Analyzing Foreign Language Instructional Materials through the Lens of the Multiliteracies Framework

Kate Paesani, Mandy Menke, & Russell Simonsen

Methodology

1. Research questions

- What are literacy and the multiliteracies framework?

- Why literacy?

- Where are the research gaps?

Background Information

What are literacy and the multiliteracies framework?

- LITERACY = "emphasizes students’ developing ability to critically interpret and transform written, audio, and audiovisual texts of various genres; the interconnectedness of language and culture; and the centrality of language in understanding diverse societies" (Menke & Paesani, 2017, p. 3)

- MULTILITERACIES FRAMEWORK = pedagogical approach for developing students’ FL literacy through activities centered around four knowledge processes (Kalantzis et al., 2016)

Why literacy?

- Solution to the language-content divide in collegiate FL programs

- Prepare learners to interact with intellectual content at all curricular levels

- Coherent framework for rethinking curriculum instruction, and assessment

- Challenge learners and teachers to rethink their beliefs and assumptions

- Enable more holistic, consistent, and effective FL teacher professionalization (Paesani, Allen, & Dupuy, 2016)

Where are the research gaps?

Limited understanding of...

- how teachers design and implement multiliteracies instructional materials

- what characterizes multiliteracies instructional materials in collegiate FL programs

- what professional development supports assist teachers in applying the framework

Study Design

Research questions

1. What knowledge processes characterize multiliteracies instructional materials?

2. Does the distribution of knowledge processes vary according to level?

3. Are some knowledge processes emphasized more than others?

Methodology

- Materials analysis (Littlejohn, 2011) of 134 tasks from 25 multiliteracies lessons

- Researcher-created knowledge processes coding tool

- Coding by lesson plan authors [2] and researchers [2]

- Audio recording of coding discussions

- Focus group follow-up

Results

Distribution of Knowledge Processes across tasks

- Brainstorming vocabulary

- Multiple choice comprehension

Instructor perceptions

Reflections on using the coding tool and analyzing multiliteracies materials:

- Deeper understanding of the multiliteracies framework, its benefits and limitations

- Reinforced importance of goals and objectives and their alignment with instructional materials

- Paradigm shift from what the teacher does to student cognition

- More objective assessment of communicative language teaching/textbooks and their limitations

- Potential to facilitate programmatic/curricular change

References


Future Directions

Study – Phase 2, Fall 2017 & Spring 2018

1. What are instructors’ understandings of multiliteracies pedagogy and its classroom implementation?

2. How do instructors implement multiliteracies lesson plans?

3. What tools, resources, and professional development experiences support instructors’ implementation and understandings of multiliteracies lesson plans?

Case study procedure:

- Observations of instructor implementation

- Follow-up interviews

- Professional development meetings