Examining Pedagogical Effects of Incorporating Authentic Doctor-Patient Interactions into Medical Chinese Language Curriculum (with Dr. Meng Yeh, Dr. Liang Fu, and Dr. Wei-Li Hsu).

Incorporation of real-world or authentic data into teaching materials is highly recommended for all SL courses. This project seeks to better understand an actual effectiveness of authentic language materials by focusing on a medical Chinese course offered at CLIC in Spring 2019. To answer this question, the course is designed of two major parts. The first part is offered within the first four weeks of the and the teaching materials are textbook-based and heavily focused on mastering medical vocabulary and grammatical structures. The second part is offered in the second half of the semester and consists of class handouts with authentic doctor-patient interactions collected at the local medical center. Students will focus on mastering interactional competence by doing analysis of the conversations. The data for examination will consist of video-recoding of role-plays collected within the first week, after the traditional unit, and after the interactional unit. In addition, a semi-structured interviews will be conducted after the traditional and interactional units to obtain the emic perspective of the students and triangulate with the ratings of the role-plays. The frameworks of institutional discourse analysis along with the frameworks of sociolinguistics will be employed to analyze the effectiveness of incorporation authentic doctor-patient interactions in the curriculum of the Medical Chinese Course. For example, viewing a role-play as the task-oriented institutional interaction and employing intertextuality theory, we aim to do discourse analysis of the role-plays and trace if and how teaching materials have been used by the students. The theory of positioning will be used in analyzing the interviews to see how students perceive the effectiveness of the traditional vs. interactional teaching approaches.

Discourse Analysis of oral histories and language attitudes among Kazakh and Russian Immigrants of the Houston Area (With Dr. Lindy Comstock).

This research project aims to explore the oral histories and language attitudes of heritage speakers who represent cultural groups immigrated from the Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan) and Russia in the city areas of Houston and, possibly, Los-Angeles. We will initially focus on Kazakh HS participants primarily and focus on other Central Asian HS participants later in the process. The study methodology is a comparative approach utilizing diverse methodologies to explore the experience of heritage language speakers of different profiles and the intersection between their social beliefs and linguistic expression of identity.

Part 1. Building on previous research with the immigrant populations in USA, we propose to take a comparative perspective to yield more nuances of assimilation processes among the HS who are relative minority and majority in the context of the USA and investigate how prior HS’s background may influence their assimilation processes. To do so, we will conduct sociolinguistic interviews to elicit emic perspectives of HS participants from two groups. The first set of interviews will include questions to elicit their life stories (Linde 1993) of transiting from one cultural background to another. By focusing on life stories of transition, we examine how coherence of major transition events are achieved through the principles of causality and
continuity (Linde 1993). This allows us to investigate how the prior linguistic and social experiences of HS speakers interplay with their assimilation process and if there is a difference between the Central Asian and Russian HS groups. Using the methodology of narrative discourse analysis (e.g., Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008; De Fina 2006, 2008, 2013; De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2011), we examine how the social world is constructed and how different languages are positioned and what role the heritage community plays in them.

In addition, we conduct a language attitude survey to explore how the prior language context and language ideologies may play a role in the integration into the new country, linguistically and socially. Specifically, the Central Asians are coming from a diverse linguistic environment, in which their native language may not be the “prestige” language, versus Russian HS, who are the ethnic and linguistic majority in their country with strong ideologies about their native language, the local “prestige” language, and language acquisition in general. In other words, we propose to examine how the degree of linguistic flexibility of these two HS groups may play a role in the process of assimilation.

Part 2. Using an experimental methodology, we investigate which social and generational factors may be most meaningful in prosodic acquisition and attrition. The research questions we will address are: 1) how does the acquisition of native-like prosody and phonetics change from the first, second, and subsequent generations of immigrants? 2) what different trajectories do these patterns of acquisition and attrition take? 3) are phenomena that are acquired more easily associated with social groups or pragmatic content, representing sociolinguistic membership or idiosyncratic learning, respectively? 4) what role may instrumental, integrative, or low motivation play in these processes, and do they differentially affect prosodic or phonetic acquisition?

Utilizing the Tones and Break Indices (ToBI) notational system, we aim to document the prosody of heritage speakers and their parents, ideally recruiting subjects from among 1, 1.5 and 2 generation immigrants.

The sociolinguistic interviews, conducted in English and the heritage or first language—depending on the interview subject’s place of birth and time of immigration—will be coded with the ToBI system, allowing for deviations from the standard prosody of each language to be noted. The context of these deviations will be recorded, including the structural position, type of deviation, and content expressed concurrent with each instance. A phonetic analysis of deviations for standard pronunciation will be undertaken in the same fashion. In addition to the sociolinguistic interviews, subjects will be asked to perform a few isolated tasks common to prosodic analyses to better isolate the component features of their prosodic system. The results of these two sources of data will be analyzed for emergent patterns among speakers of the same profile and generation, as well as in relation to their expressed identity, language ideologies, and motivational profile.

Narrative Discourse Analysis of Self-Presentation and Gendered Identity Construction among Kazakh-speaking village residents.

Integrating narrative discourse analysis with rigorous sociolinguistic theories, I’m undertaking two examinations of the naturally occurred personal stories collected among Kazakh-speaking Kazakhs collected in an isolated village (approximately 300 residents) in rural Kazakhstan. Numerous variation studies (e.g., Labov 1961, Schilling-Estes and Wolfram 1999, Schilling...
2017) reveal a value of working with isolated or “peripheral” communities to explore the links between language use and identities of “periphery”. Building on this research, I focus on several personal stories selected from the set of twenty mealtime narratives and conduct more qualitative research.

The first analysis focuses on the personal stories told by the two neighbors as they exchange daily news during the mealtime. In this exploration, I combine the narrative discourse analysis with Goffman’s work on self-presentation to reveal how Kazakh villagers create the “ideal and dramatic” self in and through the personal stories about the third party (i.e., their other neighbors). Through detailed discourse analysis of characters’ actions and attributes in the story world, I examine how an ideal and dramatic self of the narrator as a story protagonist is constructed and how this ideal self is effectively used to do self-presentation in the storytelling world or interactional context. By employing this integrative model, I contribute to better understanding of how the identity of a Kazakh villager or neighbor is constructed to meet the local/village norms of “goodness”/morality.

In my second analysis, I integrated the narrative analysis and gender studies to explore how identity of “proper” wife is constructed among Kazakh-speaking villagers. This study similarly focuses on the identities within a “peripheral” community in under-researched post-Soviet Kazakhstan taking up a process-oriented approach to identity in narrative discourse (e.g., Bamberg et al. 2007). Specifically, I integrate Bamberg’s (1997, Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008) model of three levels of positionings in narrative and Schiffrin’s (1996) work on agentive and epistemic selves in narrative to examine how the identity of a rural/“peripheral” Kazakh woman is achieved via a self-portrait of a wife in a personal story that is co-constructed with another Kazakh woman within the mealtime conversation.

I focus on one ten-minute story of a Kazakh woman about how she took care of a dying husband. Following the model of positionings in narrative, I analyze the characters’ actions and attributes in the narrative’s story world (level one) connecting the results to Schiffrin’s (1996) concept of agentive self (i.e., teller’s actions) and epistemic self (i.e., teller’s beliefs expressed via evaluative devices) in narrating. I then highlight how the story world serves the teller to create her interactional identity of a “proper” village Kazakh woman allowing the other Kazakh woman to validate this local identity via co-narrating in the storytelling world (level two).