is discouraged in a classroom, and this method believes that new words or grammar should be explained in the target language. Compared with the grammar-translation method, the audio-lingual method focuses more on the habit-formation through a drill, pattern practice, and memorization of scripted dialogues (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Similarly, behaviorist Skinner (1954) formed the belief that all behavior (including language) was learned through repetition. The purpose of repetition and drill in ALM is to internalize the introduced structure or grammatical models. The role of teachers is more like an orchestra leader, directing and controlling learners' language behavior.

On the other hand, students imitate teachers' models, follow teachers' directions, and respond as accurately as possible. ALM highlights that language learning aims to learn how to use the language to communicate. It aims to develop listening and speaking skills instead of focusing on learning grammar rules as Grammar Translation Method advocates. However, the

role of input was neglected, and the output was primarily mechanical in the Audiolingual-Lingual Method. It is not a conductive method when it is not helping in building a mental representation of language and developing language skills through meaningful practice that fosters communicative ability (Koonthar et al., 2018; Wong, 2013).

Communicative Language Method. The Communicative Language Method (CLM) was developed on the idea that the key to learning a language practically involves communication. The CLM primarily focus on language fluency instead of teaching vocabulary and grammar as discrete units (Yousaf, Umar & Habib, 2017). It aims to enable language learners to use language in real situations and meaningful tasks to communicate purposefully (Li, 1998). It implies that fluency should be preferred to grammatical accuracy. Researchers Yousaf, Umar, and Habib (2017) argued that grammar teaching is essential but not a necessary part of communicative language teaching. They also believe that integrating communicative activities with the teaching of grammatical structures can result in meaningful teaching and learning of language. These skill-related methods all advocate the essential purpose of using language rather than analyzing or studying a language.

Task-based Learning

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (n.d.), a task is a piece of work to be done. In the scope of language learning, Williams and Burden (1987) associate tasks with all activities that engage learners in furthering the language learning process. Drawing upon the broad definition of task, Littlewood (2004) suggested two dimensions of task: tasks that focus on language forms and tasks that focus on meanings.

There are many similarities between task-based learning and skill-based learning. For instance, like skill-based learning, task-based learning also focuses on defined communicative

outcomes and language use (Ellis, 2003; Moore, 2018; Littlewood, 2004). Furthermore, task-based learning emphasizes using the target language in genuine and authentic communication. In addition, task-based learning gives prominence to meaning over form, using over learning (Ellis, 2003; Wang, 2019). Another note on the similarity is reflected in the three stages of task-based learning: pre-task, during-task, and post-task stages are developed based on skill-learning theory (Ellis, 2003). Skill-learning theory claims that language learning starts with first obtaining declarative knowledge (language about), then converting it into procedural knowledge (language use) through practice and exercise.

However, task-based learning is different from skill-based learning regardless of the many similarities. The task-based learning approach seeks to develop students' problem-solving abilities through tasks, while the skill-based learning approach offers students opportunities to develop skills from cognitive to a stage of automaticity (Anderson, 1983; DeKeyser, 2007; Husain, 2015). In other words, task-based learning focuses on task completion rather than language skill development (Littlewood, 2004). Additionally, task type, sequencing, and performance evaluation could be hard to justify when delivering language learning, whereas skill-based learning leverages deliberate practice and effective feedback in the learning process.

Conclusion and Implications

Language-as-skill and language-as-knowledge are two distinct aspects of acquisition. One proposes an abstract and implicit mental representation. The other emphasizes the ability to use language in both production and comprehension (VanPatten, 2010). Skill development does not diminish the significance of language knowledge use. The knowledge helps build the ability to understand and recall information. Many teachers plan activities for the first two stages of second language learning. They introduce topics and explain grammar. However, they do not

address activities or strategies that transfer from procedural knowledge to automation. Skill acquisition starts with a cognitive stage where information and knowledge are acquired. The associative stage focus on practice and performance. Eventually, this leads to automation where students can have the linguistic competence to apply knowledge, use it with less effort, and become more spontaneously. From a classroom perspective, it is not an easy task to design practice activities that are both communicative in purpose and guided (Lyster & Sato, 2013). Skill acquisition theory requires practice under authentic operating conditions (Johnson, 1996) and feedback that can be provided within meaningful communicative interaction.

To conclude, among all the theories in SLA, skill acquisition theory does not compete with them but emphasizes different language acquisition processes in different ways. It stresses the importance of practice but more toward a deliberated approach using technology-powered tools within meaningful contexts. It does not deny the essence of declarative knowledge in the learning process. Instead, it suggests activating declarative knowledge through careful proceduralization by engaging in relevant tasks (VanPatten et al., 2020).

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of cognitive development (SCT) was built upon the importance of social interaction. It claims that community and language through social interactions play a central part in learning (Vygotsky, 1962; Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). From the perspective of SCT, effective learning happens through socially meaningful activities (Vygotsky, 1962, 1987; Sun & Zhang, 2021). Vygotsky (1987) claimed that social interaction is a significant factor that leads to Cognitive Development. Specifically, all higher mental functions originate in the social and cultural environment, and knowledge entails social interactions. However, some research suggests that this claim is too strong (Schunk, 2016) since young children can still

construct some knowledge before participating in any social interactions (Bereiter, 1994; Strawhacker & Bers, 2019; Feldman, 2019). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is still valuable for second language learners, especially adult second language learners, because their first language has already developed within groups and communities. Learning is social and needs to be developed through social interaction (Li, 2020).

Mediation and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

One of the critical concepts of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is social mediation. Vygotsky (1978) claimed that learning involves tools, such as language, signs, and symbols, to allow humans to mediate in socially organized activities. He also established an explicit connection between speech and mental concepts, arguing that inner speech develops from external speech via a gradual internalization process. Therefore, younger children who do not finish this process can only think aloud. Once the process is complete, inner speech and spoken language become independent. Effective guidance, support, and assistance are essential in learning (Deliani et al., 2020). Vygotsky's ZPD describes the difference between what a learner can do with or without the help of others. Vygotsky believed that inside the ZPD, learning could precede development, meaning that a learner can learn skills beyond their natural maturity. ZPD is critical to instructional guidance since it allows the learner to develop the knowledge or skill that they already have to expand their learning and go beyond the areas they cannot yet do.

Conclusion and Implications

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of cognitive development supports the current study because it emphasizes the importance of social processes for language learning and that social interactions can enrich learning experiences. This theory directly links to the core concept of the Skill-based learning approach in the following ways:

1. It provides contextual support for the concept of learning by doing and learning to use, not just to know, but to interact in a social environment (Kadota, 2019; Palpacuer et al., 2018).
2. Learning occurs in the learner's zone of proximal development through purposeful and meaningful interactions (King, 2017; Kusmaryono & Kusumaningsih, 2021)
3. With the support of technology and the assistance of a capable mentor, learners could reach the full potential of their ability and become more proficient in using the targeted language (Williamson et al., 2020; Zhang & Zou, 2021)
4. The concept of ZPD argues against the use of academic, knowledge-based tests to gauge students' intelligence (Tetzlaff & Brod, 2021)

In addition, the mediation suggests that by giving students practice in talking with others, we give them frames for thinking independently. However, though babies may be able to learn without any developmental prerequisites (Bereiter, 1994; Strawhacker & Bers, 2019; Feldman, 2019), second language learners do need a certain amount of information processing before they can develop their language skills. Because learners cannot produce or practice something that has not yet been conceived in their mental representation, skills develop requiring information processing (VanPatten, 1996; Krashen, 1981, 2008). Piaget's theory of cognitive schemas development (1973) also supports that the pre-existing cognitive schemas are necessary for fitting new information.

The Input, Interaction, and Output Hypothesis

When examining Second Language Learning (SLL) from a social perspective, Krashen's (1982) Input hypothesis, Long's (1981) Interaction Hypothesis, and Swain's (1993) Output Hypothesis are vital processes that need to be reviewed in SLL. These three aspects of the SLA

explain the two distinct language domains: knowledge and skill. Krashen (1982) considers input as a key for language acquisition and output unnecessary since language production should not be forced but should happen naturally when enough comprehensible input is taken. Swain (1993), on the other hand, stresses the significance of output in language production for automatic linguistic behaviors. From the skill acquisition perspective, DeKeyser (2007) posits that both input and output practice need to be specific to develop second language skills.

The Input Hypothesis

According to VanPatten's input processing theory, there are two principles of processing in Second Language Acquisition: (a) learner processes input for meaning before processing it for form, and (b) learners tend to process the first round or pronoun they encounter as the subject/agent in a sentence. Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis greatly influenced second language teaching and learning (UII & Agost, 2020). Krashen (1982) defined *input* as a process of understanding language (listening and reading) and output as an end production (speaking and writing). Krashen (1982; 2008) stressed the importance of comprehensible input in the process of Language learning. The input hypothesis claims that language acquisition occurs only when the input is understood. Therefore, teachers need to provide students with comprehensible messages and messages that are slightly beyond the current level of their competence ($i+1$). Ellis (1991) and Pica (1987) also noted that comprehensible input plays a crucial role in SLA. However, despite the creative construction of Krashen's input hypothesis, many scholars criticize the sufficiency of the comprehensible input method since input alone is not efficient for second language learning (UII & Agost, 2020; Wong, 2013; VanPatten, 1996; Ellis, 1991; Swain, 1993). Many researchers argue that input can facilitate vocabulary acquisition but not many syntactic structures (Wang & Castro, 2010, Zhang, 2009; Gass et al., 1998). After all, the processing of

comprehension and the processing of production play different roles in Second Language Acquisition.

The Interaction Hypothesis

Krashen's input hypothesis spurred more research by many linguistic researchers than other theories in SLA. Long's interaction hypothesis is one of these examples. Long (1981) conducted a number of studies on what type of interactions are vital for comprehensible input. Through various studies, Long (1981) concluded that comprehension input promotes acquisition in both first and second languages. However, instead of only highlighting the significance of comprehensible input, Long (1981) also emphasized the role of interaction. Input alone cannot promote acquisition. Linguistical and conversational adjustments through interaction are also needed to promote acquisition. In other words, speakers need to use some conversational tactics to overcome communication obstacles, regardless of whether they are native speakers or not native speakers. Conversational tactics can be repetitions, confirmation checks, clarification questions, and other forms to negotiate meaning, comprehension, and acquisition (Long, 1981). To further explain the two constructs of input and interaction, Long (1981) defined *input* as using the linguistic forms and interaction as the functions of the linguistic forms, such as expansion, repletion, and clarification. Overall, the interaction hypothesis sheds light on four significant constructs: input, interaction, feedback, and output (Long, 1981, Gass and Mackey, 2007, Ellis, 1991).

The Output Hypothesis

Many language educators might agree that output is critical in increasing language fluency. Learners can study a language and take input as much as they can. However, without Language production practice, it is doubtful that they can get the fluency to carry a conversation

with the targeted language (Drozdowski, 2018; Nematizadeh & Wood, 2019; Kahng, 2020). Swain's output hypothesis addresses this and explains why many learners can pass the written language tests but cannot communicate in real-life using the targeted language. It also explains why linguistic knowledge is insufficient to gain communicative competence. Swain (1993) went a step further and explained that the output promotes fluency and modifies the interlanguage. Swain's (1993) output hypothesis asserts that language production can help learners develop automatic linguistic behaviors, force learners to consider syntactic aspects of the target language, test hypothesis, and provide students with information on how comprehensible their utterances are.

According to Symons (1988), there are three stages in the foreign language learning process: input, input processing, and output. Pitarch (2018) states that teachers must provide the correct output, which is an authentic, varied, relevant, and adequate context for their students. Output usually forms a confederation with skill development (Wong, 2013). Practice is essential in SLA since it is usually how people improve their L2 fluency and accuracy (Suzuki & Sunada, 2020). However, not all output can foster fluency and accuracy. Second language methodologies, such as the Audio-lingual Method, the Direct Method, and even the Immersion Method, emphasize the output and production. However, when the role of input is ignored, it could be problematic for learners to develop communicative ability because they cannot produce or practice something that did not exist in their mental representation (Wong, 2013, VanPatten, 1996). In other words, to practice language skills, learners first need to have enough input information to press on to practice and develop the skills. Wong (2013) concluded that both knowledge and the ability to use language accurately need to be developed in second language instruction. Language is both a process (means to acquire knowledge) and a product (the

outcome of language learning) (Laskov, 1988). Therefore, language learning needs to include the meaning it encodes and the context in which it is used (Mayo et al., 2013).

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

Technology has evolved massively over the past 30 years. Integrating technology into the second language curriculum has become commonplace in many education institutions as we enter the digital age. When utilizing a variety of technology and multimedia tools in second language education, Language learning could be transformed to a new level as it provides learners control over the delivery of information and gives learners an authentic learning environment by delivering multiple roles and perspectives (Cairncross & Mannon, 2001; Moradi & Chen, 2019; Misir, 2018; Pitarch, 2018). Integration technology in second language teaching and learning, also called Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), has become critical (Ozfidan & Burbaw, 2020). CALL provides students with open access to authentic learning materials (Tafazoli et al., 2019; Ozfidan & Burlbaw, 2020). The CALL approach also enhances collaboration and helps personalize the learning experience (Zou & Thomas, 2019, Kocabas et al., 2018). In addition, software for CALL has advanced dramatically over the years. As a result, language learners can utilize multimedia, mobile phones, tablets, and portable computers to have both individualized and cooperative learning anywhere and anytime (Pitarch, 2018; Moradi & Chen, 2019; Misir, 2018; Gunawardhana & Palaniappen, 2016; Gilakjani, 2017).

Multimedia in SLA

Multimedia technology is a vital part of e-learning, in which video, audio, text, images, animation, and various simulations are combined for instructional designers and instructors to build powerful learning environments for learners. Effective pedagogical practice has a theory of learning at its core. Although research has repeatedly shown that multimedia has advantages for

improving the learning process (Moradi & Chen, 2019; Misir, 2018; Pitarch, 2018), successful learning also depends on learners' cognitive involvement and engagement (Anmarkrud, Andresen, & Braten, 2019).

In a multisite case study, McKnight et al. (2016) documented teachers' digital instructional strategies to enhance and transform student learning. The authors specified that a successful digital conversation is not determined by the technology but rather by how technology enables teaching and learning. McKnight et al. (2016) used a mixed-methods, multisite case-study design and collected qualitative and quantitative data. This study documented six common strategies used across the seven sites and identified five roles technology plays in enhancing teaching and learning through interviews, observations, surveys, and interviews. This study suggests that technology and multimedia improved access for users, including teachers, students, and learners with particular circumstances and needs, to more learning resources and opportunities anytime and anywhere. Moreover, multimedia such as YouTube and Pinterest can significantly help teachers match student interests to content (McKnight et al., 2016). In addition, technology and multimedia activate a cognitive process that enhances learning (e.g., active inquiry vs. memorization). Lastly, using technology and multimedia, such as online forums, web tools, and virtual classrooms, can enhance communication, collaboration, assessment, and feedback.

Intelligent Computer-Assisted Language Learning (ICALL)

With the rapid development of technology innovation, Artificial intelligence (AI) is gaining more attention and massively transforming our daily lives in many ways. For example, Siri, Alexa, and Smart Thermostat are all intelligent digital personal assistants that can be used on various platforms. Transportation devices, such as autonomous cars, are also AI technology

products. AI-powered technology can also be found in manufacturing, financial technologies, eCommerce, communication, and marketing (Pokrivčáková, 2019).

Over the past decade, with the rapid pace of change in terms of information and Communications Technology (ICT) innovation, the rising pervasiveness of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is driving changes and creating new trends in SLA (Kannan & Munday, 2018). It is imperative for educators to consider the changing needs of learners of this new digital era and related capabilities (Misir, 2018). As Godwin (2015) states, understanding the capability of a full range of digital literacies is vital in education. Foreign language education has been greatly influenced by the incorporation of AI-powered technology tools, including intelligent tutoring systems, virtual teaching assistants, instant translation devices, and educational robots (Qin et al., 2020). Both language learners and instructors can choose from a much more comprehensive range of learning resources with less effort. In addition, AI-powered tools can help learners have more highly individualized support and reduce language instructors' workload by automating tasks, such as assessment, feedback, and plagiarism detection (Baker & Smith, 2019). Furthermore, AI can enormously improve the educational process in the cognition and perception areas (Brynjolfsson & Mitchell, 2017).

ICALL refers to the use of artificial intelligence in facilitating language learning (Stickler & Shi, 2016), including intelligent tutoring systems, virtual teaching assistants, instant translation devices, and educational robots (Qin et al., 2020; Kannan & Munday, 2018). As a result, both language learners and instructors can choose from a much more comprehensive range of learning resources with less effort (Pokrivčáková, 2019). The term Artificial intelligence (AI) originated in 1955 by John McCarthy. The concept of AI has a lot to do with intelligent

software programs that make machines think and react to situations intelligently (Joshi, 2017). Siri, Alexa Cortana, and Google Assistant are all forms of AI.

Why Do We Need to Use AI? Nowadays, many AI-based applications in language education can significantly contribute to language education due to the richness of multimedia utilization. The advancement of AI technology can bring together graphics, audio, music, video, gaming, tagging, interactive HTML5 content, and multimedia. (Moradi & Chen, 2019; Misir, 2018). In addition, with the tremendous amounts of data, machines can do a much faster and more precise job in generating, managing, and analyzing data from multiple sources simultaneously than humans (Joshi, 2017). With the assistance of AI systems, teachers could make more effective learning strategies for each learner and adjust teaching styles through AI's facilitation (Cukurova et al., 2019; Joshi, 2017; Luckin & Cukurova, 2019). AI applications such as Google Docs speech recognition can be a valuable tool to evaluate learners speaking skills. Interacting with a voice-activated assistant, such as Siri and Alexa Cortana, could test and assist learners in speaking, listening, and communicating skills. Google maps, automatic speech recognition, automatic correction, chatbots, and AI tutors are excellent language learning mediums to facilitate learning experiences (Fu et al., 2020; Luckin & Cukurova, 2019; Cukurova et al., 2019).

AI For Practice. AI has the ability to combine vision and language to describe events in videos through simultaneous object detection and tracking (Barbu et al., 2012; Barrett et al., 2016). As a result, language learners can practice speaking, writing, reading, and listening skills with video clips using real-life situations. Moradi and Chen's (2019) research in digital tools implementation suggests that integrating visual images with text can create a personalizing learning experience, engage learners in the learning process, and improve comprehension.

AI For Feedback. Effective feedback is critical in second or foreign language learning (Ai, 2017; Haristiani, 2019; Pokrivcakova, 2019). AI provides instant and effective feedback for learners at any time and place. AI Chatbots, for example, in a recent reach conducted by Haristiani (2019), are reported effective as a language learning medium in six ways:

1. Decrease students' anxiety level when communicating to a computer rather than someone.
2. Chatbots can repeat endlessly.
3. Students can simultaneously practice reading, speaking, and listening skills with text and synthesized speech features.
4. It is motivating.
5. Learners can use a variety of ways to learn a targeted language.
6. Bots can provide instant and effective feedback.

Haas et al. (2020) also validated that Chatbot can provide more effective feedback to second language learners.

AI For Teachers as a Teaching Assistant. Research shows that tremendous workload is one of the main reasons for the high teacher turnover rate (Geiger, 2018; Wolgast & Fischer, 2017; Zydziunaite et al., 2020). Teachers might tune to AI-powered teaching assistants as a solution. AI teaching assistants could automatically answer frequently asked questions, freeing teachers from answering many repetitive questions to focus on more creative aspects of teaching. AI teaching assistants can also answer questions instantly, anywhere, for any tasks related to their learning subjects. According to Goel (2018), students can get personal attention and guidance when they have an AI teaching assistant, leading to better student motivation, engagement, and retention. In addition, AI can be a solution to reduce teachers' workload by

decreasing their routine tasks, such as grading, planning, collecting data, analyzing data, collecting feedback, posting weekly announcements, and answering routine questions (Goel, 2018; Pokrivčáková, 2019).

Moreover, AI triggers teachers to reflect and modify their role in the language learning process, from lecturer to the facilitator (Choi, 2016; Parra & Calero, 2019; Ozfidan et al., 2020). AI can provide and develop learning strategies and recommendations for students. Teachers can take advantage of this advancement in AI and create a more personalizing and visualizing learning experience and facilitate learning more effectively (Rose et al., 2019). Also, the human-computer collaboration model can assist teachers in promoting and developing personalized education for learners both in the classroom and on online platforms (Haiguang et al., 2020).

Furthermore, AI can push classroom limitations from physical locations to a global environment. Students do not have to go aboard to learn a foreign language. AI technology can go beyond the borders of our classrooms and bring the world to us. Additionally, automation is another benefit when using AI technology as a teaching assistant. Educational software such as Gradscope can assist in grading and generating analytics as soon as students submit their work. Furthermore, AI can also identify the learning gaps and provide valuable suggestions on students' strengths and weaknesses. As a result, teachers can tailor their teaching to different learners and adjust their lesson plans accordingly.

AI For Students. AI can help learners own their pace of progress and be autonomous instead of being constrained by the curriculum (Pokrivčáková, 2019; Kannan & Munday, 2018). Language learning will not be limited by time and physical locations anymore. It can be learned in community settings at any time in any place (Kannan & Munday, 2018). Intelligent tutoring systems can use collected data to provide instant feedback and work with learners directly (Qin

et al., 2020; Briggs, 2018; Wattenberg, 2016). AI can also adapt to each student's individual learning needs and provide personalized learning content (Poquet & Laat, 2021). In addition, advancements in AI can make predictions and recommendations through the algorithm learns from students' learning patterns and behavior (Di Mitri et al., 2017; Goksel & Bozkurt, 2019).

AI For Motivation. Motivation plays an essential factor in achieving learning goals for language education. Many types of research emphasize that technology can impact student motivation in the learning process. Alshaiji (2015) suggests that an enjoyable learning environment can foster student motivation, creativity, and productivity. Similarly, Moradi and Chen (2019) recommend that the digital storytelling method engages, motivating learners and their learning. Gunawardhana and Palaniappen (2016) demonstrated that AI applications could provide a real-world experience for learners, promoting learners' motivation and increasing interactions. McKnight et al. (2016) touched on the topic from a learner-centered system framework. The learner-centered approach emphasizes students' role as participants and divers of their learning (Byrne, 2016). Pitarch (2018) also reviews how game-based technology tools can enhance learners' motivation toward language learning.

Key Issues. The first key issue is ethical dilemmas related. Though AI-powered technologies have many advantages in enhancing language learning, there are some debates and conflicts on whether and how schools should integrate AI technology into foreign language education. With various AI applications, people are becoming aware of some ethical concerns that go along with these applications. One of the ethical concerns involves the purpose of using AI. Some AI applications use video tracking of students' learning habits or concentration rates to ensure that learners are engaged and monitored for effective feedback. However, the same technology could track people or be used by others to track students' activities.

The second ethic concern with AI is data management and access. Data collection could be beneficial for both teachers and learners in many ways. However, data management and control cannot be shared easily with all stakeholders due to the cost and technical skill requirements as other technologies do. Innovativeness requires the decision-makers to have enough control and the ability to manage when adapting to a new system (Davenport, 2018). For schools to successfully integrate AI-powered technology into foreign language education, it is essential to ensure that stakeholders have a say on how AI will benefit their programs.

The third issue is school and teachers' readiness to embrace AI technology. It takes passion, curiosity, an open mind, and perseverance to adapt to innovational and complicated technologies. However, many educators still do not trust using AI technologies. As Kim et al. (2021) explained, AI-generated information might not be trustworthy because they do not accurately reflect humans' will. Therefore, AI recommendations may not be accepted by people. In addition, except for the teachers' perspective and attitude toward AI integration, the readiness also includes the school budget, subject matter experts, and facilitating training to support the successful adoption of AI technologies. It could be challenging for the AI integration process.

AI can be transforming for SLA. However, with all the opportunities AI brings, it also has some risks and ethical challenges (Maouche, 2019). For example, Holmes et al. (2021) raised potential issues around AI ethics in education, such as fairness, accountability, transparency, bias, and autonomy. In addition, some researchers believe that the adoption of AI would bring more pedagogical challenges from an organizational, technical, and individual level (Jan et al., 2021). Moreover, many organizations call for trust in the ethics guidelines within their AI-based educational systems (Qin et al., 2020). This is consistent with the standpoint of Garcia and Lopez (2018) that AI's ability to solve complex problems and manage personal data is not trustworthy.

Also, AI technology integration is another challenge many schools and educators face due to the lack of training and preparation (Pokrivcakova, 2019). AI readiness, including teachers' perspectives and attitudes toward AI applications, must be evaluated, and considered in the AI adoption process (Jan et al., 2021).

Conclusion and Implications

The CALL literature illustrates that the integration of technology can increase learner's interest and motivation; strengthen linguistic skills; achieve more collaboration, promote effective learning, and provide learners with enormous opportunities to interact with people worldwide (Moradi & Chen, 2019; Misir, 2018; Pitarch, 2018). Furthermore, The ICALL method provides many ways that leverage AI to enrich foreign language learning. Multiple AI-powered technologies are specifically helpful for skill-based learning. Intelligent tutoring systems, for instance, can use collected data to provide instant feedback to learners and work with learners directly. In addition, AI can adapt to each student's individual learning needs and provide personalized learning content (Poquet & Laat, 2021). Therefore, a well-developed learning system with AI-powered tools would dramatically help foreign language schools and institutions leverage. In this aspect, AI-powered tools can help human teachers analyze each learner's learning outputs, diagnose their individual learning needs, and give learners well-grounded feedback, which is critical in skill acquisition. Thus, AI technologies in foreign education have great potential to address foreign language education's challenges, promote personalized learning, and enhance skill learning in multiple ways.

Summary

The literature review chapter provided a thorough overview of the skill acquisition theory as the central theory to guide the current study, including origination, prominent theorist, stages

of skill development, and skill-related language learning methodologies. From the perspective of skill acquisition theory, language development consists of two distinct domains: mental representation and skill. Language educators need to distinguish these two domains and adjust their pedagogical practice to reflect the distinction to keep language learning effective (VanPatten, 2010; Wong, 2013). In addition, this chapter also provides a comprehensive synthesis of three related literature reviews, including Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development, The Input, Interaction, and Output Hypothesis, and Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). The literature review in this chapter illustrates that language research moves from discrete linguistic forms to a sociocultural perspective.

Moreover, the literature review also revealed that language learning strategies research had shifted language learning to communicative competence learning (Plonsky, 2011). Communication is different from mental representation (VanPatten, 2013). Language learning is multifaceted (VanPatten, 2013; DeKeyser, 2007; Chang & Hung, 2019), and language consists of knowledge (implicit knowledge and explicit knowledge) and skill (the ability to use language). Finally, this chapter discusses how this research addresses the gaps in language-as-skill and language-as-knowledge. In specific, this study will fill the gap in the literature by providing a deeper understanding of the distinction between knowledge-based learning and skill-based learning, which is essential when developing and assessing the effectiveness of language instructional practices (Schwieter, 2013; Lindgren, 2018; Loewen & Sato, 2017).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to understand the concept of language-as-skill by examining foreign language teachers' perspectives and lived experiences. Qualitative research focuses on human experience and making sense of or interpreting the participants' meaning of their world (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Though researchers have their perspectives and biases, research needs to be conducted as they put themselves in the participants' shoes so that others can learn from the documented and interpreted different points of view. It is not what the researcher wants to show, but let the data speak for itself. As Patton (2015) stated, the skilled analyst enables the data to unfold their own story. To improve foreign language education in globalization from the perspectives of understanding language teachers and students' perspectives on language-as-skill and language-as-knowledge, chapter three presents the research design, describes the structure of the research procedures, and the data analysis plans for this study. The trustworthiness and ethical considerations are also addressed to ensure that the data is validated and participants' rights are protected.

Research Design

This study was conducted through a qualitative research method using a phenomenological study design. Qualitative research allows researchers to gather first-hand information in a naturally occurring situation. As Yin (2014) explained, "A research design is a logical plan for getting from here to there, where here may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered, and there is some set of conclusions (answers) about these questions" (p. 26). Qualitative research is performed when there is a need to explore a problem or issue (Creswell & Poth, 2018) and address the social aspect of research (Choi, 2016). Specifically, it is

an appropriate research method when the researcher needs to gather an in-depth and detailed understanding of the issue or a desire to empower individuals. The purpose of phenomenology was to describe the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). It is all about their lived experiences in their words. This study aimed to understand the concept of language-as-skill by examining foreign language teachers' perspectives and lived experiences. Therefore, employing a qualitative phenomenological study was appropriate in this research since it is an interpretive process that focused on the lived experience of participants and understands how they view the foreign language acquisition from the knowledge and skill aspects.

Further, a transcendental phenomenological study design was selected as the appropriate methodology for this research because the essence of what and how participants experience language teaching and learning is the focus of this research (Creswell & Poth, 2018, Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). Transcendental phenomenology focuses on describing the participants' experiences and less on the research's interpretations (Moustakas, 1994). It is all about participants' first-hand experience and requires the researcher to put aside their attitudes, assumptions, and prejudgments (Moustakas, 1994; Neubauer et al., 2019). The focus is on description. For this research, I intended to examine the participants' interpretations of language-as-knowledge and language-as-skill to uncover how language educators implement these methodologies in foreign language education. To have a deeper understanding of second language learning, explore the key elements of efficient language learning, and discover perspectives that could shed light on the identified issue, a phenomenological study methodological approach could be the best fit for the research.

The quantitative research method was not the best means for this study because the purpose was not to seek measurable or observable data on variables but to understand the participants' experiences and perceptions. It was not to test objective theories or assumptions but to explore and identify the meaning of a phenomenon from the participant's perspective (Creswell, 2018). Moreover, In-depth insights into the concept of language learning needed to be studied through interviews, observing, and analyzing documents, not through numbers or statistical analyses.

Research Questions

With the increasing globalization and demands of international competence, foreign language learning has shifted from learning about the language to improving communicative competence (Malovrh & Benati, 2018; Romanowski, 2017). Foreign language education needs to cope with the new challenges and opportunities. This study intended to discover the lived experiences of foreign language educators using skill acquisition methodologies in their classrooms and their perspectives on language-as-skill. Therefore, the research question focused on the challenges and strategies of using the skill-based approach in foreign language education. The sub-questions further gathered the essence of participants' interpretations and experiences on language-as-skill methods that detail language learning through skill-based approaches.

Central Research Question

What do foreign language Teachers consider the main challenges and strategies of using the skill-based approach in foreign language Education?

Sub-Question One

How do participants perceive the role of practice and feedback?

Sub-Question Two

How do foreign language educators apply skill acquisition in their teaching practice?

Setting and Participants

This study was conducted in a local language training school in Virginia. The experience of learning a foreign language within a school setting and training center setting could be very different. In a school setting, learning tends to be more well-rounded than related to linguistic content, literature, and cultural studies. While training centers usually provide an immersive environment and lean toward language performance (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017). Therefore, I purposefully selected two foreign language settings to ensure that both knowledge-based and skill-based teaching methods can be observed and analyzed.

Site (or Setting)

The training school in this study locates in Washington, DC, is an independent language school that teach more than 85 foreign languages, including English as a Second Language. Also, this training school provides learners with a variety of learning formats, such as private lessons, online-class, customized group classes, and high-intensity language training. In addition, this training school offers professional development for international students and professionals who pursue learning for their careers, such as government officers assigned overseas for duties. This training school is a woman-owned private language training school. Most of their language instructors were native speakers of more than 85 languages.

Participants

The current study employed purposeful sampling to explore what participants experienced and focus on their foreign language teaching phenomena (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A total of 10 foreign language educators who work with non-native speakers to learn and use a second language was selected from a local language training school. With a plan to make the

best use of limited resources, this qualitative research purposefully selected participants who have similar and yet different emphases within various curricular perspectives regarding foreign language education. Therefore, participants of different ages, gender, race, educational background, and years of teaching or learning experience were considered in the selection process since these factors might impact teachers' perceptions of language learning (Derakhshan et al., 2020; Khlaif, 2018).

Researcher Positionality

Positionality describes researchers' worldview values and reflects their chosen positions (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). This section presents the internal factors that motivate and influence the current research through the interpretive framework, philosophical assumptions, and the researcher's role.

Interpretive Framework

The interpretive framework, combined with the assumptions of qualitative research, play an essential role in guiding how we approach and carry out qualitative research studies and how we analyze and interpret qualitative data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The current qualitative research study was conducted within the framework of pragmatism. Pragmatism evaluates the consequences of actions and focuses on the solutions to real-world practice by using pluralistic approaches (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This interpretive framework attempted to answer the research questions and accept that multiple realities may exist within a group of people, even for a single person (Seigfried, 2017).

Philosophical Assumptions

Alongside the philosophical worldview, the philosophical assumption is also crucial to the research because it directs the research goals and outcomes. It helps readers understand the

basis of evaluative criteria for research-related decisions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumption gives the researcher leverage to compare and contrast different areas of studies at a more sophisticated level.

Ontological Assumption

Ontological assumptions examine the nature of reality (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). However, language learning is multifaceted (VanPatten, 2013; DeKeyser, 2007; Chang & Hung, 2019), and there are multiple realities when examining it from different aspects. Different linguistic researchers and scholars constantly negotiated, debated, or interpreted these multiple realities. After all, second language acquisition is a very complex process within a complex organism (Brown, 1973; VanPatten et al., 2020). The current study reviews the multiple realities of language-as-knowledge and language-as-skill and reports different perspectives of Language instructors and learners.

Epistemological Assumption

Epistemological assumptions examine what can be known and how an individual understands knowledge (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, the knowledge gathered in this study was assembled based on participants' experiences and perceptions. Though the skill acquisition method has not been widely applied in SLA, universal or objective knowledge could still be studied and discovered. Therefore, I conducted this research through first-hand sources in classrooms and the lived experience of foreign language educators.

Axiological Assumption

The axiological assumption focuses on the study of values and attempts to understand the meaning, nature, and origin of the notions of values (Stefanova, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Pragmatism with axiological values both the researcher and the participants' views,

understandings, and experiences of a phenomenon. The value I strived to bring to this study is to give prominence to language-as-skill and emphasize language use instead of language analysis.

Researcher's Role

As a foreign language instructor, I have taught and trained Mandarin Chinese to business professionals, university students, and elementary through secondary school students for 16 years. I have years of experience providing linguist instruction to support linguistic readiness, mission productivity, and effectiveness when speaking, reading, and writing in Chinese. As a foreign language learner, I have learned English and Japanese in formal and informal settings. I was taught and learned from the traditional Language learning method with the explicit philosophy that "practice makes perfect." It was not my goal but acceptable to speak broken English and Japanese with language education. My perspective started to change when I became a Quality Assurance (QA) manager in a call center where being bilingual is one of the requirements. I interviewed many candidates who claim they can speak a foreign language but cannot carry out a simple conversation with the targeted language. Language proficiency was a skill gap I had identified, and I worked hard for solutions. Then I moved to a government Network Operational Center (NOC). As a QA Manager, my job is to keep apprised of industry best practices in developing and implementing process improvements to improve efficiency and productivity. My experience in the Information Technology industry has dramatically sharpened my skills using all technology tools. From the field of security to data collection and analysis, automation to monitoring tools, most industries have constant upgrades and innovations. However, innovative technologies are not progressing in education (Tokareva et al., 2019; Apandi & Raman, 2020). Through my experiences as a language teacher and learner working within multiple industries, there is a potential bias for this study because I believe a language is a

tool for communication and, therefore, should be taught as a skill-oriented subject. Furthermore, innovative technology could play an essential role in this transformation to help learners gain the ability and skill to communicate using the target language.

Procedures

This section presents a series of actions that had conducted for this study. The procedure was carried out to provide a roadmap for readers so that they can better understand how the data were collected, how the samples were recruited, and what had happened in the study. Moreover, it allows other researchers to be able to replicate the study.

Permissions

I did not collect data from participants until I had gained all necessary approvals from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and any other required level of approval from all participating schools. Once I receive IRB approval, I scheduled a meeting with the International Center administrators. This meeting aimed to explain the study and discuss the recruitment plan. Once permission was granted (See Appendix B for Site approval), I officially sent the participating school a research request and the consent forms, IRB approval documentation (See Appendix A for IRB approval), and other required documents.

Recruitment Plan

When the final approval from both IRB and participating schools was received, an invitation email was sent to all language instructors of selected schools by their administer. In the invitation email, the school administer explained the study's purpose and the participant's role and explained the procedures. In addition, the school provided a link for participants to respond on whether they are interested in participating or not. Furthermore, a consent form that explains the purpose of the study, the data that will be collected from them, the amount of time it might

take, and the procedures were also be attached. The informed consent also provided details on how participants can withdraw from the study if they choose to. The sample size for this study ranges between 10 to 20. Purposive sampling may affect the recruiting process because this study needs to collect data from teachers with different teaching backgrounds, years of experience, and language subjects. Purposive sampling is "judgment, selective or subjective sampling" (Sharma, 2017, p. 4). It is a sampling technique in which the researcher purposefully recruits a sample of participants to thoroughly answer the research questions for the study. Though it was an appropriate sampling method to access a particular subset of participants and purposefully inform an understanding of the study, it was prone to high bias levels (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Sharma, 2017). In addition, since this research used a phenomenological study design, a maximum variation was also be selected so that diverse experiences and multiple perspectives can be represented and documented (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Collection Plan

Rich data collected in qualitative research can provide details about people, places, conversations, and settings. It allows readers to make decisions regarding any transferability of findings. However, a detailed description is not simply a matter of amassing relevant details. It is not the more, the merrier, but "interpret it as recoding the circumstances, meanings, intentions, strategies, motivations, and so on that characterize a particular episode" (Schwandt, 2001, p. 255). Individual interviews, observation, and document analysis will be this study's primary data collection approaches. All conclusions or assertions were validated through the triangulation process and detailed descriptions. For this research, data source triangulation and methodological triangulation were used to examine the collection and check the consistency in altered circumstances.

When collecting data, I examined the physical documents, including course descriptions, program introductions, assessment reports, and teachers' lesson plans, if available. Through this document information, I attempted to get a glimpse of each school's language learning program. Studying the background helped me prepare for the next data collection plan: classroom observations. I could better understand each school's articulated philosophy, objectives, and principles through observations. With the gathered information through document and observation data collection, the interview was an appropriate approach afterward. Having a one-on-one interview with each participant, I could fill the gaps and get clarifications based on the information I collected through documents and observations.

Document Analysis Data Collection Approach

Document analysis is a systematic review or evaluation of printed and electronic documents (Bowen, 2009). A wide range of written, visual, and physical documents can be used for research. For this study, I requested the following documents from the participant schools: Language program descriptions, course syllabus, homework or assignments, quizzes, copies sent by teachers, and lesson plans. These documents were data sources for the researcher to corroborate teaching methods and understand how the language program is structured, managed, delivered, and assessed.

Document Analysis Data Analysis Plan

Upon permission, the collected documents were reviewed before classroom observations to analyze the efficiency of each documented activity used in the classroom. All documents were primarily used to compare the efficiency and learning results for knowledge-learning approaches and skill-learning approaches, including language program descriptions, course syllabus, homework or assignments, and lesson plans if available.

Program Mission Statement. Farrell (2018) stated that an organization's mission is the pattern of how people behave and work within an organization. It sets the tone for an organization's culture. When it comes to an individual's behavior, it could be very broad, complicated, varied, and unpredictable. Viewing the program mission statement helped me understand the general value, commitment, principles, and purpose descriptions for each school's language programs.

Course Descriptions. A summary of a course catalog description was helpful to get a general idea of the length and scope of a course as well as its linguistic emphasis. In reviewing the course description, I got insight into the extent of the course's approaches, objectives, learning outcomes, learning content, knowledge, skills, and attitudes, as opposed to topics.

Lesson Plans. This was a section where I got more insights on the teaching and learning strategies, including lesson segment, guided practice, assessment, and selected delivery system or media technologies. Through lesson plans, I found information on how many activities are knowledge-related learning and how many are skill-related learning.

Assessment Reports. The ultimate question regarding instruction is whether the learner has learned what he is supposed to learn. Can the learner demonstrate the capabilities specified in the stated learning objectives and terminal learning outcomes? The assessment report was helpful to learn how each program is designed to develop assessment tasks to assess the learner's knowledge, skill, and attitude that require the learner to demonstrate the behavior stated in the objectives. In addition, I reviewed how many assessments that were skill related.

Observations Data Collection Approach

Observation is also known as field notes. It is the act of gathering data to describe existing situations through the five senses (Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

I conducted observations through participants' interactions and conversations with their students in the classroom setting for this study. A blank field note template of observation protocol guides and records the observation. The use of visual or audio records were used for class observations with permissions.

Observations Data Analysis Plan

During the classroom teaching observation, I documented three sets of notes. First was the raw data on how teachers engage, interact with students, and manage and deliver a lesson in a real-life setting. The second was the researcher's interpretations of patterns, trends, concepts, and theories; The third notes were personal opinions that involve the observer's judgment (Phillips & Stawarski, 2008). After the data logging, a process of coding and condensing the codes were conducted to develop themes depending on the collected data.

Individual Interviews Data Collection Approach

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) explained that interview is a social interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee to construct knowledge. Cote and Raz (2015) suggested that interviews can pursue in-depth information for a particular topic. This study explored language teachers' experiences and perceptions of the skill acquisition approach in second language learning and their attitude toward advanced technology integration. Individual interviews allow researchers to be transparent and explicit with the participants, ask open-ended questions and probe the participant deeper to explain and describe their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For this qualitative study, a semi-structured interview was employed to collect open-ended data and delve deeply into the participants' perspectives on second language acquisition. The semi-structured interview type guided discussions through questions and provides more flexibility for interviewers to modify questions or be more exploratory based on the responses (Creswell &

Poth, 2018). The interview protocol consisted of 20 open-ended questions that started with background questions and focus on understanding the central phenomenon of language-as-knowledge and language-as-skill. A recording device was used for each individual interview.

Individual Interview Questions

1. Please describe your educational background and foreign language teaching experience.
2. What experiences led you to become a foreign language educator?
3. Describe the purpose of language teaching and the goal of your language course.
4. Describe your lesson planning process.
5. Please describe your understanding of the concept of language acquisition as skill acquisition, such as learning to swim, play sports, drive a car, or play an instrument. CRQ
6. Based on your teaching experience, do you think foreign language learning is a more knowledge-based learning like history or literature, or a more skill-based learning, such as learning how to swim? CRQ
7. What is your perception of effective language teaching? SQ1
8. When do you feel your students are engaged, and when do they not? SQ1
9. What strategies have you been using to improve communicative competence in foreign language teaching? CRQ
10. What technology tools do you use in your class to improve communicative competence? What are the challenges and advantages of having an AI-powered teaching assistant in second language education? CRQ
11. What are the challenges to improving communicative competence in foreign language teaching? CRQ

12. Why do you think grammar and vocabulary teaching methods are still the main teaching methods for many languages learning programs? SQ1
13. How do you define a language teacher's role? SQ1
14. How would you describe your experience of effective and ineffective practice? SQ2
15. How would you describe your experience of effective and ineffective feedback? SQ2
16. How is skill-based foreign language teaching different from knowledge-based teaching? SQ3
17. How would language training be different if it is delivered as on-the-job skill training? SQ3
18. How do you advocate and apply skill-based learning as a foreign language educator in your classroom? SQ3
19. From your teaching experience, what do you think is lacking in foreign language education? CRQ
20. What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences with teaching language using the skill-based methodology or knowledge-based methodology that we haven't discussed?

Questions one through three were designed to give participants an accessible form to talk about their background and foreign language teaching experiences in their way. It also served a purpose for both the researcher and participants to warm up and establish rapport to keep the interviews on track (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). Question number two focuses on the teachers' motivation for their teaching experience. It helped the researcher make sense of participants' interpretation of their particular experiences and understand why they do what they

do. Question number three provided an overview of participants' various goals and foreign language teaching, which was critical for the central research question.

Questions four and five emphasized the aspect of skill learning in the central research question, which provided a "textural and structural description of the experiences" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 79). Phenomenology research was not limited to information collecting but instead an "intellectual engagement in interpretations and meaning-making that is used to understand the lived world of human beings at a conscious level" (Qutoshi, 2018). For this purpose, questions four and five were designed to help the researcher understand participants' experiences and perceptions of language-as-skill and language-as-knowledge.

Questions six through ten leaned toward the part of challenges and strategies for foreign language learning. These questions allowed the interviewees to describe their understanding and interpretation of effective language learning pedagogy, design, challenges, and plans to improve communicative competence in foreign language education. Questions six and seven aimed to understand foreign language educators' perception of engaging and effective language teaching. Questions eight and nine stressed the teaching strategies and implementation of using technology-powered tools. Finally, question ten emphasized foreign language teachers' challenges in their teaching careers.

Questions 11 through 13 dedicated the sub-question one, which focuses on the process of language learning, including lesson plans, knowledge acquisition, and skill acquisition. These questions helped researchers gain insights into participants' points of view on foreign language education to "unfold the meaning of their experience, to uncover their lived world (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p.3).

Questions 14 through 15 shed light on sub-question two, which concentrated on the two main components of skill acquisition: practice and feedback (Chater & Christiansen, 2018; DeKeyser, 2007; Husain, 2015). Additionally, the foreign language educators' role in facilitating these two activities. Questions 16 through 18 were designed for sub-question three, focusing on skill acquisition application in teaching. Lastly, the final two questions were closing questions that allowed the interviewees to give their final thoughts (Patton, 2015) or made any additional comments not addressed during the interview.

Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan

The individual interview questions aimed to learn about the language teachers' experience and perspectives on language acquisition in the knowledge and skill frameworks. Therefore, it was not for debate but for listening and learning. The researcher recorded each interview and took reflection notes so that all verbal and non-verbal cues could be documented during and after the interview. For data analysis, the open coding technique were used. First, I transcribed the interviews. Then I organized the interview transcripts into three categories: skill learning, knowledge preparation, practice, and feedback. Next, I sorted and sifted through the materials to identify similar phrases, patterns, distinct differences between subgroups, and familiar sequences. This step was crucial because it allowed the researcher to identify the patterns, processes, commonalities, differences, and meanings in different places.

Data Synthesis

Patton (2002) stated that analysis transforms qualitative data into meaningful findings. A qualitative research study consists of three steps for data analysis to draw all the findings from each source of evidence together: preparing and organizing the data, reducing the data into themes, and representing the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, all data that were

collected from the interviews, documentation, and observations were reviewed, grouped, coded, and reported as faithfully as possible to the participants' experiences and perceptions for this phenomenological study. I used a constant comparison model in the data coding process to categorize and analyze data. By constantly comparing the collected data from multiple sources, the researcher could develop and refine concepts, identify properties, and explore relationships (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). In addition, through the coding process, data that emerged repetitively or consistently across data sources were sorted as patterns or themes and reviewed from coding lenses (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña, 2016). I conducted the analyses manually instead of using the NVIVO Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS) due to the productivity concerns.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is referred to as validity and reliability (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Quality research is about looking at a phenomenon from a different point of view and seeing the world from other peoples' perspectives. Therefore, data analysis and management need to be true to the participants when conducting qualitative research (Sutton & Austin, 2015). In qualitative research, trustworthiness emphasis the true value of qualitative data, analysis, and interpretation.

Credibility

Lincoln & Guba (1985) defined *credibility* as the truth to describe reality. To establish the validity and credibility of this research, I collected and analyze data from multiple data sources. Data triangulation would provide deeper insight into language learning through interviews, observations, and document analysis from the knowledge and skill perceptive. In addition, member checks where each participant will have an opportunity to review and approve their transcript for accuracy of interpretation. Along with checking the accuracy, participants also

had the chance to verify the authenticity of the findings that were generated from the collected data.

Transferability

Transferability demonstrates that a study's findings may apply to other contexts (Slevin & Sines, 1999). A thick and detailed description of the procedure provided in the research findings section so that the research results may apply to other contexts. Well-documented procedures and descriptive data allowed readers to judge the study or the suitability of applying findings to their setting. In addition, this study purposely ensured maximum variation in sites and samples by using the persistent observation technique to increase the transferability. I intentionally selected different language learning groups and participants when conducting interviews and observations. This process increased the transferability to ensure the research applies to various languages and contexts.

Dependability

This study followed through a thorough review of the process and the product of the research conducted by the local schools and training schools so that the findings were consistent and can be repeated. In addition, an audit trail that keeps all data records, research memos, reflective notes, and personal interpretations were created and could be found in the appendix section. The audit trail provides evidence of the process of data collection, coding, reflexivity, and synthesis. It outlines "how a researcher's thinking evolved throughout all phases of the study" (Carcary, 2009, p.11). In addition, the audit trail established credibility and dependability since it provided a way for others to audit and repeat the procedures.

Confirmability

The findings in this research were all based on the write-up through interviews, field visits, participant observations, contact sheets, and interim case analysis forms. To improve confirmability, all summary statements, explanations, speculations, and hypotheses in this research were based on what was going on the site, not what the researcher assumed. Reflexivity were used as a technique to establish confirmability. Austin and Sutton (2015) describe reflexivity as "the processes whereby the act of engaging in research affects the process being studied, calling into question the notion of detached objectivity" (p. 437). In qualitative research, the three prominent voices are the traditional academic voice, researcher voice, and participant's voice. The researcher's voice can also be heard as a human instrument in the quality study. Therefore, researchers can be transparent about their subjectivities and biases by seizing their assumptions since their own experiences, worldview, and paradigm will influence how they analyze the data (Hammarberg, 2016). However, for qualitative research, the participant's voice weighs the most. Therefore, qualitative research aims to capture participants' narratives, worldviews, and how they arrived at their knowledge (Austin & Sutton, 2014, Hammarberg, 2016). All three voices together provide a whole picture of the presented research for the audience to draw their conclusions and make their interpretations.

Ethical Considerations

When conducting research that involves human beings, it is imperative to protect the participant's safety, security, and needs (Austin & Sutton, 2014). Researchers might encounter many ethical issues during data collection in the field, analysis, and dissemination of qualitative reports (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I ensured that all names remained anonymous to respect participants' anonymity and confidentiality. In addition, an informed consent letter (see Appendix D) to participate in the research study were sent to all participants and inform them

that they can drop out of the study at any time. Furthermore, I provided participants with information on the research purpose, procedures, audio or video recordings, and photography prior to the research. All collected data were stored safely and destroyed after completing the study. Furthermore, all communication in relation to the investigation were conducted and documented with honesty and transparency.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to understand foreign language educators' lived experience of language-as-skill that focuses on language use. Chapter three explained why a phenomenological study design was appropriate for this research study. In addition, this section has displayed the research setting, procedures, data collection and analysis, and considerations for trustworthiness and ethical issues for the study. The phenomenon was language-as-skill, and the issue or problem was the lack of research conducted from the skill acquisition perspective concerning foreign language learning. This study was critical because foreign language education is essential for preparing global citizens to remain competitive in this increasingly globalized and interconnected world. The global market demands the trait of linguistic proficiency beyond knowledge competence and communicative skills and competence in a foreign language. With globalization, foreign language education needs to prioritize its goal from learning language forms to gaining the ability and skill to communicate using the target language (Lems et al., 2017; Serrano, 2022). This research explored the alternative language-as-skill method among other skills, such as learning to ride a bicycle, dance, or play the piano, focusing on students' performance instead of knowledge. It aimed to understand the framework of language-as-knowledge and language-as-skill and explore

how skill acquisition could offer a coherent theoretical alternative approach to language education.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study aimed to understand foreign language educators' lived experience of language-as-skill that focuses on language use. An international language training school in the state of Virginia was contacted through phone and email to select ten participants for this study. All participants were assigned a pseudonym to protect their confidentiality. The participating training school shared their program information through Canvas learning management system as part of the document analysis for this study. Each participant was interviewed individually. This researcher conducted a classroom observation or demonstration of each research participant, which derived a detailed description of each participant's lived foreign language teaching experience, addressed the central research question, as well as two sub-questions presented in the findings of this chapter.

Participants

A total of 10 foreign language teachers from five language programs were selected based on their common or shared experiences with the phenomenon of language learning. Before diving into the research results, a detailed description of each participant will be provided. Participants had between two and 28 years of language teaching experience. Teachers' pedagogical practices are greatly influenced by their backgrounds (Gemink et al., 2020; Graham et al., 2020). Pseudonyms are used in this study to protect participants' anonymity. Below is an example of a participant table:

Table 2*Teacher Participants*

Teacher Participant	Years Taught	Highest Degree Earned	Subject Taught
Sunny	16	Bachelor's Degree in Business Management	Mandarin Chinese
Mary	15	M.Ed. in Language	Spanish
Tiffany	18	M.Ed. in Language	Mandarin Chinese
Lily	20	Bachelor's Degree in Business Management	Mandarin Chinese
Grace	28	Bachelor's Degree in Business Management	Greek
Robert	23	Master of Science Education	ESL
Jasmine	20	Ph.D. in Curriculum and Design	ESL
Rose	6	Master of Literature	ESL
Rosa	2	M.Ed. in Language and Literacy	ESL
Talia	12	Bachelor's Degree in Business and Marketing	Tigrinya

The following section provides a rich and detailed description of each participant from program documents, class observations, and interview sessions. There is a digital and hard copy for each data collection. Pseudonyms have been given to participants to protect their anonymity.

Sunny

Sunny has been teaching Mandarin Chinese for over a decade. She is originally from China and immigrated to the States in her 20s. She did not plan to become a foreign language

educator when she graduated from college. Due to a fortunate stroke of serendipity, she received an offer from a language training school, and that was how she started her career as a language teacher. Little did she know that 15 years later, she was still in the same industry, and teaching had become a second nature. Sunny stated that language is for communication. All learning activities and assessments should be conducted in a language-as-skill and student-centered manner.

Through our interview and observation, I noticed Sunny is skillful at engaging students in learning. She uses questions and activities to increase her student's attention and focus. She motivates her students by using task-based teaching methods to foster a sense of competence. Though she thinks vocabulary and grammar are essential for language learning, she advocates that language learning is to use. Sunny believes that practice is essential to help students become proficient in language use. She broke her teaching into different parts through scaffold instruction and targeted different language skills one at a time so that students won't feel overwhelmed with too many concepts.

Sunny is an energetic and witty teacher. It was enjoyable talking to her since she is very straightforward when expressing her options. She likes to explain things in a simple and gets straight to the point. For her, language teaching is like managing a business. It should be efficient and purposeful. She likes to teach because teaching gets easier for her with time. However, even though she has built a solid repertoire of lessons, she is eager to learn and grow as a teacher, especially on how to use a variety of technology to improve language learning.

Grace

Grace grew up in Greece and immigrated to the United States in 2000. She has a bachelor's degree in TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language). Grace has been teaching

English and Greek since 1994. She taught different levels of ESL and Greek students with different backgrounds. Beyond teaching, she was also a translator for the Greek embassy in Washington, DC. She became a language educator because of her passion for languages. As she described, "I have a lot to offer as a Greek speaker. Language teaching is not just about learning a language but also about culture. Language skills teaching should cover the whole spectrum: speaking, listening, reading, and writing."

From the interview and class observation, I noticed that Grace is excellent at explaining complicated concepts by breaking them into small sections. ICLS uses the Learning Management System called Canvas for their students and teachers. Grace is proficient in using Canvas to create teaching content. In the two hours of class observation, she spent most of her time on vocabulary and grammar learning. Grace explained later that she loves grammar and thinks grammar is essential for any language learning. Grace has an interesting view on language learning. She believes that "language learning is not for everyone. Some people can learn a foreign language easily, and some people just cannot get it."

Tiffany

Tiffany is a Mandarin Chinese teacher who majored in Japanese with a bachelor's degree and then received a master's degree in international education. She immigrated to the U.S. in 2000 and started teaching Japanese and Chinese in 2004. She once gave a presentation for a conference developing the learning and teaching of Chinese language and cultural programs and received great feedback from teachers worldwide. Language teachers, for Tiffany, language teacher is a bridge that helps learners see not only what the world is like at the other end but how to get to the other side.

Tiffany's class is fun to observe. She started each of her classes with small talk. Students feel welcome and relaxed, knowing that it is a safe place to learn and share. She does not follow the traditional teaching method, which is teaching vocabulary and grammar first and then jumping into text learning. Quite the opposite, she started with text learning. Within the context, students then get into vocabulary and grammar learning. It seems very effective since students understand why they must learn specific vocabulary and sentence structures. All learning is seamlessly connected instead of chunked or isolated. Tiffany explained that "vocabulary or grammar learning needs to be introduced in natural contexts. Otherwise, they are only surfaced in students' eyes, not in their brains." Also, she divided each class with a different object so that each language skill is more manageable for students to acquire.

Furthermore, she has a great personality. Her class is fun and engaging. From my observation of her class, she utilized her body language when speaking with her students to help them understand the vocabulary she used. She is very encouraging and provides constant feedback when conversing with her class. For example, when teaching a new vocabulary, she uses it in different contexts so that students can get more opportunities to use the words they have learned. When asking a question to check students' understanding, she does not directly give them the answer but guides them to the answer or learning point. Moreover, her class is not limited to the textbook but includes many more valuable materials that she made up to best use the learning points. She repeated the word enough times to reinforce the learning. She makes learning personal and delightful.

Lily

Lily got a bachelor's degree in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). She has been teaching multiple languages for about 20 years. She selected SLA as her major because she

wanted to "apply my learning experience to helping others to learn another foreign language which was a trendy career at the time." For Lily, the purpose of language teaching is to give students communication tools.

Through my conversations and class observations, Lily's class wonderfully demonstrated the teacher-facilitator model. Lily primarily aided her students in leading themselves. She believes that effective learning does not come from being told what to do but from learning how to get the information they need to accomplish their learning goals. Students should be held accountable for their learning outside and inside the classroom, as in flipped classrooms. She is an active listener and quickly adjusts her teaching plans to help her students build on their skills and learn new ones. She guides her students to discover and then choose the best ways that fit them to master their learning. Lily put it as "a teacher's role is not to feed their students with a fish, but to teach them how to fish so that they can excel without her guidance."

Lily specifically introduced the Flipped classroom instruction in which students will serve as the instructors, and the teacher will be in the background, facilitating these students acting as the instructor to flip the classroom. Flipped classroom instruction sometimes can serve very good purposes, but it was much work for the students beforehand, and she found it very effective.

Rose

Rose has been teaching English in China for about six years and Mandarin Chinese in the States for about ten years. She calls herself a "technology geek" because she is passionate about teaching with advanced technology tools. She believes technology "has the magic power to make even the boring drill-and-practice grammatical exercises interesting and engaging." She mentioned that nowadays, many teachers are still questioning whether the use of technology has

a positive impact on language learning; instead, what type of technology can be integrated to promote effective teaching and learning? "Technology, advanced technology, such as artificial technology, is coming, regardless of whether we are ready or not."

Rose wanted and planned to be a teacher since she was a little girl. Education is highly valued in China. However, the school was very dull for her. She stated that there were not any hands-on activities at school. Teachers used the same curriculum and lesson plans for many years. They didn't consider students' interests when planning the content of the courses they taught. On the other hand, students were more like robots, simply obeying and following. Therefore, she wanted to become a teacher who puts life into learning. When she immigrated to the United States 15 years ago, she decided to become a Mandarin teacher because the Chinese language as a second language was becoming increasingly important.

As for the concept of language-as-skill or language-as-knowledge, Rose explained that even though all foreign languages are hard to learn for most non-natives, not all foreign languages are equally difficult for any learners. It depends on how similar it is to the mother language. Due to the character-based orthographic system, Chinese is considered by many as one of the most challenging languages to learn in the world. However, all foreign language experiential learning processes were naturally connected with these five C's: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. Therefore, language acquisition is skill acquisition. The five C's are all established to help language learners develop a skill to apply what they have learned to real life.

Jasmine

Jasmine is another fun and energetic ESL teacher. She started teaching in general around 2002. Jasmine was a music teacher before she became a foreign language teacher because of an

overseas teaching experience in 2006. She also received a doctoral degree in curriculum and instruction. For her, the goal of her language course is to give her students the English academic skills to help them successfully and independently participate in other areas of their lives.

Therefore, the purpose of language teaching for her is to help her students survive.

Jasmine designed her class with two major sections: content and language objectives to reflect both language-as-knowledge and language-as-skill concepts. The language objective is based on the four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. During the language skill practice section, she specifically focuses on one skill at a time so that students can have enough opportunities to practice and utilize the skill they just learned.

One thing I noticed about her class during the classroom observation is that she started by welcoming her class to make her students feel welcome in the school. Her compassion towards her students and her passion for teaching is demonstrated throughout her class. She believes that effective language teaching transfers to places outside the classroom. She can tell students are engaged when sharing their learning struggles because that is where learning happens. Struggling is expected when they learn new things.

She is a creative teacher. She created activity corners for her class. For example, she uses Uno for her language lessons. She stated that students get so excited to play that some natural languages come out. So, it will show if they need solid knowledge, such as how to say numbers and colors or give directions. It also allows teachers to step in giving corrective feedback. In addition, Jasmine believes that playing games together is also great for building that community. Jasmine also mentioned that the Pandemic has dramatically changed how teachers use technology in their classrooms. Before the Pandemic, teachers had to search for ways to use technology actively. However, since the Pandemic, everything has gone to technology, so

nowadays, teachers have to decide what technology tools they should keep. Online games like Cahoot, Quizlet, and GeoGuesser. Gamification is an excellent strategy in foreign language education.

Mary

Mary's educational background in foreign language teaching began at a government-based educational and research institution in 2007. She has been teaching Spanish for about 15 years. However, teaching was different from her original plan because she majored in international policy studies and cultural anthropology. She took up teaching and taking courses at school for her teaching certification while working at the government institution. For her, the purpose of language teaching is to "improve the human condition based on the acquisition of a new foreign language while also learning the target culture and customs." She also earned a degree in Cultural Anthropology. Therefore, she likes to incorporate culture into her foreign language teaching curriculum. After all, "you cannot teach language without culture and vice versa. They go together."

In addition, Mary believes that knowledge and skills alone are not enough for language learning. Cultural learning is also essential. She explained that information or words that are cognitively set up could "apply to one word, and they mean the same. However, it may not mean the same in another context." So, in other words, teachers need to give their students the ability to see the bigger picture. She described herself as "a bigger picture person and a global person in my perspective, not as detailed oriented as I would like to be. But it is ok. It helps my students to see language learning with different subcategories."

Moreover, Mary believes that language learning is only for some people. In her words, "not everyone can be a doctor, a professor or linguist." She gave an example that she once took

ballet when she was young, but she never was able to pick it up since it was not her strength. She sees that as language learning. Teachers need to find learners' strengths first, "and then we can start talking more about resolutions or solutions to the problems." In addition, Mary also emphasized the importance of patterns in language learning. She said, "Once you get the patterns down on foreign language learning, things start, and the vocabulary starts to come."

Talia

Talia had a degree in International Business and Marketing. But her passion is in foreign language learning and teaching. As a native Tigrinya speaker, Talia can also speak French, English, and Italian. She loves everything about languages, studying them and helping people with the language skills she has obtained. She was an interpreter and translator when some missionaries went to their hometown to teach English. Because of language barriers, Talia assisted these missionaries in classroom teaching, and that opportunity opened more doors for her later as a foreign language teacher. After she immigrated to the United States, she volunteered at local schools to translate some paperwork for parents who did not speak English. Because of her excellent work, she was hired by one of the local schools as a language teacher, and that was how she became an official foreign language teacher.

For Talia, the whole purpose of language teaching and learning is to "help people communicate better, understand different cultures, and understand their environment better." She believes that humans are made for communication, and a language is a tool for interchanging messages. In addition, she mentioned that language is just one of the means of communication; there is so much more that should be included, such as gestures and cultures. Learning language itself alone is not sufficient to communicate with others.

Since most of Talia students took individual private classes, she was able to provide her students with a more personalized and customized learning experience. She believes that a sense of personal achievement is essential to build students' confidence and lead to effective learning. Therefore, she ensures that she takes every opportunity to celebrate students' improvements and achievements so that her students are engaged and motivated in her class. In addition, Talia thinks the best way to learn a foreign language is to immerse yourself in that language. To create a language immersion environment in the classroom or online, teachers must provide students with as many opportunities as possible to develop language and cultural fluency.

Robert

Robert is another great ESL teacher teaching students who are learning English as a second language. Robert loves traveling and experiencing different cultures. During our conversations, I found that Robert is like a walking Wikipedia. He is very knowledgeable in many areas and passionate about reading and learning. I was not surprised to find out that Robert can speak six languages fluently. He is very talented at learning languages. He had the desire to engage in a more rewarding profession, and that is why he started teaching in 1999.

Based on Robert's teaching experience, he thinks effective language teaching has to be challenging to the learners but also at a level that is just above their current level of proficiency. The key is making the activities challenging and not either beyond their capacity to learn or cognitively overwhelming. Avoiding boringness and fatigue is a challenge for teachers to balance. In addition, Robert pointed out that "good communicative teaching entails making covert cognitive ideas or processes overt to learners."

He found heuristics and scaffolding are fantastic techniques to achieve these objectives.

Bloom's Taxonomy of educational learning greatly influenced him. Robert stated that focusing on grammar should not be a priority in learning. However, vocabulary learning is essential. He wants his students to learn target vocabulary and cultivate an appreciation for learning vocabulary. Additionally, Robert believes that an instructor is a learning facilitator and an elucidator of skills or techniques that help hasten critical thinking skills among those learners. An instructor also helps learners achieve their language program's learning objectives.

Rosa

Rosa has been teaching French and English for six years. She holds a master's degree in literature. She loves languages and always wants to help others learn a foreign language. She quoted a saying from Gordon B. Hinckley, "Being humble means recognizing that we are not on earth to see how important we can become, but to see how much difference we can make in the lives of others." Rosa stated that with increasing racial and ethnic diversity in our nation, there is a growing misunderstanding, prejudice, and inequity towards other cultures. When it comes to education, I believe that every human being needs to be treated with dignity and respect no matter where they are from or what color they are. As a language educator, she is responsible for advocating equality and understanding between different nations and cultures.

Rosa thinks that the purpose of language learning is to experience different customs and learn different values. Her teaching course aims to help her students promote greater communication and understanding when they learn another language. She believes language plays a vital part in promoting collaboration between nations.

For each class, Rosa set a particular set of objectives for her class. She explained that the ultimate question regarding instruction is whether the learner has learned what he is supposed to learn and whether the learner can demonstrate the capabilities specified in the stated learning

objectives and terminal learning outcomes. Therefore, she usually started her class with a warm-up activity to review previously learned content to begin a new lesson. This creates an environment for learning and prepares the learner for the new concepts. The second section is the instruction. Instead of jumping right into a new concept, she usually uses different activities to motivate the learner to increase a desire or curiosity before further information is introduced. Rosa stated, “Motivation is key to the acceleration and quality of learning. Because when learners are motivated, they are more enthusiastic and engaged.” The third section is the demonstration. This is where all the new information with various strategies gets implemented, such as visuals, descriptions, explanations, and written text. The fourth section is practice. Learners are guided to practice the skill through different activities. The last section is assessment, using oral, written, or applied performance assessments. Her class flowed seamlessly. It was fun and engaging.

As grammar and vocabulary are still the main teaching methods for many languages learning programs, Rosa thinks grammar learning is less important than most language educators perceive. Students can still communicate well with others even without knowing sentence structures. The vocabulary helps people understand each other, not how a sentence is constructed. Effective learning, therefore, is not how much they know about the language but how well they can utilize it. For language classes with many students learning together, it is hard to assist everyone to practice and give instant feedback. And that is one of the reasons why so many students cannot speak a language after years of learning. “Language learning is very personal. Grammar and vocabulary teaching is a great way for teachers to manage many students at the same time and keep a big class under control. It is a teacher-centered method. It is a great

challenge for teachers to deliver personalized lessons when they have more than 20 students in a class.”

As a language teacher, Rosa believes her role is to open doors for her students. What she can teach her students is limited, but when her students obtain a skill from her, they can do so much more afterward. Knowledge points in a direction, but skills can help them explore, extend, and stretch to different directions.

Results

This phenomenological study utilized Moustaka’s (1994) approach to capture the participants’ perceptions and experiences and describe the essence of the language-as-skill phenomena. It focuses on what participants experience and its expression in the language (Polkinghorne, 1989). Three rich descriptive data sets were collected via document analysis, class observation, and individual interviews to gather the essence of foreign language teachers’ perceptions of language-as-knowledge and language-as-skill. Due to covid, all data were collected through Canvas and Zoom. Participants submitted their lesson plans, assessment reports, and program descriptions during the data collection period. The analysis began when the interview recordings were transcribed, and other documented data were collected. Each transcription and document were downloaded and saved as a Microsoft Word file using the participant’s pseudonym to protect their privacy. To establish trustworthiness, I asked each participant to confirm their transcript for accuracy. The documents, stories, and insights gathered through three data sources contributed to the study’s data triangulation.

Throughout the data collection process, I used a reflective journal to record my observation, thoughts, and personal responses, along with recording the collected raw data regarding foreign language teachers’ experiences in the SLA field (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Journaling also helped me synthesize the data during the data collection process. Initially, I planned to use the NVIVO Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS) as the data management tool. It is an excellent tool for organizing all data, notes, and references. However, I conducted the analysis manually since it might not be an ideal tool to replace human analytical expertise for this study. Also, the NVIVO may create more complexity than necessary for this study. Therefore, I created my node structure to uncover meaningful and valuable results, including coding, creating spreadsheets, analyzing data, and generating themes and findings.

Furthermore, I reviewed all collected data repeatedly and analyzed them line-by-line. Eight descriptive themes were first merged based on key concepts and how they related. Lastly, after a more thorough thematic analysis through linking, theming, grouping, decontextualizing, and recontextualizing the data (Nowell et al., 2017), I drilled down three analytical themes that contain deeper research insights. The following section presents the results using themes and a portrayal of the participants' shared experiences with the phenomenon of the study.

Table 3

Themes and Sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
Perceptions of Language-as-skill vs. Language-as-knowledge	Perceptions Language-as-knowledge Language-as-skill It depends on student goals
The purpose of Language Learning and Teaching	Utilizing the Language Understand the Culture Build a community
Practice and Feedback	Effective and Ineffective Practice Effective and Ineffective Feedback

Theme 1: Perceptions of Language-as-skill vs. Language-as-knowledge

Though most participants understand the concept of skill acquisition and knowledge acquisition, different participants express their perceptions of foreign language acquisition differently. Four participants explained the concept of language-as-skill and language-as-knowledge from learner-centered and teacher-centered perspectives. Five participants detailed the concept from the information-delivery system and skill-application system perspective.

Sub-theme 1: Perceptions

When language is delivered as a type of knowledge learning, then the focus should be on understanding (Sunny & Rosa) and facts-based learning (Lily & Talia). Rose termed it, "from my understanding, when language learning is delivered as a type of knowledge learning, and then it would be more teacher-centered. It is like teaching all the parts of a car, and hopefully, students can learn how to drive. Skill-based learning is more learner-centered, which aims to teach students how to drive and introduce all the parts of a car to reach that goal." Sherry described knowledge-based learning as "content-centered" learning that mainly focuses on transmitting content to learners. It is about the delivery of content or information. Jasmine commented that knowledge-based learning is easy for teachers because it can be used for all learners. Regardless of their backgrounds and learning styles. It is an education that mainly focuses on transmitting content to learners. Skill-based learning, on the other hand, is "a learning-centered approach" (Jasmine), "to use not to analyze" (Lily), and "to help students physically and cognitively involved not to passively receive" (Mia). Robert concluded that effective language learning is not about how much information has been delivered but about how well the instruction gets received.

Sub-Theme 2: Language-as-skill

In the interview data collection, five participants expressed that they believe language learning is a type of skill learning and should be taught as a skill. As Rose explained, “although there is much knowledge-based learning in language acquisition, language should be taught as a skill. After all, language is for the purpose of communication”. To teach language as a skill, teachers need to “understand how our brain works and the importance of repetition in the skill acquisition process. It is easy to deliver information and even understanding, but it is hard to make it stick.”

Robert also perceives language as a skill acquisition that can be achieved over time through a particular process. "It involves leveraging varied domains, and one language domain can be obtained independently from another." He illustrated this point by using the analogy of team sports.

If you compare this to, say, the sport of soccer, or English football, one will note that there are many athletes within the team that play in different positions and have different roles—goalkeeper, defender, sweeping midfielder, striker, and so on. They all have specializations, but they play together, and the skill set of these individual role players overlap in the competitive team effort. You cannot be a great goalkeeper independent of teammates who help defend well or of other players who attack well as a unit, thus providing relief to a goalkeeper over the course of a 90-minute match... So, teamwork in sports leads to synergy, and utilizing stratagems such as scaffolding, or peer review can also help hasten to learn and improve L2 language performance.

In a similar way, when comparing the concept of language-as-skill and language-as-knowledge, Lily shared her story as a language learner. She said that she used to spend an enormous amount

of time analyzing every sentence and ensuring the part of the speech was in the correct place. In reality, the sense of the language and the idiomatic usage of the language is critical but overlooked by many language teachers. She explained that theory might back learners up somehow, but rules only make sense after students have observed enough of the language elements. She stated, "I do not believe that English grammar was established before the actual English language. Therefore, it is Okay to start the language acquisition without knowing any rules, then add some of the rules which were formulated much later, and then sensitized by the instructors."

Sub-Theme 3: Language-as-Knowledge

As for the perception of language-as-skill and language-as-knowledge, Mary believes that learning a foreign language is more knowledge-based as most foreign language learners still need to understand how foreign language acquisition works. Mary said, "acquiring this type of learning approach is the best way to facilitate the learning process. By introducing new concepts in grammar, patterns, linguistics, semantics, and culture-building knowledge, this approach will put things into perspective for students acquiring a new language." To reinforce the importance of culture in foreign language education, she stated, "You cannot teach language without teaching culture." The knowledge base may be theoretical, but it is needed to develop the skill acquisition. Therefore, she believes we must know the theory before we apply it. Grace also argued that "If language training was solely delivered as a skills-based activity, I don't believe the student will gain much other than learning how to navigate the language and culture through a skill rather than having the background knowledge to go in confidently with their newly acquired skills."

Sub-Theme 4: It Depends on Student Goals

Some participants think that whether language acquisition should be deemed a tool depends on students' goals. Knowledge-based teaching could be an appropriate approach for students who need to pass a test to go to college or get certified. Some students, like government employees or officers, must be equipped with language skills to perform the jobs they are assigned overseas. Language acquisition should be a primary focus of skill development. Additionally, some people may only be able to acquire the skills if they genuinely know the language's grammatical structures or linguistic theories behind them but to understand better and truly utilize a language. Students need to combine knowledge and skill with actual practice.

Theme 2: The Purpose of Language Learning and Teaching

Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) has a long history in foreign language education. Different students have different learning goals within the concepts for academic, business, or scientific purposes. Participants in this study believe that their language courses' purpose is built upon three primary missions: utilizing the language, understanding the culture, and building a community. Effective language teaching requires specific goals so that learners know where instruction is going and what is to be accomplished.

Sub-Theme 1: Utilizing the Language

All participants mentioned in one form or another that language is a tool for communication. Tiffany termed it, "language is a bridge to the other side of the world, and I am helping my students to build it up." Using this term, Tiffany explained that language is a tool for her students to see and explore other countries and cultures with their own experiences. A language teacher can describe it from their own perspective. However, with the ability to utilize a foreign language, students could follow their curiosity, drive their own learning, and find their own truth.

Participant Jasmine used the term "survival" when describing the purpose of language teaching. In Jasmine's words: "For my students. Learning English is a basic survival tool. Suppose they just arrived (in the United States), and they don't have time to learn English before they can learn the content of others. In that case, it is hard for them to be successful at whatever they wanted to achieve". Sherry explained the purpose of language teaching in a fun way "language is to use, so it should be in students' head, not in their textbooks."

Sub-Theme 2: Understand the culture

Vocabulary and grammar learnings are essential for language learning. However, removing language barriers to communication requires also requires cultural awareness. As Mary stated, "you want your students to know what is culturally important to your culture, and what traditions in customs and foods and music, especially the literature. All that beautiful stuff that culture has given to the world. It makes them a well-rounded student and a cultured person." Tiffany also emphasized the importance of accepting and respecting other cultures. She claimed that diversity brings not only different colors to our society and culture but also various opinions and viewpoints. Therefore, helping our students to embrace different cultures and values is also critical in foreign language learning. She said, "we need diversity in our lives to keep things interesting and innovative in foreign language education. Therefore, language teaching should be given in a very diverse manner and keep in mind that we always have a lot left to learn". In a similar way, culture-based teaching is vital for Talia as a teacher. She mentioned that a challenge for language learning is building a sense of community. It is not just about using language because students do not have a sense of the cultural context in which things are spoken in cultural context.

Grace also mentioned that learning about culture is critical for a language learner to master a foreign language truly. Talia stated, "communication is just one of the means of communication. There is so much more that should be included, such as gestures and cultures. Learning language itself alone is not sufficient to communicate with others."

Sub-Theme 3: Build a community

When explaining the concept of skill acquisition, Rosa explained that the essence of skill learning is community building. She further explained that "without the community, students have no place to apply the skills or the knowledge I am trying to get them to use. Community is why they want to learn another language to have a sense of belonging".

During our interview, Jasmine stated that it is hard to categorize language learning as more knowledge-based or skill-based learning because "cognitive linguistics gave us a lot of more linear approaches to language, processing, and learning, and then socio-cultural linguistics come in, and kind of muddy that a bit like how you are actually going to get to cultural and communicative competence. So, language learning is not one or another, because it is all about community and both concepts are for the purpose of community." Teachers can give their students both content and skills, but if students do not have a sense of belonging or feel uncomfortable merging into the culture, they will not use any of them.

Theme 3: Practice and Feedback

Practice and feedback are vital in enhancing foreign language learning (Pan et al., 2019; Biau & Desmet, 2019; Hamidova & Ganiyeva, 2020). All participants expressed that practice and feedback are critical and essential for foreign language learning. All data collected through classroom observations, teachers' lesson plans, and interviews show evidence that learners were guided to practice language skills through different activities.

Table 4*Feedback and Practice*

Effective Practice	Ineffective Practice	Effective Feedback	Ineffective Feedback
Get improved after practice	No improvement; make the same mistake again	See improvement	Get improved after practice
Drilling and repetition	Not engaging	Compliment, humor, open, sensitive, personal, patient	Point fingers, judgmental, harsh
Be flexible, alert	Repetition and boring	Constant feedback	Grading
Defeat forgottenness	Teach one point and limited to one point	Fluency vs. accuracy not specified	Too long
Quantity over quality		Categorized it, break it down	
Build meaningful context			
Flipped – students plan their own topic/learning		Non-judgmental Motivation	
Willing to use outside of the classroom			

Sub-Theme 1: Effective and Ineffective Practice

Whether a foreign language is skill-based or knowledge-based, all teachers agree that effective practice is one of the most critical sections when planning a course. Two categories came forth: method and result.

From the method aspect, six participants out of ten suggested guided practice using the drilling and repetition methods are effective. Lily used an analogy of playing Ping Pong to explain this type of practice:

I think about playing ping pong. How many times do you have to practice by yourself? Hit the ball over the wall and back many, many times. Therefore, guided consistency in practice. Speaking building up, we always say quantity direct quality. You must have enough practice before the entire skill becomes part of your own. Therefore, consistent practice, consistent getting rid of your fossilized prior native language, is the key, and the only way to do the language to learn it efficiently and acquire it completely is through guided practice. That practice can be very boring over time.

Furthermore, five participants out of ten claimed that immersive learning is an effective practice method. Though creating an immersive learning environment is challenging, activities that aim for immersive, contextualized, experiential learning would be beneficial and effective. In Lily's words, "We know it is ineffective when we ask our students to read a sentence ten times.

Language learning points cannot be learned or practiced in an isolated way. It only takes place when it is meaningful and within a context."

Moreover, four participants spoke about purposeful and deliberate practice. Rose and Tiffany mentioned that effective practice needs to be goal oriented. Jasmine and Robert also explained that when the goal is clearly stated and how to achieve the goal is well demonstrated,

and then effectiveness is usually guaranteed. They believe practicing grammar-translation without a meaningful context is a form of rote memorization. It is disengaging and ineffective.

From the result aspect, Sherry phrased it precisely "as long as students can get improved after practice and have a sense of accomplishment, then it can be considered effective practice. Otherwise, students might feel stuck and discouraged in the learning process". In addition, four participants used whether students could apply and expand what they have learned outside of the classroom as evidence of effective learning.

Sub-Theme 2: Effective and Ineffective Feedback

Feedback is important for language learning because it enables an understanding of performance, and a lack of feedback detracts students' language education (Ingrassia, 2022). All participants agree that effective feedback is critical for language learning. As Lily recounted in her interview, "to provide constructive feedback along the process of the student's learning is extremely important." Rose explained, "The practice truly will get you to be more fluent or skillful in applying the language, while the feedback is a correction and improvement process. She further explained, "The collected data demonstrated three keywords regarding feedback in language teaching. The first keyword concerned the foreign language instructors' ability to provide effective feedback. The second keyword is related to the student's willingness and readiness to engage in feedback. The third keyword is about how often and how much an instructor should provide feedback.

Six participants stated that effective feedback needs to be specific with detailed explanations and relate to a performance goal. It cannot be too general. For example, comments like "you can do better," "your pronunciation is not good enough," and "I do not understand what you are talking about." Also, students need to be willing to accept. Krashen's affective filter

hypothesis (1985) suggests that emotional factors might distract learners in language learning. As Tiffany explained, "No matter how well or detailed feedback you provide to your students, if they disagree or say that is not the case, they will reject it." Tesga also recounted, "Don't interrupt students when they talk. Make notes on their mistakes and provide them to students after their speech. Make sure students understand all your feedback, no questions left". Lily had a similar comment on this,

Do not constantly correct them. Students will get discouraged, and then they might shut down. How students receive your feedback makes a big difference. Therefore, the tone, body language, and anything that you were talking to the students has to be sincere, Not condescending, and the students know that you were doing this for their best benefit.

Constantly correcting mistakes in the middle of the production will hinder the student's progress and production. And it is going to impact their learning process negatively.

Rose pointed out,

There are ways that you probably have to establish with the student that, as a language learner, it is so natural and so common to make mistakes. Mistakes are a way to make you alert that you need to improve. You can always voice what you want to tell your students in a positive way. You are correcting the mistake, but you are really letting him know that you want him to do better than what he is, and not in a negative, scolding way. There is a big difference in how the students receive this. So that he will know, "yes, I am doing very well, but I can do even better." With this kind of mindset, I think they will be receiving them in a very positive manner. Therefore, you have to word it diplomatically in such a way that it is acceptable to them. Otherwise, even if you provide correct feedback, it is useless if they don't listen to you."

It is ineffective when teachers give comments like "do not do this" or "do you not remember? As for teachers, feedback is not to point fingers but to help students enhance their learning. By involving teachers in the evaluation of their own learning, they become active partners in evaluation of their own learning instead of passively recipients of teachers' feedback. Both teachers and students will benefit greatly when students are not passive receivers. Lily stated, "

Language overlaps, and it is very natural that they forget, and you can always say, "Do you remember? The tone of language is important as your body language and how you use it. You can use a warm, encouraging. The opposite will be cold or neglecting the student's feelings. You have to be in the shoe of the students. If you are not, the feedback will be very ineffective.

Regarding standard tests as a common assessment method, five participants expressed their concerns about using fact-check, fill-the-blank, translation, or other knowledge-based assessments. Providing feedback through assessment is multifaceted, not a singular process of giving grades after a test or quiz. Those formative assessments may specify what students are expected to know and be able to do at each language learning level. However, students are then grouped in terms of their scores on the standards test as advanced, basic, needing improvement, or failing. Scores do not measure the ability to use the language in real-life situations or measure their language skill levels. Though it is easy to grade and provide feedback for teachers, it is not an effective assessment for students since it encourages a narrowed curriculum and outdated methods of instruction.

As Jasmine stated in her interview, "I don't think multiple-choice or short-answer tests measure important student achievement. They are not strong measures of the ability to comprehend complex material, write, applied skills, or grasp social science concepts. Nor do

they adequately measure thinking skills or assess what people can do on real-world tasks". Rose also mentioned that "tests are not good feedback for students. It takes away the joy and purpose of learning as they have fewer and fewer opportunities to explore topics that do not appear on the tests". Various assessment data are needed so that teachers can make instructional adjustments. Feedback would be more effective when teachers can produce a complete picture of student performance.

Research Question Responses

The current study was to understand how foreign languages can be learned and taught effectively using skill acquisition methodology. A central question that focuses on the challenges and strategies of using the skill-based approach in foreign language education was raised due to my quest in this undertaking. Several themes have emerged from this question. These themes consist of perceptions of language-as-skill vs. language-as-knowledge, creating a positive learning experience, effective practice and feedback, know your learners and cultivate positive relationships

Table 4

Themes and Research Questions Addressed

Theme	Grade Level
Creating a Positive Learning Experience	CRQ, SQ1, SQ2
Expand Learning Outcomes	CRQ, SQ1, SQ2
Effective Practice and Feedback	CRQ, SQ1
Know Your Learners and Cultivate Positive Relationships	CRQ, SQ2

Central Research Question

What do foreign language Teachers consider the main challenges and strategies of using the skill-based approach in foreign language Education? Almost all participants pointed out that an isolated learning environment is one of the biggest challenges when learning a foreign language. A learn-as-needed goal needs to be aligned with a learn-as-need approach. Foreign language learning must facilitate authentic dialogues and cultural awareness with real-world panoramic scenes (Chabot et al., 2019). However, an immersing learning environment takes work to create. Many students can pass different language tests with high scores but need help communicating with people when using the targeted language in real-life situations.

Strategy 1: Creating immersive, contextualized, and experiential learning experience

Six participants expressed that teachers must create an immersive, contextualized, experiential learning environment for language learners. A learning environment includes all conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the learner's development. As Mia put it, "immerse learning is the best way and the fastest way to learn a foreign language." Jasmine stated this sentiment this way, "we are trying to get much communication and listening and authentic voices and examples in the foreign language classrooms for our students to create an immersive learning environment." Talia also mentioned that "activities and opportunities to expose to the authentic environment is the most effective way to learn a foreign language." Mary stated:

Studying abroad is the optimal way to learn a language. There is no better and more effective way to learn a language than to be immersed in a culture that speaks the language they are learning. By living in the country, they will be able to pick up on people's mannerisms and unconscious behaviors. Grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation aren't everything there is to communication, after all. However, when

studying abroad is not an option, it is the teacher's responsibility to create a similar learning environment to help students develop language skills.

Four participants also emphasized the importance of meaningful and contextualized learning. As Lily put it, "If you can sustain a meaningful input into the content of the classroom, then the meaningful output can be expected." Tiffany expressed it this way, "Every learning activity needs to be contextualized within a meaningful context. Otherwise, learning is isolated and fertile." Mary was blunter in her interview, "Learning without using in a meaningful context, students will fail to relate whatever words list and grammar to anything." Rosa also mentioned that without real-life context, students are disconnected from using it.

Strategy 2: Expand Learning Outcomes

As the proverb says, "If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime." One fish can solve a moment of hunger but cannot solve long-term hunger. There is a valuable life lesson in that simple statement. Fish is the goal, and fishing is the means. We will only have a temporary solution when we are given an answer. When we are taught the principles that led us to that answer, we will be able to create our own solutions in the future. Four participants described this strategy during their interviews and believed teaching students how to learn is one of the most effective learning techniques in foreign language education. Lily said, "a teacher's role is not to feed their students with a fish but to teach them how to fish so that they can excel without my guidance." Rose said, "when teachers learn how to unlock the key to learning by recognizing how students learn and the motivation behind that learning, academic success will occur."

Similarly, Lily also mentioned that effective learning outside the classroom is critical besides effective learning in the classroom. Through her observation and experience over the

years, she has found that teachers usually guide the best of students outside the classroom, in which autonomous learning comes into play. "In order to be effectively guiding the students in the process of language. Learning should not overflow the classroom with theories or practice or overburden the contents. However, much of the time should be spent on how the students can effectively learn, which turns into guiding the students into doing the autonomous learning in the long run." Mary concluded, "A teacher, especially now in the Internet era, should be a leader, facilitator, motivator, and content provider, showing the students how to "find water" even when the teacher will not be there to lead them to it."

Sub-Question One

How do participants perceive the role of practice and feedback? All participants stressed the importance of practice and feedback in foreign language learning. For example, Sunny believes that practice is the best way to help students become skillful at using it. Rosa believes practice and feedback are the essence of language teaching and learning. Because when they are utilized together, language automation is no longer unreachable.

Practice

Sunny and Lily described language learning as "physical training," and repetition is the best way to build "muscle memory." Lily also mentioned that language learning is like playing ping pong. Repetition is critical to reaching automaticity. Jasmine emphasized that quantity is more important than quality in practice. However, several participants claimed repeatedly practicing something does not always guarantee improvement. Effective practice needs to be goal-oriented and level-appropriate. Teachers must observe their students closely when conducting activities and be ready to readjust the level and content when needed. Effectiveness

depends not on how much effort learners have put in but on the learning outcomes that they have achieved.

Several participants mentioned two specific teaching methods as effective practice approaches: the FORETE method and the Flipped classroom methods. The FORTE method is an acronym for family, occupation, recreation, travel, and entertainment. Mary believes this method can help her students improve their communicative competence and create effective practice activities. She thinks that in any language course, whether high school, junior high school, or whatever language setting, FORTE-method allows students to apply what they know as a skill since these topics are universal. In addition, three participants talked about the flipped classroom pedagogical approach as an excellent strategy for students to obtain skills independently through self-guided study. It is beneficial in a learner-centered environment and in one that encourages personalized learning.

Feedback

Every participant in this research study articulated the importance of feedback in foreign language learning. Many highlighted the prominence of remaining non-judgmental when providing feedback to their students. As Tiffany noted, "our role is to facilitate learning, not judge how fast or how well a student can learn." Lily also mentioned that a teacher needs to understand that it is normal to forget, especially for new concepts. Robert stated that it is vital for teachers to understand students' points of view as to why a mistake was made in a non-judgmental way. Other participants also mentioned that to provide effective feedback, a teacher should know when to enforce, interrupt, and correct their students and how to insert praise to keep their students on track and engaged. In addition, teachers need to set clear expectations for quality work.

Technology

Participants held different opinions on using technology to assist practice and feedback. Some believe that the use of technology during classes has several benefits, such as increased motivation (Rose & Jasmine), fostering engagement during learning (Lily), and support of student-centered didactical approaches (Robert). Some participants argued that many teachers hold a 'replaced-by technology' mindset which in contrast makes it so that students are left to their own devices. However, students might get overwhelmed by the complexity when using technology or get frustrated that can sometimes arise in making inquiries (Tiffany, Mary, & Tseqa).

Sub-Question Two

How do foreign language educators apply skill acquisition in their teaching practice? When designing the components of the instructional event, all participants agreed that language teaching needs to be consistent with the learner's style, motivation, background, and characteristics to make instruction significantly more effective. Robert said,

I believe that my teaching should be tailored to, or cater, to the learning style of my students. However, students come with different attitudes, learning styles, and personalities, which impacts the kinds of learners I teach. I would like to know if a modal intelligence appears among a significant number of L2 learners and if I can tailor such teaching to these learners by presenting learning materials that appeal to their learning, and can this principle be applied in the L2 classroom?

Mia explained:

My understanding of language acquisition and skill acquisition depends on the individual learner. Some learners are audio-visual, while others may be aural and listen to patterns.

Nevertheless, others may be kinetic learners requiring an immersive learning environment where a hands-on approach is best for this type of learner. Most learners are audio-visual but see things from a global or more detail-oriented perspective. It all depends on the student learner. I have found it useful in my administering a Language Learner Survey at the beginning of my course. I am better able to determine the types of learning strengths and weaknesses of my students. In other words, develop a SWOT analysis for each student.

As for the purpose of language teaching, Georgia explained that it should all depend on the goal of her students' learning. All effective instruction requires careful planning based on students' needs and learning styles. Everyone's experience is different, and what works for one group might not fit the needs of others. Therefore, language teaching needs to be "flexible, adjustable, and purposeful".

In an interview with Mary, she echoed similar feelings:

Some learners are audio-visual, some may be aural and listen to patterns, while others may be kinetic learners requiring an immersive learning environment where a hands-on approach is best for this type of learner. Most learners are audio-visual but see things from a global or more detail-oriented perspective. It all depends on the student learner. I have found that by administering a language learner survey at the beginning of my course, I can better determine my student's learning strengths and weaknesses. In other words, develop a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis for each student.

In addition, establishing a learning environment effectively and ensuring that the learning environment fosters positive, confident attitudes on the part of the learner is also an important

theme that appears in the data collection. Eight participants out of ten expressed the importance of developing positive relationships with students to enhance learning. In Tiffany's words, "we are all equal in the learning process. Heart-to-heart teaching is one of the most effective teaching strategies. Students should feel safe and open to learn and to make mistakes." Mia said,

My perception of effective language teaching consists of the relationship the language teacher develops with the language learner. It is important to develop a trusting and self-reflective approach to effective language teaching that involves a Socratic method of deduction by coming up with an overarching question/hypothesis and then arriving at your own conclusions based on your own findings.

Jasmine also mentioned that when teachers have a positive relationship with their students, it is easy to guide their practice and provide feedback. A good relationship creates a positive and safe learning environment. Talia also mentioned that cultivating a good and open relationship can help us keep a collaborative atmosphere in the classroom." Tiffany said, "Opening is the key to surviving and thriving during virtual teaching." Rose commented that teaching particularly needs a heart-to-heart relationship because we need to establish a climate of mutual respect. Georgia stated that when students trust and feel comfortable to open up to their teachers, it can significantly give them more confidence and reduce their anxiety level when practicing the language.

Summary

This transcendental phenomenological study aimed to discover the lived experience of foreign language teachers' perceptions of language-as-skill and language-as-knowledge. A total of ten foreign language teachers participated in this study, including three Mandarin Chinese teachers, four ESL teachers, one Spanish teacher, one Greek teacher, and one Tigrinya teacher.

Three themes and nine sub-themes emerged from the data collected from the document analysis, class observations, and individual interviews. Three themes demonstrated participants' perceptions of language-as-skill and language-as-knowledge. The first theme emerged from the participants' perspectives regarding whether language should be learned as a skill or knowledge. The second theme developed from the participants' beliefs in the purpose of foreign language teaching and learning. This theme painted a picture of the participants' value, scope, and direction of their perspectives on foreign language education. The third theme came from the participants' experiences regarding the two critical elements of skill-based language learning: practice and feedback. Further, this chapter answered the central research question and two sub-questions guiding this study. As a result, my study indicates significant support for skill-based learning techniques in foreign language education.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the concepts of language-as-skill and language-as-knowledge through foreign language educators' lived experiences. This chapter will bring together the interpretations of findings as discussed in Chapter Four, implications for policy or practice, theoretical and empirical implications of the study, limitations and delimitations, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

This phenomenological qualitative study explores foreign language educators' perspectives of language teaching and learning from the skill acquisition aspect. Significant findings were established through participants' experiences shared through documents, individual interviews, and class observations. This section presents both hard data from the study and theoretical and empirical sources to support the interpretations of the findings.

Interpretation of Findings

The research study aimed to gain insight into language-as-skill and language-as-knowledge by examining foreign language teachers' perspectives and lived experiences. There are ten foreign language educators who participated in this study. Two major themes emerged through document analysis, classroom observations, and individual interviews: purposeful teaching and learning and effective teaching and learning. Specifically, whether a foreign language should be taught as a type of skill, such as learning an instrument, or be taught as an academic subject, such as history or literature, depends on teachers' perspectives on language education and students learning objectives. Moreover, effective teaching and learning requires deliberate practice and feedback, creating a positive learning experience and positive teacher-

student relationships to increase cooperation and engagement in the foreign language learning process.

Summary of Thematic Findings

There are no right or wrong answers when discussing whether a language is a type of skill learning. Even if a teacher profoundly believes that a language is a tool for communication, a knowledge-based teaching approach is still appropriate if the learner's purpose is to know about a language, and vice-versa. In the same matter, different education environments demand different instructional strategies. Both external and internal factors that engage and motivate students in the learning process need to be considered for effective foreign language education.

Purposeful Teaching and Learning. Most participants stated that the purpose of language learning and teaching is to utilize a language, understand a culture, and build a community. The purpose-driven language teaching and learning starts with *why* and then teachers could set identification and clarification of associated objectives of knowledge and skill so that students skillfully use or apply the targeted language. When a language is learned for the purpose of communicating, the focusing objectives should focus more on utilizing a language instead of analyzing language. The performance objectives focus on what students can do and how well they can perform instead of what students know or how many grammar rules they can remember. In this case, language learning should be learned and taught as a skill learning.

When teachers or students believe that language learning is to understand different cultures, language learning is not just a network of words, sentence constructions, and grammatical principles. Culture-driven language teaching and learning is to develop an awareness and appreciation of different values, attitudes, conventions, and social forms associated with the targeted language. To understand, embrace and connect to different cultures, learners need to be

knowledgeable about the associated characteristic features of other cultures and able to interact appropriately. Therefore, cultural-specific knowledge and skill learning are central to foreign language acquisition. From this perspective, foreign language education should combine knowledge and skill learning that spotlights understanding and application.

Moreover, community building plays a vital role in foreign language acquisition because language is a basic need for many learners to survive and thrive. Language is a fundamental tool to use in their daily lives both within and outside the classroom. Learners need to be actively involved in collaborative conversations in their communities to build relationships, seek a sense of belonging, and develop an environment where they feel safe and supported.

As for foreign language education, social interaction demands real-life and authentic language learning. The learning outcome is not about reciting language knowledge but becoming a community member. A mechanical learning experience will not be efficient for learners to reach real-world goals. Students need to use the language to negotiate and communicate effectively with others. From this point of view, a skill-based learning approach would be more appropriate since a dynamic learning experience is necessary for learners to reach real-world goals.

Effective teaching and learning. Effective teaching and learning can be defined in many ways. This study discovers three main aspects: deliberate practice and feedback, a positive learning environment, and valuable partnership with students to increase cooperation and engagement in the foreign language learning process.

According to the participants in this study, deliberate practice and feedback are meaningful and goal oriented. They are not mindless repetitions but constantly striving for improvement with specific goals. Effective practice and feedback are meaningful. They foster

the engagement and involvement of students in the learning process so that students can apply what they have learned in the classroom to the real world. Furthermore, effective practice and feedback are consistent, monitored, and demonstrated.

Effective teaching and learning create a positive learning environment where students are encouraged and inspired to step out of their comfort zone to reach their learning goals. Acquiring knowledge or skills is a process. It is crucial for teachers to establish a supportive learning system where students feel safe making mistakes. Also, a positive learning environment enables students to become more independent learners. Learning could start in the classroom but should not end there. Students set goals, explore new learning concepts, and conduct their own learning activities and evaluations at the core of learning. Effective teaching and learning help students make discoveries and celebrate their success for each accomplishment.

Moreover, effective teaching and learning involve a valuable partnership between students and teachers. Teaching and learning are not passive social activities or one-way process in which knowledge are transmitted to students by teachers. Teaching and learning require meaningful interactions and collaborations. Therefore, it is important for teachers and students to build mutual trust and respect and share authority. To cultivate a good partner relationship with learners, teachers must learn about their students and understand their learning experiences, including their strengths, struggles, and challenges in the learning process. Promoting students' engagement, motivation, and ownership of learning are essential for skill acquisition.

Implications for Policy or Practice

The policy operates and influences individuals at all levels in an organization. Derived from the findings of this study, the implications for policy and practice may benefit language

professionals, researchers, school administrators, and policymakers when they aspire to facilitate the implementation of skill acquisition in foreign language education.

Implications for Policy

The study results suggest that foreign language education institutions need to develop policies to evaluate quality indicators of foreign language teaching and learning activities. Criteria include whether the teaching methods align with the learning outcomes and students' learning goals; whether effective teaching approaches are implemented; and teachers' skills in communication, collaboration, empathy, and patience. The evaluation and quality control will not only help a service organization improve its operations but also provide feedback and reports to workgroup staff and managers on the results of key performance indicators. Quality control activities ensure that education institutions promote efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness to learners, continual improvement, and innovation.

Furthermore, foreign language education institutions need to build resilience as we enter an age of pandemics and in a constantly changing world. Sayilar (2016) pointed out that there is a dynamic fit between organizational structure and contingencies. It is recommended that school administrators and policymakers need to adjust their policies or structures accordingly when the rules of the game change. It is crucial for any organization to learn continuously as a way of adapting to changed surroundings. Effective policies state the vision for the culture and provide training for individuals to work differently in a new culture (Farrell, 2018).

Moreover, the study's results indicate that effective language teaching demands that teachers know their learners and build a valuable partnership with them. Foreign language classroom size should be in a range so that each student can get individual attention, sufficient class participation, and plenty of opportunities to communicate with teachers. When the

classroom size is too big, it is hard for teachers to get to know each of their students. However, knowing the learners' specific learning goals, learning styles, strengths and weaknesses is essential for boosting and engaging students' learning. In addition, when there are too many students in the classroom, it is hard for teachers to provide all students with sufficient opportunities to participate in learning activities, diagnose and provide instant feedback. It is challenging to provide differentiated instruction in a big-size classroom in response to student needs.

Implications for Practice

Based on this study's findings, three practical implications apply to foreign language educators: knowledge, skill, and motivation. Knowledge about a language, as conceptual or procedural understanding, is essential for language learning. However, more than knowledge is required for language acquisition. Therefore, teachers might need to adjust the percentage of the knowledge teaching portion in their instructional plan to align with learning purposes.

Knowledge-based teaching serves as guidance to promote understanding, not performing.

Teachers need to consider when deciding whether their lessons are delivering information or skills.

Skills acquisition requires more than theoretical knowledge. When the learning goal is to utilize a language, teachers might need to focus on applying knowledge to accomplish real-world tasks. Acquisition of skills would be a primary objective, and learning should focus on mastering language skills. Deliberate practice and feedback should be used to transfer theoretical knowledge to practical language skill proficiency. The result of the study also confirms that deliberate practice is goal-directed practice and striving to go above and beyond the current

level. Repetitive practice and drills do not necessarily improve performance. Effective language teaching needs to engage in deliberate practice for skill-based performance activities.

Motivation plays a vital role in foreign language learning. Motivating students to learn, develop, succeed, and use it beyond the classroom is one of the critical characteristics of effective teaching identified in this study. Teachers could motivate students extrinsically with rewards or help them develop intrinsic motivation to enhance learning. In addition, the use of technology is also indicated as a powerful tool to motivate and engage students. The results of this study indicate that the school system might need to increase the impact of technology integration. Especially for an online learning environment, technology will help organizations satisfy the never-ending demand for ways that make learning faster, better, and more productive.

Theoretical and Empirical Implications

The study's findings affirmed the major aspects of the theories guiding skill acquisition in foreign language education. On several occasions, participants emphasized the need for meaningful and experiential learning; deliberate practice and effective feedback; the importance of sociocultural elements; and the need to build a positive relationship with learners (Anderson, 1982; DeKeyser, 2007; VanPatten et al., 2020; Vygotsky). In addition, participants addressed the importance of both knowledge and skill acquisition in foreign language learning, indicating different preferences and perspectives. Though these appear like conflicting viewpoints, they pinpoint the three stages of Anderson's (1982) skill development and Symons' (1988) input, input processing, and output language process. It highlights that language is both a process and a product and therefore needs to include the meaning it encodes and the context in which it is used. It also emphasizes the process and stages of language learning. Though learning starts with first

obtaining declarative knowledge, to develop automatic linguistic behaviors, teachers need to find ways to convert it into procedural knowledge through effective practice and feedback.

As previously indicated, skill acquisition is commonly applied to sports and industry (Farrow & Robertson, 2017; Hodges & Williams, 2012; Powell et al., 2021). Only a few studies have examined the theory of foreign language learning. This study provided a different angle to review language-as-knowledge and language-as-skill. It fills an existing gap in the literature on how second language learning could be acquired from the skill-based and knowledge-based approaches. Though most of the study's findings do not differ from previous research, this study corroborated areas of the current empirical research and added to the existing literature by providing strategies and applications for transferring knowledge to skills in foreign language education.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study had two main limitations. First, it was limited to one single site and institution in the state of Virginia. The one-site research design might impact the outcome and conclusions of the study due to the limited number of participants and a small variance in educational settings. Students in this training school are all adult learners. Though participants have different language teaching backgrounds and teaching five different language programs, the results obtained in this study may not be applicable if the foreign language teachers were from K-12 schools or different areas of the nation. Therefore, it is recommended for future research include more sites so that a more diverse sample can be collected.

The second limitation of the study is related to the Covid-19 pandemic. This research would have been conducted in a way that all interviews could be in person, and all classroom observations could be on site. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, most classes are in an

online setting. Therefore, all data were collected digitally via web-based platforms. Interviews and class observations were conducted via the Zoom platform. Fortunately, all participants got accustomed to Zoom platforms. It was convenient for both parties to schedule one interview and a class observation session.

Moreover, as for the delimitations, this research study will not address the perceptions of learners' experience regarding the concept of language-as-skill and language-as-knowledge. I delimited the scope to teachers' experience and practices in teaching foreign languages. However, students' perspectives and lived experiences were not in the scope of my study.

Recommendations for Future Research

The results of this qualitative phenomenological study revealed three possibilities for future research in foreign language education. First, this study provides a small glimpse into the foreign language teachers' perceptions of language-as-skill and language-as-knowledge. Due to the limited number of studies in this field, future research should continue to look at this group and add students' perspectives to build a more thorough and deep study on this topic. Since this study focused on foreign language teachers in a language training school, future studies could examine different school settings to testify to the findings and outcomes. Furthermore, including foreign language learners and teachers from more varied backgrounds could broaden the scope of the study.

The second recommendation is that future research may consider conducting quantitative research focusing on whether there is a difference in effective language learning using knowledge-based and skill-based approaches. Data collected through quantitative research by comparing the differences between knowledge learning and skill learning may be more objective and can also be quantified, measured, and analyzed. Also, to have a deeper understanding of the

process of second language learning, a multiple case study design could be helpful for future research. This design can be used to investigate the efficiency when second language acquisition is considered a skill learning instead of knowledge learning and explore the *what, how, and why* research questions within a bounded system.

Last, future research may consider examining teachers' attitudes and efficiency in using technology in their classrooms to support learners' cultural and linguistic skill acquisition. Compared to the traditional teacher-centered method, technology applications have a greater reach to accomplish needed tasks. How to integrate technology into skill-based learning acquisition is still one of the under-researched topics in second language acquisition.

Conclusion

This transcendental phenomenological study aimed to understand the concept of language-as-skill and language-as-knowledge by examining foreign language teachers' perspectives and lived experiences. The theoretical basis for this study is DeKeyser's (2007) skill acquisition theory. The theory laid a foundation for understanding the application of the skill acquisition approach in foreign language education and addressed integrating knowledge and skill in the learning process. The study included ten language teachers across Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, English, Greek, and Tigrinya. The findings of this study were consistent with the literature. Though teachers have different opinions on whether language should be considered as knowledge or skill, they all emphasize the importance of practice and feedback, which are the two elements of skill acquisition.

The findings of this study imply that foreign language learning teaching is purposeful, meaningful, and uplifting. Engaging purposeful and effective teaching is an imperative approach for skill acquisition application in language learning. Policymakers and teachers need to be

equipped with a larger scope of the political systems that drive professionals' behavior in training organizations so that teachers can go beyond instructional strategies, management skills, and assessments to positively influence their teaching on a grander scale. Therefore, policymakers and teachers play a critical role in the integration process, especially when the goal is to help students utilize a language for communication and community-building purposes. Skill learning requires deliberate practice and effective feedback. Integrating knowledge, skills, and attitudes is vital for language learning and needs a more thorough exploration in the research regarding learning processes.

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Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

October 4, 2022

Xiang Johnson
Jose Puga

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY22-23-134 Language as a Skill Approach in Foreign Language Education: A Phenomenological Study

Dear Xiang Johnson, Jose Puga,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Research Ethics Office

Appendix B: Site Approval Letter

September 16, 2022

Dear Xiang Johnson,

After careful review of your research proposal entitled Language-as-skill Approach in Foreign Language Education, we have decided to grant you permission to conduct your study at

[REDACTED]

We will not provide potential participant information to Xiang Johnson but we agree to send her study information to potential participants on her behalf.

We are requesting a copy of the results upon study completion and/or publication.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Appendix C: Recruitment Letter

Dear [Participant],

As a doctoral student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctoral degree. The title of my research project is Language-as-skill Approach in Foreign Language Education, and the purpose of my research is to understand foreign language educators' lived experience of language-as-skill that focuses on language use.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research in the Loudoun County Public School district. Participants will be asked to contact me to schedule an interview and one section of classroom observation. Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.]

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on official letterhead indicating your approval. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Xiang Johnson
Doctoral Student

Appendix D: Participant Invitation Letter

Dear [Participant]:

My name is Xiang Johnson, and I am a doctoral candidate pursuing a Ph.D. in the School of Education, focusing on Instructional Design. The purpose of this letter is to make a formal request to conduct a doctoral-level dissertation research study on foreign language learning. The qualitative study aims to understand foreign language educators' lived experience of language-as-skill methodology that focuses on language use.

With your permission, I would like to ask a select group of foreign language teachers if they would consider voluntary participation in a research study. Teachers selected to participate in the study will only be asked to allow the researcher to conduct a one-on-one interview, class observations, and review course materials. The time commitment for each participant is likely to be less than 3 hours in its entirety. While there is no monetary compensation for participation in the research study, their participation is greatly appreciated and will continue to the body of research on professional development.

Upon your approval, I will contact the principals or administrators of each school sought to field potential research participants. I will provide your office with an update and a detailed schedule for conducting the research.

Thank you in advance for your consideration in permitting members of your school's teaching faculty the opportunity in this research study.

Sincerely,

Xiang Johnson

Doctoral Student

Appendix E: Consent Form

Title of the Project: Language-as-skill Approach in Foreign Language Education

Principal Investigator: Xiang Y. Johnson, MEd, Liberty University School of Education

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years or older and have previous language teaching experience. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to understand foreign language educators' lived experience of language-as-skill that focuses on language use. The central research question explores the foreign language educators' experiences and perspectives on the concept of language acquisition as a type of skill acquisition.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Provide documents of teaching materials, such as teaching plans, course descriptions, or assessment reports.
2. Conduct one section of classroom observation. The observation will be audio-recorded for accuracy.
3. Participate in a recorded one-on-one interview, which will take approximately 30-60 minutes.
4. Review the transcript of your interview, provide any necessary feedback or concerns concerning this information, and affirm your agreement with the accuracy of the content. It takes approximately 30-60 minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect a direct benefit from participating in this study. However, you may benefit from familiarizing yourself with the language-as-skill teaching method introduced in this study. You may increase your knowledge/skills on foreign language teaching and learning.

Benefits to society include gaining a deeper understanding of language-as-knowledge and language-as-skill that could help improve the development of foreign language education.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only

the researcher will have access to the records. Participant responses will be kept confidential using codes. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation. Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings. This confidential data may be used in future studies or presentations, but not in a way that would identify a subject. All electronic records will be deleted after three years.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision on whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any questions or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Xiang Y. Johnson. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, [REDACTED].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy of the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to record audio/video of me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

