



Modernizing Classical Language Education **Communicative Language Teaching & Educational Technology Integration in Classical Greek**

Apostolos Koutropoulos

University of Massachusetts Boston

a.koutropoulos@umb.edu

Abstract: Classical language education has changed little over the past three decades despite advances in academic technology and advances in our understanding of both second language acquisition and human development. This paper proposes a modification to classical language teaching and the classical language curriculum based on findings of second language acquisition research, as well as factoring in observational data of students taking an introductory course in Ancient Greek.

I. INTRODUCTION

A number of years ago, having been a student in many foreign language classrooms, I opted to audit a course on Classical Greek. What struck me was the massive difference in teaching styles between those teaching in Modern Languages¹ and those in the Classics Department. At the time, as a student auditing the class, I didn't really analyze the methodology much; I just went along with the teaching style of the professor and used my metalinguistic awareness which I had developed through the study of other languages, and my familiarity with

Modern Greek, to understand both the grammar and syntax portions of the class.

Recently, I was given an opportunity to observe the same course, the course that I took a number of years ago, and examine the classroom from a different lens—that of an applied linguist. Going into this pilot study I was interested in analyzing the teaching methodology, wondering if the teaching methodology for the class had changed from when I was a student. Having learned a great deal about the various linguistic factors that go into learning another language, I was interested in understanding whether professionals in the field of classical language teaching applied any of this research in second language acquisition in their own practice. If I found the approaches to be about the

¹ My previous in-class language learning experiences included English, French, Italian, German, Russian, Chinese and Japanese.

Apostolos Koutropoulos is a Training Coordinator for the Healey Library at the University of Massachusetts Boston where he instructs students on computer literacy, and consults faculty on pedagogically sound ways of integrating technology into the curriculum. He holds a B.A. in Computer Science, an M.B.A. with a focus on Human Resources, an M.S. in Information Technology, an M.Ed. in Instructional Design, and an M.A. in Applied Linguistics from the University of Massachusetts Boston. His research interests include: knowledge management, educational technology, linguistics, and epistemology.

same as when I was a student of Classical Greek, I would then be interested in applying my knowledge of applied linguistics to propose a reboot of the curriculum. A secondary goal was to discover who the students were and what motivated them to learn a classical language; last time around I didn't really pay much attention to my fellow students, as I was then focused on my own education.

1. Learner Analysis

During the fall semester of 2010 I observed a typical set of learners in Classical Greek at an urban university in the Boston area over a period of one semester². Through my semester-long observation, as well as a beginning-of-the-semester class survey³, I discovered that the learners in this classroom were amazingly diverse in terms of their educational background. My initial assumption was that courses in Classical Greek and Latin would attract mostly students whose major is Classical Languages and Literature, while still attracting a minority of students interested in the language—much like I was as an undergraduate student. I expected that students in most majors, other than Classics, would opt to take a modern language, like French or German, since those are presumably the languages that would be most useful to them in a work or research environment. I was, however, surprised to find that only a handful of students were actual Classics majors. Most students in the class came from both the arts and the

humanities (social work, philosophy, history) and the sciences (biology, psychology). History could be lumped into the "Classics" category if these students aim to study the history of the ancient world and need to be able to decipher original sources.⁴

In terms of other academic backgrounds, about half of the students in this course were juniors, about a quarter were sophomores and about a quarter were freshmen. My initial predictions, however, had been that most students in the course would be freshmen or sophomores majoring in the Classics. I thought that since this was a Greek 101 course, and the knowledge gained in this course would aid these students in future Classics courses when interacting with original, authentic materials, then they would more likely take this course earlier in their studies. This initial prediction was proven wrong.

Another prediction was based on linguistic factors. I predicted that many students would have had some exposure to a second language, and would have had some sort of exposure to Latin, given that my initial prediction was that these students would be predominantly Classics majors. I also thought that there would probably be a few Greek-Americans looking for an "easy A" by taking Classical Greek. My initial predictions, as far as linguistic factors go, were proven correct. Most students did have some exposure to a second language; there were quite a few students who had studied Latin, there were some Greek-Americans with some knowledge of Modern Greek, and a number of students had studied various European languages like French, Spanish, Italian, and German, as well as some languages, that one doesn't typically find in a high school curriculum in the US, such as Gaelic, Hindi,

² I observed every class session except sessions that were set aside for hour-long unit exams. This took place over a 13-week period in the fall 2010 semester. Each week had three sessions; each one being forty-five minutes in length.

³ The survey was designed to capture data on learners' previous encounters and familiarity with other languages, familiarity and usage of technology, existing knowledge of the subject matter (Ancient Greek), and learners' expected for learning outcomes.

⁴ It would be interesting to conduct further research as to the motives of studying a classical language by non-Classics majors.

and Arabic.

In terms of technology access and use, the results were quite interesting. There is a trend in academia to believe that students have both access to technology and facility with using this technology. This is based on Marc Prensky's work (2001) with what he terms *Digital Natives*. All students in this course had access to a computer and access to the Internet. All students also had access to either a smartphone, or a digital music player. When it came to rating their own competence in using computers and the Internet, all of the students rated their skills at least at the intermediate level of proficiency. The status of the learner (freshman, sophomore, or junior) seemed to have a lot to do with how they rated their competence in using *library resources* and *using Blackboard*. Students who had been on campus longer tended to rate their experience higher than students who had been on campus for a shorter time; this was to be expected. The Web 2.0⁵ behaviors of the students were also quite interesting. Most students knew of blogs and microblogs but didn't use them. They knew of Facebook and used it frequently; however, they did not know of, and therefore did not use, dedicated social networks like *del.icio.us*, *Ning* and *Goodreads*. They also did consult wiki pages, but they never contributed knowledge to a wiki. These findings were close to my initial hunch about the learners; I believed that they would have *access to technology*, but unlike Prensky (2001) I believed that this didn't necessarily imply that students were comfortable using it.

The student expectation responses, in

⁵ Web 2.0 is a term that describes applications on the World Wide Web that facilitate participatory information sharing and collaboration amongst the users of those web applications. The user-centered design of Web 2.0 web applications encourages dialogue and user-created content. It is commonly believed that members of the "Digital Native" generation (born after 1980) are avid and expert users of Web 2.0 technologies.

the free-form answer part of the survey, were actually quite interesting to analyze. In the responses there are a few responses of the "the course will be successful if I get an A" sort, but in responses where students went beyond a letter grade you can see a difference between students who had been apprenticed into the discourse of Classics, and those who had not. The former had most likely taken Latin and their rubric for a successful class is to be able to read the Greek and to translate it into English.

Individuals who have not been apprenticed into the discourse of Classics expect to be able to speak Classical Greek with friends and family, gain an understanding of English based on Greek roots and lemmas or learn about their background. It is interesting that students who have been apprenticed into the discourse expect to be able to memorize a lot, and use that for reading, while those who have *not* been apprenticed into the discourse of Classics expect cultural background information, and to gain competence in speech as well as reading—something you tend to see in the discourse of foreign language teaching, not in classical language teaching. What is interesting to note is that about half of the students dropped the course during the university's add-drop period⁶, and most of the students who remained were Classics majors.

2. Current Teaching Methodology

Having observed a seasoned, and talented, faculty member teach Classical Greek⁷ for one semester, I can say with a high degree of confidence that the approach used to teach the course is the

⁶ According to the instructor it is normal to start a class with a full set of students, and for about half to drop it throughout the semester. It would be interesting, in a future study, to see how this compares to other Classical and Modern languages and to determine what makes students stay or drop the course.

⁷ 5th century B.C.E. Attic Greek to be exact.

Grammar Translation approach; this was the same approach used when I took Classical Greek a number of years ago. The Grammar Translation approach also appears to be favored by many Classicists teaching Greek and Latin (Lafleur, 1998). The Grammar Translation method, also known as the Prussian Method in the US (Richards & Rodgers, 2001), is interesting in that it is a method with no theory; there is no literature that offers a rationale or justification for using it, or that attempts to relate it to issues in linguistics, educational theory or psychology (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Focusing on forms seems to me to be more of a psychological need to *build up* to the level where students are considered able to read on their own; this *building up* entails a focus on, and mastery of, the grammar before students are considered ready to tackle authentic texts.

The primary goal of the Grammar Translation approach is for students to study a language in order to read its literature, or benefit from the mental discipline and intellectual development resulting from the study of another language. The target language is first approached through a detailed analysis of the language's grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge to the task of translating sentences and texts into and out of the target language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). I can think of numerous examples of this in both my original experience as a learner of Classical Greek and as an observer of a class of students learning Classical Greek during the fall 2010 semester. The average learning module begins with a thorough explanation of the grammatical topic at hand, followed by practice drills, and ultimately culminating in translating sentences from Greek to English and English to Greek⁸. A considerable amount

of class time was spent going over the drills that students had done for homework.

The Grammar Translation method views language teaching as consisting of little more than memorizing rules and facts in order to understand and manipulate the morphology and syntax of the target language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). This was also something that was seen in my observations of the Classical Greek course in the fall 2010 semester. Even though the instruction observed wasn't purely Grammar Translation, the instructor did mention that students could be helped if they memorized groupings of things—like, for example, a verb's principal parts. I interpreted this as that memorization was highlighted as a major learning strategy on the part of the learner. There were, throughout the course, a number of interesting discussions tying in history, sociology, and sociolinguistic factors in language use, as far as Classical Greek was concerned; however these were few and far in between when compared to the frequency of drills and form pattern practice and they often happened in conversations between students and the instructor before and after class and they were not part of the formal curriculum.

The Grammar Translation method can cause frustration in students (Richards & Rodgers, 2001), and I did notice some grammar frustration in the course, although frustration seemed to be mitigated by how metalinguistically developed the students were. It seemed that students who had some language education in their background were better able to deal with this language teaching approach, and perhaps these students used previously acquired schemata (Carell & Eisterhold, 1988) to process new forms of a different target language. Even those students, however, had issues with the way the instructional approach dealt with content—that is having a syllabus that is organized by grammar points and focusing

⁸ Translation exercises in my recent course tended to have more items from Greek to English, than the English to Greek.

on sentence level translation (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

As the semester progressed, even students with a somewhat developed metalinguistic awareness expressed problems with “remembering” all the forms because they tended to not use all of them. They worked on a specific form until their practice culminated to a test of their knowledge, and then they moved to another grammatical topic that made little explicit connection to items learned in previous lessons. Even though language is cumulative in nature and you cannot move on to the next steps without using *some* of the rules that you have learned before, the student comments seemed to imply that *they felt they were not doing more with the language that necessitated going back to previously learned materials and thus having more opportunities to practice.*

Finally, the role of the instructor in a Grammar Translation approach to language learning is what Lee & VanPatten (2003) call an “Atlas.” The instructor is the main speaker and presenter of information in the class. The model is fundamentally one where the teacher is essentially a broadcaster of information and the students are receivers of this information. The instructor in my course did engage students and tried to get more of the students involved as the semester was underway, mostly by trying to access their prior knowledge and having them try to connect their previous knowledge of Greek (acquired earlier on in the semester) to what they were learning later on. It seems to me that the students, at that point in the semester, were used to the “broadcast” method, a pace which was set earlier in the semester, and it was not as easy to urge them to contribute later on in the semester since the tone was already set. I also believe that part of the students’ reluctance to speak may have been affective in that they may have felt comfortable with understanding the individual parts of the

sentence, but not necessarily comfortable with deciphering the meaning of the whole sentence.

II. REBOOT: COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING IN CLASSICS

The current approach to teaching Classical Greek has certain shortcomings: 1) It is not based on any linguistic, educational or psychological theory of learning; 2) it is focused on reading and writing with little or no systematic attention paid to speaking or listening; and 3) it can cause frustration for learners, especially those that are not as metalinguistically aware as more “advanced” language learners. It seems clear, therefore, that a new approach is necessary if we are to truly educate our learners in the Classics. This revamped approach not only has the potential to help Classics majors, but it can potentially make Classics more approachable to non-majors, thus piquing the interest of more students and bringing more people into the field.

The methodology proposed here is based on the principles of Communicative Language Teaching.

1. Teaching Methodology

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is borne out of the need to focus on communicative proficiency in language teaching rather than a mere mastery of structures (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The CLT approach aims to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and to develop procedures for teaching the four language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication. Communicative competence (Hymes, 1972 in Richards & Rodgers, 2001) is defined as what the speaker needs to know in order to be able communicate in a speech community; this requires both

knowledge and the ability to use language with respect to what is possible, feasible, and appropriate in a language, and knowledge as to whether something (a particular expression or grammatical construction for instance) is indeed done.

Canale & Swain (1980, in Richards & Rodgers, 2001) further expand this definition to include four subcomponents: (1) Grammatical competence, which is essentially Hymes' "what is possible"; (2) Sociolinguistic competence, i.e., the understanding of roles relationships and the shared information of the participants and the communicative purpose of the interaction; (3) Discourse competence, that is, the interpretation of individual message elements in terms of their interconnectedness and how meaning is represented in relationship to the discourse of the text; and (4) Strategic competence, which is about coping strategies that communicators use to initiate, terminate, maintain, repair and redirect communication. All of these are important in modern languages, but they are important in classical languages as well. Focusing on solely grammatical form means that, at best, you are ignoring three out of four competencies that learners are required to have to be competent users of a language.

When one mentions "communication" as the focus of anything, the immediate mental image generated by the person listening to you is that of speech. Perhaps this is the case because *all* languages are spoken, but not all languages are written; as a matter of fact *most* of the world's languages exist in only spoken form (Lewis, 2009). Communication, however, is *not just* in speech. Communication exists in the written texts of ancient authors that we want to study; these authors are communicating with us through their writings. Granted, this communication is *one way* but we do have methods of interacting with the text to get to the underlying meaning—viewing what ancient writers wrote

through the prism of that ancient culture and not through our own *modern* biases. I would submit that the acts of reading and attempting to understand *are willful acts of communication on the part of both the reader and the writer*.

John Firth, a British applied linguist, stressed that language needs to be studied in the broader sociocultural context of its use, which included participants, their behavior, beliefs, the objects of linguistic discussion and word choice (Wardhaugh, 2009); thus communication *does* exist *outside of language*. Art for example is a medium for communication. Everyday objects are also acts of communication. For this reason, an approach to teaching Classical languages should include culturally authentic realia in the process of teaching language. Little *et al.* (1989, in Mishan, 2005), describe culturally authentic realia as objects that are created to fulfill some social purpose within a social context of the language community in which they are found. Written language, and written texts, also don't exist in a vacuum. They are influenced *both* by spoken language and by the time and society in which the language developed. For this reason it is important to treat classical languages as spoken languages as well, so that we may better understand the context in which they were spoken. Epic poems like *The Odyssey* were originally spoken. Plays were written to be performed; as such they would be a good source to get us to think more about *how* the ancients spoke, what they spoke about and in what contexts. Works meant for public performance can tell us a lot about the social climate at the time and a city's *Weltanschauung*. One of the most characteristic features of CLT is that it pays systematic attention to function, as well as structural aspects of language (Littlewood, 1981, in Richards & Rodgers, 2001), by exploring the spoken language, in addition to the written language; we are better able to understand *how* the language was used,

which in turn helps us better understand what we are reading in those classical works.

Luckily for us, the ancient Greeks have left behind statues, coins, vases, architecture and more things that we can use to integrate culture into the language learning curriculum. It is important to explore culture as an integrated part of language learning because, as Bernstein (in Wardhaugh, 2009) puts it, there is a cyclical relationship between language and culture: language influences culture, and in turn culture influences language. You cannot hope to fully understand an ancient text without knowing the cultural context in which events took place.

With communication, and not morphological forms, as the focus, learners can excel in the task of learning a Classical language. As Savignon (1972, in Lee & VanPatten, 2003) writes, in her study she found that people learn to communicate by practicing communication. In her study, groups, with different learning styles, learning French, were more successful in learning the language using the CLT approach than the audiolingual method⁹. If you are learning to use a tool (in this case language) with an end-goal in mind, and you are making progress toward that end goal while learning to use the tool, you are much more successful in your task of learning the tool since you can see an immediately demonstrable purpose. The notion of direct, rather than delayed, practice of communicative acts is central to most CLT interpretations (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

This de-emphasis on forms, however, brings questions like “don’t you need to first gain mastery of grammatical skills before you can apply them?” Generally these “grammatical skills” are an allusion to morphological elements like tense conju-

gations and noun inflections. Savignon (1983, in Richards & Rodgers, 2001) rejects the notion that learners must first gain control over individual skills such as pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary before applying them in communicative tasks; she instead advocates providing communicative practice from the start of instruction.

The CLT environment is learner-centered. This is a departure from the teacher-centered Grammar Translation classroom. The instructor is no longer, what Lee & VanPatten (2003) term, an “Atlas.” The instructor’s role changes from a broadcaster of information, commonly referred to in academia as “the sage on the stage,” to that of a facilitator of the communications process, and an independent participant in the learning-teaching group. The CLT approach also stresses a cooperative approach to learning. This *may* cause some confusion or resentment on the part of the learner because learners *do* bring their preconceptions with what language learning looks like into the classroom and they may be expecting a sage on the stage to just download all the information about language that they need into their minds (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In addition, in order to teach language, we don’t simply need grammarians, we need capable subject matter experts of the ancient world. The instructors teaching Classical languages *are* experts in the Classical World, so the question is why do we still relegate them to just being grammarians? Through CLT the totality of their skills can be used for the benefit of the learner.

2. Technology Integration

Using technology to improve and enhance language teaching and learning is not a new idea in the Classics field (LaFleur, 1998; McManus, 2001; McManus & Rubino 2003; Reinhard, 2009). The question then becomes how does one best utilize both

⁹ The Audiolingual Method, aka “Army Method,” comes after Grammar Translation and is based on a behaviorist methodology utilizing a lot of drills to form correct habits.

general information technology and educational technology available to enhance our learning outcomes? In years past there was a special problem with using educational IT for teaching Greek given that it uses a non-Latin alphabet. This caused special problems for the creation of materials as well as student work. With the advent of Unicode character sets, all computers created within the past eight years now have the capacity to display and produce Greek characters and accents without any special software. This wide availability makes the job of the instructor easier to implement exercises using educational technology to enhance their curriculum.

With this wide availability comes a question on just how to use the technology to improve the curriculum. Through the use of the Grammar Translation methodology, the pitfall is that we use it for “hyperrote,” that is, just doing the same old thing that students are doing in paper and pencil form now—memorizing forms and filling out grammar tables (Hill, 2003). This use of technology for effective teaching and learning is largely a failure, as it is reproducing a form that already exists, and doesn’t work very well! With the advent of “social” media, technologies such as blogs, wikis, podcasts, and free video hosting, such as YouTube, we now have many tools on our palette to create an educational solution that coincide with the theoretical underpinnings of our methodology, CLT—ones that coincide with the technical level of competence of our learners.

Perseus

When Classicists, and Humanists in general, think of a major computerized resource for resources dealing with the classical Greek and Roman world they think of the Perseus Project. The Perseus Project isn’t a new kid on the block. The project started in 1985 and it covers the history, literature and culture of the Greco-

Roman world (Crane, 2010). In its collection one can find works by ancient Greek and Roman authors, as well as some visual material of art and architecture. In addition, there are great tools for textual analysis and vocabulary help. Depending on the level of the learner and on the activity, this tool can be used sparingly or extensively.

The idea for using Perseus as a pedagogical tool is also not a new one (Crane & Mylonas, 1988; Marchionni & Crane, 1994). The design of Perseus is compatible with our view of language learning, namely that we are looking at primary sources, and culturally authentic realia; as opposed to having a filtered view of these items through some textbook or “expert.” The designers of Perseus “view knowledge as a process and flow of relationships rather than as compartmentalized and discreet concepts” (Marchionni & Crane, 1994). This connectivist view of knowledge and learning coincides with our methodology for language learning where the teacher is no longer the atlas, but a participant in co-constructing knowledge.

Using Perseus, early learners can, for example, use the word lookup tool to figure out what unknown words mean while more advanced learners could go to the original texts and do searches to spot trends in language use within an author’s works, or examine language use among multiple authors (Marchionni & Crane, 1994). Knowing what a student’s current level of technological knowledge is in a 101 course can help instructors tailor the use of Perseus for their class, and as students progress to more advanced language classes the instructor can incorporate technology literacy into their curriculum so that students become more sophisticated users of the technology.

Learning Communities

The central organizing principle for our educational technology use revolves

around the use of technology that facilitates a revamped Classics classroom, a classroom conceived as a community of practice. Communities of practice “are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavor” (Wegner, 1998). Communities of practice are about joint practice, shared repertoire and mutual engagement (Wegner, 2006). Communities of practice are thus compatible with our Vygotskian view of knowledge and human learning using the CLT approach—our classroom thus is a community of practice.

Since our class only meets three times per week, it is worthwhile extending our implicit in-class community of practice to one that is assisted through technology mediation and thus enables learners and facilitators to meet, interact and socially construct knowledge when the class is not officially in session (Koutropoulos, 2010). These days there are many tools to enable us to create such online communities; and the tool of preference for educators appears to be a service called *Ning* (Reinhard, 2009; Koutropoulos, 2010; Sorenos, 2010).

A Ning community can bring together novice learners, learners just starting their learning of Classical Greek, and more experienced learners, such as learners in upper level undergraduate courses and graduate level courses, for mutual learning, and resource sharing, as well as social engagements. Through the use of a Ning community as central jumping off point we can also use other Web 2.0 technologies such as wikis, blogs and audiovisual means like podcasts and videos on YouTube.

Wikis

A wiki can be characterized as a website that can be accessed and edited by many people, giving them the ability to collaborate and co-construct knowledge. Wikis in language learning hold “a potential for collectively producing, organizing

and sustaining textual (and, increasingly, visual and auditory) resources” (Lund, 2008). Depending on the language level of the learner wikis could be used as a tool to supplement others tools. For example, the use and analysis of language corpora (Kaltenböck & Mehlmauer-Larcher, 2005; Braun, 2005; Braun, 2007) have been shown to help with language acquisition. Wikis could be used to collectively organize knowledge gained through the use of such corpora, along with drawing upon relevant examples from these sources.

Since we don’t want to cut out grammar instruction completely from our curriculum because it is an important part of language competence (Larsen-Freeman, 1997; Richards & Rogers, 2001), we could use an exercise where students develop their own grammatical definitions (Lloyd, 2005) and use a wiki to take a solitary activity and transform it into one where students collaborate with each other, with guidance from the instructor, in order to come up with definitions of grammar that are factual and make sense to them. Since grammar is essentially hypertext (Beaudoin, 2004)—a web of rules which are connected and dependent on one another—instead of having grammar rules handed down from instructor, or textbook, like laws coming down from mount Sinai, these rules can be co-constructed with the help of the instructor. This gives students a sense of ownership in the process and the outcome, instead of being outside of the process and just memorizing rules provided by someone else—wikis can be an instrument which enables this collaboration outside the classroom.

Blogs & Microblogs

With an acknowledgement of the importance of culturally authentic materials (Kramsch, 1993, 2000), blogs and microblogs have been invaluable resources in the modern language classroom. We can

see many uses of these services in recent research (Murray & Hourigan, 2008; Borau *et al.*, 2009; Scinicariello, 2010; Byrne, 2010;) such as getting news from the target language country, seeing what speakers of the language are saying, and getting authentic language use in context. With classical languages we cannot exactly follow the same approach considering the fact that there are no ancient Greeks on the Internet blogging and tweeting about their daily lives; thus blogs and microblogs (like twitter) aren't a sources for authentic input and we must use them in a slightly different fashion than they are in modern languages.

At all levels of language learning blogs can also be used as a means to provide both the learner and the instructor with a barometer to gauge how the language learning process is going. Learners could use a blog, as was originally intended, as a journal to track their progress, their successes and their frustrations. This can help the instructor with modifying the class as needed and with providing additional or alternate resources to help the student with their language learning goals. Depending on the class, microblogs can be used as a way to get students into the role of a protagonist in a work that they are reading. For example if there is a course devoted to the *Iliad*, students can take the role of Helen, Odysseus, Paris (and others) and tweet, in Greek, as if they were them—thus providing some sort of insight into how students are interpreting that character through Homer's writings.

Audio & Video

One of the innovations of the broader (online) Classical Greek learning community (Sorenos, 2010) is their use of audiovisual means for learning the language and interacting in it! In modern languages we see many examples of research (Oxford, 2009; Dukate & Lomicka, 2009; Abdous *et*

al., 2009) where researchers are looking at the effects of computer mediated communication and interaction on learning and using the language. In classical languages, mostly due to the reliance on the Grammar Translation method, we do not see the use of video as a way to enhance learning in the classroom.

One example, used in the [Schole] community (Sorenos, 2010), is the use of video-grams sent from member to member as a means of communicating. While this is a novel use of the technology and mimics techniques used in modern languages classrooms, the environment is ripe for coming up with new uses of video to teach Classics.

III. POTENTIAL HURDLES

No change is without some potential hurdles to overcome. One of the main hurdles that I foresee is that this change in how classical languages are taught needs to be implemented throughout the curriculum in order for it to be effective. It would be really unfortunate if students in Greek 101 were taught using this methodology, only to be going back to a Grammar Translation model with Greek 102. When implementing such a change not only do all faculty need to be on-board, but the curriculum needs to be redesigned in order to accommodate the new methodology. For instance, one may be able to cram all of the Classical Greek grammar in four semesters using the Grammar Translation approach, but when a more communicative method is employed, more time will be taken up for meaningful communication drills than morpheme manipulation drills; this means that perhaps fifth and sixth semester Greek courses need to be implemented in addition to reworking the four existing courses.

The second *sticky point* might be the actual pronunciation of Greek. This is a topic that is beyond the scope of this paper,

but as we can see through a cursory look at research and commentary on the issue (Snow, 1890; Allen, 1987; Caragounis, 1995; Dillon, 2001; Daitz, 2002), scholars disagree on what classical Greek sounded like and what we should be teaching in school. The [Schole] community (Sorenos, 2010) tackles this by asking members what pronunciation the member uses when she or he speaks. If learners know of some of the possibilities, they may be able to communicate with others even when they are using different pronunciations. The analogy to this can be seen in modern day English where there are many potential pronunciations for the same language. Schools around the world teaching ESL teach all different kinds of pronunciation but this¹⁰ doesn't necessarily impede learners. Learners who are aware of the differences in pronunciation can cope with the same written words sounding different depending on the speaker's preferred pronunciation. Ancient Greek shouldn't be any different. My recommendation, to keep things simple, is that the department ought to adopt a pronunciation and have faculty use it throughout the curriculum. Whether one uses the *Restored* pronunciation, the *Modern*, the *Pontic*, or the pronunciation of the recently discovered *Romeyka*, dialect of Greek (Kathimerini, 2010), the important thing is to pick one and use it throughout the curriculum because it will be used as a vehicle for communication.

A third sticky point is the question of whether or not we really need to *speak* the language in order to learn it. In Modern Languages it seems like a silly proposition to *not* speak the language, so why is it so with Classical Languages? All discussions

¹⁰ An example to this is my own personal experience in (re)learning English. When I was learning English in Greece, the pronunciation used by instructors and fellow students was Received Pronunciation. When I was in high school in the US, the pronunciation in my ESL classes was what may be thought of as "generic" or "news anchor" American.

about "*what is communication*" aside, a compelling reason for choosing to speak the language comes from Swain's Comprehensible Output Hypothesis (Swain 1985 & 1995, in Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Swain argues that when we *read* texts (which is what Classical Language Learning has been geared toward) we only partly process those foreign language texts. In order to drive forward the learner's linguistic development, that learner needs to *produce* language. In her Comprehensible Output Hypothesis she states that when learners produce language they *notice* when they don't know something they are trying to express; and they hypothesize *and test* language structures. If the message that the learner tries to convey is received, but not understood, this, in theory, pushes the learner to prod at their own learning and help them along their linguistic development. If the message conveyed is grammatically wrong, and therefore not comprehensible, the learner will have to reformulate to correct the grammar of their utterance in order to make it comprehensible to the hearer. If the utterance is correct, but it is not understood because of some other factor, the speaker-learner will have to rephrase his or her utterance so that the act of communication can continue. Having students perform these communicative exchanges in real-time, through speaking, gives students an opportunity to think in the language they are learning in smaller chunks of information, as opposed to merely passively translating sentences and passages from Ancient Greek to an English that students don't necessarily connect with in their own lives.

The last hurdle to tackle are the assumptions from students themselves. If students have taken Latin, or Greek before, they've surely been exposed to the Grammar Translation method. They may also thrive in it because they've learned to learn with that method. For instance, we see that in some studies (Braun, 2007) students

were expecting grammar rules to be explicitly taught. Even though post-instruction tests showed that the group that received non-explicit grammar training performed as well as the group that had explicit grammar training, in a post-experiment questionnaire the students claimed that no grammar had been learned because no grammar rules had been explicitly taught—i.e., the student assumption was that language learning implies explicit knowledge of rules. Knowing that this may be a possibility, it is important for the instructors undertaking this to let the learners know of the learning process in these courses.

IV. CONCLUSION

The current approach to teaching classical languages is the Grammar Translation approach, an approach which is hit-or-miss because it is not founded on any particular theoretical underpinnings and it views language in a technocratic, grammar centric, approach. Switching to the Communicative Language Teaching approach for the teaching of classical languages affords us the ability to use language in its totality, not just for reading classical works, but also interacting with those works and using all four dimensions of language (reading, writing, speaking and listening) to improve the acquisition of the language. In addition, there is a focus shift, from a teacher-centric focus in the Grammar Translation method, to a learner-centric focus with CLT.

It is important to caution language teachers to not fall, as some have (Kárpáti, 2009; Oxford, 2009), for the myth of the “digital native.” Just because a certain generation has grown up around technology and information, this does not mean that these students know how to use this technology or take advantage of it for educational purposes, as our survey of

students this semester has shown. Various Web 2.0 technology are great tools to use in our language teaching endeavor, but we should make sure that our learners can use these tools before they have to use them for classroom purposes. Technology can be used to enhance the teaching and learning of classical languages, now more than ever. With the wide use of Unicode fonts allowing for Greek to be typed and viewed on the World Wide Web, learners no longer have to be focused solely on text-based materials and written interactions with peers. Web 2.0 technologies, on the other hand, have moved the Internet from a broadcast model, a corollary to Lee & VanPatten’s (2003) “atlas” language teacher, to a model that allows of interaction among peers. This facilitates the communication and the social construction of knowledge in the language classroom.

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