

**ORAL COMMUNICATION IN THE TARGET LANGUAGE:
A SURVEY OF CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF THEIR OWN SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES**

by

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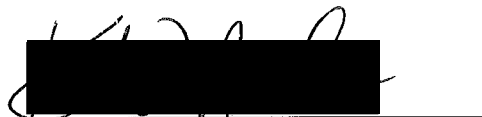
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CERTIFICATION OF THESIS/PROJECT CAPSTONE WORK

We, the undersigned, certify that this project entitled ORAL COMMUNICATION IN THE TARGET LANGUAGE: A SURVEY OF CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR OWN SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES by KAYLA R. SAFF, Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science in Education, Teaching English to Student of Other Language (TESOL), is acceptable in form and content and demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by this project.



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ORAL COMMUNICATION

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the barriers middle and high school language teachers in Chautauqua County face in promoting speaking in the target language. The second goal of this study was to determine which teaching practices these language teachers are using to promote oral communication in the target language in their classrooms and which strategies they have found to be effective. This study used an electronic survey which consisted of a demographics section and ten survey items. The participants included 25 middle and high school language teachers in Chautauqua County schools. Findings determined that the teachers' perspectives were conclusive with prior literature. All participants in this study felt that speaking in the target language is important. Results of this research also revealed that while the majority of teachers found the strategies listed in research to be effective, there were several effective strategies not listed in the research. In addition, results revealed the large role that teachers play in the language classroom. In the conclusion, the study showed that while there are many effective strategies for promoting oral communication, successful practices vary by teacher. At the end of the study, the researcher added some suggestions for further research studies.

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

 Problem 1

 Purpose 2

 Significance 3

Literature Review 5

 Krashen’s Monitor Hypothesis 5

 The Silent Period 6

 Willingness to Communicate 7

 History of WTC 8

 Factors that influence WTC 9

 Motivation 12

 Language Anxiety 12

 Teacher Influence 14

 Classroom Environment 16

 Methods to Increase Oral Communication 18

 Authentic encounters 18

 Naturalistic immersion 20

 The communicative language approach 20

 Cooperative learning 21

 Oral communication strategies for students 22

 Student-centered learning 24

 Modeling 24

ORAL COMMUNICATION

Methodology	26
Research Questions	26
Purpose	26
Step One: Find a Research Topic	26
Step Two: Conduct Literature Review	27
Step Three: Select Framework	28
Step Four: Create a Draft Survey	30
Step Five: Piloting the Draft Survey	31
Step Six: Creating the Online Survey	32
Step Seven: Piloting the Online Survey	33
Step Eight: Identifying Participants and Setting	34
Step Nine: Human Subjects Review Approval	34
Step Ten: Validity Considerations	35
Step Eleven: Administering the Surveys	35
Step Twelve: Organize Data	36
Step Thirteen: Data Analysis	36
Results	37
Demographics of Survey Participants	37
Data Analysis of Survey	37
Theme one: Students' hesitancy to speak in the target language	38
Theme two: Promoting oral communication in the target language	43
Theme three: Effective practices	48
Discussion	53

ORAL COMMUNICATION

All Participants Felt That Speaking in the Target Language is Important	53
All Participants Felt There Are Barriers to Students' Speaking in the Target Language.	53
Successful Practices that Help to Promote Oral Communication Vary by Teacher	54
Teachers Play a Large Role in the Language Classroom	55
Limitations	57
Suggestions for Further Research	57
Conclusion/ Implications	58
References	60
Appendix A: Email and Consent Form for Participants	65
Appendix B: Survey/ Questionnaire	67
Appendix C: CITI Form	70
Appendix D: HSR Approval	72

List of Tables

Table

Table 1: Acronyms found in the Literature Review 5

Table 2: Framework for survey questions 28

Table 3: Item 6: Teachers' Toughest Barriers in Getting Students to Speak in the Target Language 40

Table 4: Item 7: What do you do to create a positive learning environment in your classroom?.46

Table 5: Item 10: Strategies not listed in item 9 that you (the teacher) use to get your students to speak in the target language. Which of these strategies do you consider to be the most effective? Why? 50

List of Figures

Figure

Figure 1. Item 2: How often do you involve your students in the decision-making process when it comes to the content, activities and class goals? 38

Figure 2. Item 3: How would you rate your students' oral (speaking) participation in the target language in class? 39

Figure 3. Item 8: Please rate the impact each of the following appear to have on students' oral production in your classroom 42

Figure 4. Item 1: What would you consider your teaching style? 43

Figure 5. Item 4: How important do you consider oral communication in the target language? .44

Figure 6. Item 5: What priority do you give to oral communication in the target language in your classroom? 45

Figure 7. Item 9: Please rate the impact the following speaking strategies have on oral communication (in the target language) in your classroom 49

Introduction

Language teachers are continuously looking for new ways to get students to communicate orally in the target language. Rossiter, Derwing, Manimtim and Thomson (2010) boldly state that “oral proficiency is one of the most salient markers of proficiency in a second language” (p. 584).

According to the research, oral communication is a desired element in the second language (L2) or target language (TL) classroom (de Saint Léger & Storch, 2009; Garbati & Mady, 2015; Rossiter et al., 2010). However, willingness to communicate (WTC) can negatively affect oral communication if the student has a negative attitude about L2 or has internal barriers such as anxiety, fear, or self-consciousness. Inversely, WTC can have positive effects on oral use of L2 if the student is able to make connections between the language and his or her personal background or if the student is unafraid to use underdeveloped L2 skills.

The research also indicates that while teachers are a vital resource in the L2 classroom, they can also be ineffective if unknowledgeable of new methods and resources for promoting oral communication (Benaissi & Guerroudj, 2015; Herazo Rivera, 2009; Rossiter et al., 2010). However, teachers cannot control a student’s WTC, but they can create an encouraging environment and provide meaningful opportunities for authentic communication in the classroom.

Problem

Humans are in constant communication throughout their lives. Kucukbezirci (2013) states that the most widely used form of communication is oral communication. With such an evident need for the use of the oral language, educators must find a way to get their students speaking in the target language. Unfortunately, there are many factors that can cause students to

be unwilling to orally communicate in the target language, such as anxiety, fear, learners' self-perceptions, motivation, teacher influence, classroom environment and their views of the target language (Benaissi & Guerroudj, 2015; de Saint Léger & Storch, 2009; Donald, 2010; Garbati & Mady, 2015; Gregersen, 2007; Herazo Rivera, 2009; Hernández, 2010; Jeong et al., 2015; Kayaoglu & Saglamel, 2013; Kang, 2005; King, 2009; MacIntyre, 2007; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011; Mejía, 2014; Soozandehfar, 2010; Toni & Rostami, 2012; Xie, 2009).

As a language learner myself, I struggled throughout high school and college with speaking in my second language (L2) of Spanish. My lack of willingness to communicate emerged from my anxiety and fear of making mistakes and how others would perceive me, not only as a language learner, but as a person. Now, as a language teacher, I see many of my students dealing with this same struggle on a daily basis. I constantly find myself looking for new ways to help my students communicate orally in the target language.

There is currently an abundance of research that explains the causes for students' lack of willingness to communicate in the target language. However, it is difficult to find resources on what these language teachers actually do in their own classrooms to increase oral production in the TL amongst their students. Furthermore, there is only a limited quantity of research on what these teachers actually see working in their own L2 or TL classrooms.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to collect data on teachers' perceptions of students' oral communication in their L2 or TL classrooms and which teaching practices they believe to be effective in promoting students to speak in the TL. By collecting this data, it will help determine which teaching practices current language teachers find to be the most effective in their classrooms. While many research studies have been conducted on why students are hesitant to

communicate orally in the target language, very few have studied which teaching practices are effective in combating this issue.

Based on the statements listed above, my research questions were:

- (a) What do current middle and high school language teachers in Chautauqua County think is the reason for their learners' hesitancy to speak in the target language in their L2 or TL classrooms?
- (b) Which teaching practices are these current language teachers using to promote oral communication amongst their students in the L2 or TL in their classrooms?
- (c) Which teaching practices have these current language teachers found to be effective in promoting their students' oral communication in the target language?

Significance

Teaching practices are ever changing. What may have been a successful method in the past may no longer be successful in today's classroom. Research can give us great insight into what was effective in promoting oral communication amongst students in the past. However, in order to remain effective, teachers must stay current in their teaching practices and continuously evolve based on what is working now.

Research shows that variables such as anxiety, student reticence, teacher influence, classroom environment and motivation are all inter-connected (Benaissi & Guerroudj, 2015; Cao, 2012; Donald, 2010; Gregersen, 2007; Kang, 2005; King, 2012; Mejía, 2014; Nicolson & Adams, 2010; Toni & Rostami, 2012; Xie, 2009). Each variable has the ability to affect learners' willingness to communicate in the target language (Kang, 2005). Each of these factors can affect whether a teaching practice is successful or not.

With language classes existing throughout the world, one can assume that many teachers share the same problem of student reticence, or restriction when it comes to speaking in the target language. Results from this study will show which teaching practices and strategies current language teachers have found to be successful in promoting oral communication in the target language. These results will (hopefully) benefit language learners by providing them with the most current successful practices in aiding in their oral language communication. The results will also (hopefully) benefit language teachers who struggle to find the best practices for promoting their students' oral communication in the TL in their classrooms.

Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to look at research on promoting oral communication in the L2 or TL classroom and examine factors contribute to students' poor oral language production. I investigated a number of factors that contribute to the oral use of L2 including motivation; anxiety; student levels of proficiency; learning strategies; roles of participating students; willingness to communicate; teacher influence; and classroom environment.

Table 1

Acronyms found in the Literature Review

Acronym	Meaning	Definition
WTC	Willingness to Communicate	The probability of a person to speak when given the opportunity to do so.
TL	target language	The language other than a person's native language that they are learning.
L2	second language	A language that is not the home language or mother tongue.
L1	first/ home language	The first language or mother tongue.
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching	Choosing activities that foster meaningful and authentic language use.

Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis

One well-known theory of Second Language Acquisition is Stephen Krashen's Monitor Model. An important component of this model is known as the Monitor Hypothesis. The Monitor is part of the conscious learning process of a language. The learner's oral production of the target language is initiated by his or her prior knowledge about the rules of the language. This learned

knowledge serves as the Monitor for the output of the language. In other words, the learned system inspects and edits what is being spoken (Krashen, 1982).

Three elements are required for the appropriate use of the Monitor. The speaker must have time to use the Monitor, know the rules of the language in order to correctly apply them and the learner must be focused on the accuracy of the speech (Krashen, 1982).

There are several types of Monitor users. Those who use the Monitor endlessly, resulting in hesitation when it comes to the oral production of the language. Their fluency is affected by this overuse of the Monitor. There are other people who under-use the Monitor and choose not to use previous knowledge and rules of the language in their speech. This can result in fluency without accuracy. The third type of user uses the Monitor when appropriate, but does not let it interfere with communication. A balance between fluency and accuracy should be achieved for optimal output (Krashen, 1982). Before this output can occur, many new learners face a period time known as “the silent period”.

The Silent Period

Student silence in the language classroom is commonly recognized as a serious problem for many educators (King, 2009). With research supporting the idea that oral interaction and production of the L2 can considerably aid L2 development, student silence can be a detriment to language acquisition.

King (2012) defines ‘the silent period’ as “a manifestation of a learner’s identity formation and re-formation during the early stages of acquiring a new language” (p. 326). Tsou (2005) states that some researchers view the silent period as a natural part of language acquisition. Some even believe it to be beneficial to the L2 learning process. King (2012) refers

to silence as a facilitative device that allows students to have a time to cognitively process, organize, and absorb new material.

There may be no definitive cause of this reticence in the classroom, but research has shown us several reasons for it and several methods for reducing it in the classroom (Donald, 2010). Human behavior is constantly affected by multiple, interrelated variables that continually change over time. This idea proves that silence is a dynamic construct, which is established by an assortment of competing forces (King, 2012). A selection of these forces include inherent shyness, lack of L2 sociolinguistic ability, the types of activities used in the L2 classroom, teacher attitudes and beliefs, disengagement and cultural differences. Silence can also derive from conflict, anger, defiance, and misbehavior. This leads us to believe that there is no single-cause for student silence in the L2 classroom. Both learner internal and social factors can affect silence. According to King (2012), these factors include disengagement, confusion, unfamiliarity with the topic, fear of oral participation, fear of being judged. The silent period is not the only barrier learners face when acquiring a new language. A learner's willingness to communicate can also play a role in his or her reluctance to speak in the target language.

Willingness to Communicate

Current L2 teaching practices focus on opportunities for learners to participate in meaningful and authentic communication, become more independent and less reliant on the teacher's assistance, and extend the use of the L2 outside of the classroom (Cao & Philp, 2006). It is now known that language development can occur by means of interaction (Kang, 2005)

One factor that plays a role in second language acquisition is a person's willingness to communicate. The term *willingness to communicate* (WTC) signifies the likelihood of a person to speak when free to do so, as stated by MacIntyre (2007). MacIntyre and Legatto (2011)

consider WTC to be the most immediate determinant of L2 use. Research done on WTC shows a direct link to oral production of the L2 (de Saint Léger & Storch, 2009). While emphasis is being placed on authentic oral communication, learners must also be willing to engage in this type of communication (de Saint Léger & Storch, 2009).

History of WTC. Like many philosophies in education, the concept of WTC has evolved. In past research, WTC is defined as a trait-like disposition. This means that a learner's WTC is unchanging over time and across various scenarios (Kang, 2005). Pellettieri (2011) declares that in prior research, WTC was associated with variables such as shyness, introversion and extroversion, communication skills, and anxiety, but WTC was still considered to be significantly distinct. These variables were identified simply as antecedents of WTC, not part of the actual definition.

Kang (2005) now offers an updated definition of WTC. He states that “willingness to communicate (WTC) is an individual's volitional inclination towards actively engaging in the act of communication in a specific situation, which can vary according to interlocutor(s), topic, and conversational context, among other potential situational variables” (p. 291).

WTC is a dynamic situational concept affected and controlled by different factors which, in turn, create L2 learners situational WTC. Many researchers are acknowledging this idea of WTC, both directly and indirectly. Cao (2012) has also accepted this new definition by declaring that WTC is no longer solely a trait phenomenon, but a dynamic situational concept. Nicolson and Adams (2010) refer to situational WTC as ‘situated learning,’ the notion that learning is influenced by both the knowledge presented in the situation and by the means of its representation and other aspects of the situation.

Another factor that Cao and Philp (2006) discuss is the difference between WTC in the home language (L1) and the L2. WTC does not transfer from the learners' L1 to L2. This is due to the distinction in communicative competence, along with social factors linked to L2 use.

Factors that influence WTC. Many smaller factors influence WTC such as motivation, anxiety, and individual personality traits (Cao, 2012; de Saint Léger & Storch, 2009; Gregersen, 2007; Kang, 2005; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011; Nicolson & Adams). WTC can change from moment to moment. While MacIntyre (2007) suggests that future research should concentrate on these momentary driving and restraining forces, MacIntyre and Legatto (2011) show that the linguistic, social, cognitive and emotional systems are all connected and affect the WTC. These researchers also showed that there is a difference between the loss of WTC before and during oral communication with detrimental effects on oral communication if WTC is lost early.

Kang (2005) looked in depth at three of these situational variables thought to hold great influence over WTC: excitement, responsibility and security. Research showed that there was a direct correlation between each of these psychological conditions and a learner's WTC (Kang, 2005; Macintyre & Legatto, 2011).

An increase in the learners' sense of security leads to an increase in WTC. Kang (2005) found that to increase this sense of security, learners require social support from both their peers and their teacher or interlocutor. They also respond better when the conversation session involves less people. Background knowledge of the topic being discussed also can lead to increased security. If the students are knowledgeable on the topic, they are more likely to participate in the conversation. On the contrary, a lack of ideas and comprehension problems caused decreased feelings of security. Macintyre and Legatto (2011) found that participants in their research study repeatedly mentioned awareness of the level of vocabulary required for a

task as a key factor in WTC. When vocabulary in the TL needed for conversation cannot be quickly retrieved by the mind, WTC can rapidly decrease. Therefore, security is compromised after a learner experienced difficulty orally producing the language or understanding others (Kang, 2005). The beginning of the conversation typically can lead to learners being more reluctant to speak and more insecure. Cao and Philp (2006) suggest that prior preparation on a topic can increase one's linguistic self-confidence and increase a student's WTC during that conversation.

Macintyre and Legatto (2011) acknowledge that in order to acquire language, learners must communicate in the target language using underdeveloped L2 skills. The loss of confidence during the use of L2 can lead to abandonment of communication and affect WTC. This agrees with Kang's (2005) idea of a learner's sense of security directly affecting WTC.

The second variable Kang (2005) observed was excitement. He defines excitement as "a feeling of elation about the act of talking (p. 284). Similar to security, an increase in a learner's excitement leads to an increase in WTC. The topic being discussed can either increase or decrease a learner's excitement. Cao and Philips (2006) confidently state, "Interest in the topic appears to be vital (p. 489). If the topic sparks the learners' interest, they are more likely to engage in the conversation. Kang (2005) gives the example of talking about one's personal experiences.

The other people involved in the conversation can also affect excitement. Kang (2005) proposes that native speakers tend to increase excitement. Macintyre (2007) found that developing a conversable relationship with someone from another culture is a major motivating factor for some learners to speak in the TL. Learners also feel that native speakers offer better feedback to help them improve and give the conversation purpose, whereas a group of strictly

non-native speakers often decreases excitement. The learners in Kang's (2005) study were very perceptive of the interlocutor's interest in the conversation. If the interlocutor appeared to be interested or asked the learners question throughout the conversation, excitement was increased.

Kang (2005) observed responsibility as the third variable. In this context, Kang defines responsibility as "a feeling of obligation or duty to understand or deliver a message, or to make it clear (p. 285)." As the learners' sense of responsibility increases, so does their WTC. Lower numbers of participants in the conversation can cause an increase in responsibility. Learners feel a responsibility to participate when there are fewer people speaking. Léger and Storch (2009) note that whole group discussions can lead to feelings of intimidation among participants. Their research study showed that many students tend to hold back in larger group discussions. Other students become worried about participating too much and hold back. Whole or large group discussions can make participants feel vulnerable, requiring them to display their levels of proficiency in front of their peers.

However, small group discussions present their own share of difficulties (de Saint Léger & Storch, 2009). Lack of authenticity, lack of a native speaker, shortage of vocabulary or linguistic knowledge, lack of preparation, and the reluctance of some participants to speak in the L2 can all bring challenges to small group discussions. Nonetheless, some participants still see these smaller discussions as a chance to speak more.

Personal motives such as explaining an important topic to peers or defending one's own views on a topic can also increase the feeling of responsibility (Kang, 2005). When learners feel the need to clarify a misunderstanding, their WTC is likely to increase. This is due to an increase in the feeling of responsibility to convey the appropriate message to other participants. Another factor that can influence a learner's willingness to speak in the target language is motivation.

Motivation

Motivation can have a large effect on the speaking proficiency of language learners (Hernández, 2010). Gardner and MacIntyre (1991) argued that motivation promotes learning and any elements that motivate a person will result in successful acquisition (as cited in Soozandehfar, 2010, p. 116). Toni and Rostami (2012) define motivation as the desire to learn a language and the learners' attitude towards learning it.

There are two main types of motivation that L2 learners experience. The first type is integrative motivation, which is the desire to identify with the L2 community (Soozandehfar, 2010). These learners are motivated to learn the L2 and tend to view L2 learning situations positively (Toni & Rostami, 2012). Hernández (2010) found that integrative motivation can predict how likely students are to come in contact with and speak the target language outside of the classroom. The second type, instrumental motivation, is the desire to obtain something practical or tangible from the study of the L2 (Soozandehfar, 2010). This may include reading technical materials, applying for a job, meeting school requirements, or even achieving higher social status.

Research shows that both types of motivation while distinct, lead to linguistic proficiency (Soozandehfar, 2010). Motivational characteristics of learners appear to be neither strictly integrative nor instrumental. This leads us to believe that the two types are not independent of one another. This also means that L2 learning does not require learners to choose one type of motivation over the other. The type of motivation is related to the background of the learners (Toni & Rostami, 2012). Similar to motivation, language anxiety can also hinder oral communication in the target language.

Language Anxiety

The ultimate goal of most L2 learners is to have the ability to communicate effectively with other people in the target language (Jeong et al., 2015). Language anxiety can hinder this aim (Kayaoglu & Saglamel, 2013). Gregersen (2007) states that language anxiety is directly linked to negative consequences. These consequences can range from avoidance behaviors and lack of participation to low class grades and, ultimately, a failure to learn the target language (Gregersen, 2007). Anxiety can also play a large role in the quantity and quality of oral communication in the L2 (Jeong et al., 2015). Anxiety has the ability to inhibit learners' capacity to monitor and produce statements in the target language (Jeong et al., 2015).

Self-monitoring along with the ability to anticipate another person's reactions are essential cognitive processes during oral communication in any language. In order to avoid negative reactions and responses from others, one must carefully produce his or her words or statements (Jeong et al., 2015). In the L2, speakers must be cautious in their oral production of the language to get their point across despite limited proficiency and experience (Jeong et al., 2015). This constant self-monitoring and anticipation of others' reactions can result in language anxiety and reluctance to speak in the target language.

Kayaoglu and Saglamel (2013) also support the claim that anxiety is more likely to increase in speaking situations. Specific learning situations can cause learners to become anxious.

Students can be a great source of insight into the language learning process. Both Kayaoglu and Saglamel (2013) and Mejía (2014) studied language learners' perceptions of L2 anxiety. The students' responses when speaking on the sources of anxiety appeared to be similar. The key stressor mentioned in Mejía's (2014) study was the use of oral activities. Some students did not want to be in front of their peers or move around the classroom to complete activities.

Anxiety can develop from a multitude of stressors. These stressors can include frustration, fear, discomfort, shyness, limited vocabulary in the L2, inability to express thoughts through the L2, making mistakes and the fear of being judged (Mejía, 2014). Unfortunately, research has shown that anxiety is not limited to beginner language learners (Mejía, 2014). This reveals that although more advanced language learners may have a solid foundation of the target language, a need for accuracy, perceived judgment from peers and a fear of holding their peers back by asking for clarification may still result in anxiety (Mejía, 2014). In theory, it should be easier for them to verbalize their thoughts and ideas. However, with anxiety present, their oral production of the language may continue to be affected even at higher levels of language learning (Mejia, 2014).

Mejía (2014) states that anxiety proves to be problematic not only for the learner, but for the instructor as well. Before teachers are able to address anxiety in their classroom, they must recognize that it is occurring. The first step teachers should take is identifying learners who suffer from L2 speaking anxiety. This can be challenging because it involves decoding nonverbal messages (Gregersen, 2007). Teachers must look for warning signs, such as a student's posture, body movements, gazing behaviors or facial movements that may express anxiety. Gregersen (2007) notes that while detecting these nonverbal behaviors may be difficult, L2 educators should make a clear effort to watch for students exhibiting these anxious behaviors. By determining the students' stressors, teachers can then decide what to do to relieve this anxiety (Mejía, 2014).

Teacher Influence

Teachers are a large variable in the learning process (Kayaoglu & Saglamel, 2015). The teacher's support can have positive effects on how students feel about oral L2 use and increase

their oral production of the target language. Teachers must use methods that best support their students' acquisition of L2 speaking skills (Garbati & Mady, 2015). The goal of the teacher is to make practice more effective and promote of the oral use of the target language.

Benaissi and Guerroudj (2015) claim that teachers have an abundance of decisions to make in their classrooms. The teacher determines the class content, the topics being discussed, the length of conversations and discussions, who participates and for how long (Donald, 2010). The teacher must also decide what to include in the curriculum and what gets priority such as grammar, socio-cultural rules, fluency, pronunciation and more. Teachers have the ability to control how much emphasis is placed on oral use of the target language. Rossiter et al. (2010) claim that oral fluency is not fostered in many classrooms and textbooks. Some teachers are unaware of new research in oral development, while others place more emphasis on reading and writing skills.

Once these decisions are made, teachers must then select the activities and tasks that are appropriate for their students and the best strategies for achieving their goals (Benaissi & Guerroudj, 2015). Tinjacá and Contreras (2008) found that while teachers may work to achieve a successful learning environment, it is rarely plausible to create an appropriate learning environment for every student. Some students choose not to participate in the activities presented. Some activities such as initiation response follow-up or IRF can prevent improvement (Herazo Rivera, 2009). IRF is the most common type of classroom interaction in which the student only provides a response to the teacher's evocations, while it is the teacher who initiates, evaluates, re-casts, and questions (Herazo Rivera, 2009).

Crawford (2004) states that the teacher's oral use of L2 is important in helping students see that language is not to be feared. The teacher can be the only source of real-time L2

interaction for students. The results of a questionnaire given to teachers showed that individual attitudes about the use of L2 affected its oral use in the classroom. Some teachers placed a high importance on L2 use, but had hesitations about using it in the early stages of a language program. The first year of language learning is thought to be the most challenging due to the large amounts of new concepts, vocabulary and grammar presented (Mejía, 2014). Students feel that they are unable to communicate their ideas verbally, which can cause frustration and anxiety. Encouragement from teachers to speak in the target language is vital in this stage of language learning. Mejía (2014) suggests that teachers continue to remind students that the speaking in the L2 will get easier over time and not to give up in the first year.

Since teachers can have such great influence in the classroom, teachers with wrong assumptions may harm the relationship between the learners and the L2. Some teachers stress the linguistic aspect of the target language and do not promote the importance of the culture. Other teachers may hold the view that since the students are not learning in an authentic context that they do not need to communicate in the language as native speakers do. In addition, there may be teachers who have never traveled to a country where the L2 is used or who have never been exposed to a native speaker. This can lead to a limited awareness of the culture of the language they are teaching (Benaissi & Guerroudj, 2015). Drawing learners' interest toward the target language, its literature and the culture of the native speakers is one way to motivate students in the L2 classroom (Toni & Rostami, 2012).

Classroom Environment

The learning environment is also known to play a large role in students' oral production of the target language (Nicolson & Adams, 2010). By creating a positive learning environment, the students are more comfortable speaking in the L2 and, as a result, anxiety is decreased

(Mejías, 2014). The teacher plays a large role in creating this environment (Riasati, 2014). By taking the time to explain information, offering a fair amount of wait-time and using humor, the teacher can create a comfortable learning environment.

A comfortable and positive learning environment can allow students to bond amongst themselves, offer help to each other and laugh at and with each other when mistakes are made (Mejías, 2014). Teachers have the ability to turn embarrassing situations into bonding experiences using humor. Creating a stress-free environment and promoting respect for peers can reduce anxiety in oral L2 use (Riasati, 2014).

By breaking up the monotony of classroom activities and inviting students to use L2 in creative ways, students are motivated to get involved (Tinjacá & Contreras, 2008). The classroom culture should also be more open, interesting and engaging to the students. Students should feel comfortable exploring the language and new topics, not solely from the perspective of the teachers (Xie, 2009). There must be an atmosphere that encourages interaction in the target language (Donald, 2010).

The learning environment should provide opportunities for students to interact (Garbati & Mady, 2015). Regardless of the type of classroom activity, a positive learning environment can decrease anxiety and increase oral participation (Mejías, 2014). The teacher should create a learning environment that fosters trial and error. Students should understand that mistakes are part of the learning process and that they will occur when speaking a new language (Mejías, 2014).

The teacher plays a very large role in students' L2 acquisition and the creation of the classroom environment (Herazo Rivera, 2009). His or her personality, motivation, responsiveness, attitude and relationship with the learners all contribute to the creation of either a

safe and inviting communication environment or a threatening and unfriendly environment. This proves that successful classroom communication and L2 learning is dependent on the social relationships that are established between teachers and learners (Benaissi & Guerroudj, 2015). Social support from the teacher and peers can also increase the feeling of security as well as responsibility (Kang, 2005).

Methods to Increase Oral Communication

Once the causes of the lack of oral communication have been determined, educators can use this information to make decisions on how to promote oral communication in their language classrooms. The difficulty arises when determining which practices and methods to use. Fortunately, research offers several practices that have been proven successful such as cooperative learning, modeling, authentic encounters, opportunities for interaction, role play, student-centered learning, oral communication strategies, questioning and immersion (Basta, 2011; Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009; Donald, 2010; Garbati & Mady, 2015; Herazo Rivera, 2009; Hernández, 2010; Jamshidnejad, 2011; Kang, 2005; Kayaoglu & Saglamel, 2013; Mahdi, 2015; Mercer, 2015; Nakatani, 2010; Naughton, 2006; Pellettieri, 2011; Philp, Walter & Basturkmen, 2010; Riasati, 2014; Schleppegrell & O'Hallaron, 2011; Tinjacá & Contreras, 2008; Tsou, 2005; Vaca, Lapp & Fisher, 2011; Xie, 2009; Zhang & Head, 2009).

Authentic encounters. Garbati and Mady (2015) recognize the importance of authentic oral encounters for L2 learners. While these opportunities may be infrequent, the students should be offered many complex opportunities to speak. Coleman and Goldenberg (2009) claim that without extensive use of the language, both comprehension and production, it is very difficult to achieve high levels of proficiency in the L2.

Planned and spontaneous presentations can be one way to promote authentic encounters (Garbati & Mady, 2015). Even though native speakers may not be present, L2 learners can still interact with other peers and their instructor through structured practice activities and spontaneous interaction.

Role-play exercises are another way for the students to act in life-like scenarios. This allows them to experience behavioral and linguistic structures for different situations (Garbati & Mady, 2015). In classrooms with limited authentic resources, role-play can be a great option. Research shows that when students are engaged in role-play activities using the L2, the use of the home language decreases (Garbati & Mady, 2015). Role-play holds the advantage that context, characters, scenarios, themes and topics can all be chosen by the teachers or students. When students help to make classroom decisions such as these, they feel more responsible and motivated (Kang, 2005). The other added benefit of interactive learning environments is that they can be individualized (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009). The choice of methods will be contingent on the objectives of instruction and learner characteristics.

Schleppegrell and O'Hallaron (2011) suggest that teacher practices such as creating meaningful tasks, connecting the content with the students' background knowledge, and supporting interactions amongst peers can lead to the successful use of L2. The emphasis of higher order thinking also contributes to the authentic use of L2.

Realia, or real-life objects, can also be easily incorporated in a language classroom with limited access to authentic resources. With the use of realia, the teacher is not only exposing the students to authentic materials, but also placing emphasis on learners' oral communication by getting learners to speak about the objects (Mahdi, 2015).

Naturalistic immersion. With limited resources and a lack of native speakers and authentic situations, teachers can face difficulty with immersing the students in the L2 and its culture (Pellettieri, 2011). However, if natural immersion can be incorporated into L2 learning, higher levels of WTC and oral participation will be the result. Pellettieri (2011) observed the differences between naturalistic immersion and the traditional L2 setting and their outcome on L2 learners. The research shows that immersion learners were more likely to engage in L2 communication due to social norms, which favor the use of the L2, the pleasant relationships and exchanges with L2 speakers and strong social support. While social support outside of the classroom aided in WTC, this support within the classroom appears to have a minimal effect on learners' WTC (Pellettieri, 2011). Through naturalistic immersion, the students are able to develop a more positive perception of their personal L2 skills. This linguistic self-confidence can motivate students to use the L2 for authentic communication more regularly.

The communicative language approach. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) aims to encourage learners to participate in communication frequently and capably in the target language classroom (Riasati, 2014). The goal is for teachers to choose activities that foster meaningful and authentic language use. This approach focuses on active participation of the learners, and in this case, their active oral participation (Basta, 2011).

In the past, language learners were encouraged to master the grammatical structures of the target language (Riasati, 2014). Modern language teaching and learning, however, emphasize the use of the language both inside and outside of the classroom for effective and meaningful communication (Riasati, 2014). Basta (2011) states that this approach developed from the emphasis on audio-lingual language skills. CLT provides learners with a greater opportunity for individual oral production of the target language (Philp et al., 2010).

Cooperative learning Cooperative learning, learning in small groups or pairs while working towards a common goal, is one method of promoting natural oral communication amongst students (Basta, 2011). This idea of cooperative learning developed from the framework of CLT (Basta, 2011). Vaca et al. (2011) define cooperative learning as a time for students to engage in productive and accountable collaboration around a task or problem that causes them to rely on one another's part or participation to ensure successful completion.

Tinjacá and Contreras (2008) utilized *The Cultural Moment*, "a task-based cooperative-learning environment," (p. 23) to promote oral communication by reducing students' fear of speaking in the L2. Students memorized and performed songs, dances, poetry, sketches, and plays in L2 and presented them in small groups. The results showed that the support of friends played a large role in the decrease in fear of speaking in the L2. Feedback, suggestions, and decision making amongst peers strengthened oral communication. A relaxed atmosphere and meaningful activities also aided in the success of the activity.

Herazo Rivera (2009) analyzed a script-based exchange in which students had to prepare a dialogue in partners to be presented. The conversation was rehearsed and pre-planned, making oral L2 production unauthentic and not promoting L2 proficiency growth. *The Cultural Movement* presented by Tinjacá and Contreras (2008) also showed this unauthentic use of L2. By memorizing scripts, songs and poems, the students were not using higher order thinking to produce L2.

Since cooperative learning involves the use of groups, Kang (2005) found that there is a direct correlation between security and WTC. The fewer participants in a discussion, the more secure the learners feel, resulting in higher WTC. Many researchers promote the use of small groups in language classrooms due to these reasons. de Saint Léger and Storch (2009) also

opposed the use of large or whole group discussion after finding that many students admitted fear and lack of participation when questioned about their feelings towards these types of discussions. The objective of cooperative learning is to promote cooperation amongst peers, not competition (Kayaoglu & Saglamel, 2013).

The materials and activities used in the language classroom can have an effect on student silence, especially if they limit the opportunity to orally use the L2 (King, 2012). Students may be engaged in certain activities, but if they do not involve oral communication or only offer a limited opportunity for students to speak, silence will be a normal occurrence.

Mercer (2015) states that spoken language is necessary in today's world in order for people to 'get things done.' Learners need to be taught how to use spoken language in a productive manner to accomplish tasks. The most common way to do this is through the use of group discussions or meetings (Mercer, 2015).

Oral communication strategies for students. When learning a new language, learners are faced with restrictions such as lack of vocabulary and limited knowledge of the target language (Jamshidnejad, 2011). Instead of allowing learners to feel defeated by these restrictions, teachers can teach students a variety of strategies to compensate for what their target language lacks. These speaking strategies can help students feel more confident and comfortable participating in classroom activities and discussions (Tsou, 2005).

These strategies, or communication enhancers, can include comprehension checks, clarification requests, and confirmation checks (Nakatani, 2010). Jamshidnejad's (2011) list of strategies involves these three and many others including expressing non-understanding, using knowledge of the L1, using similar sound words to interpret the meaning of words in the target language, the use of fillers, and the use of general words.

The most common strategy utilized in the L2 classroom to promote oral communication is questioning (Garbati & Mady, 2015). This method can be as authentic as the teacher decides to make it. Questions that promote elaboration are important to developing oral proficiency opposed to one-word responses that do not require much interaction.

Despite the strategy, learners must be taught what these strategies are and how to use them in conversation. Once properly trained on these strategies, students will become independent learners of the target language and thus, improve their communicative ability (Nakatani, 2010). These strategies also allow students to encourage accuracy of their oral production (Jamshidnejad, 2011).

Tsou (2005) introduces the idea of participation instruction (PI), another strategy for improving oral communication amongst students. PI involves applying methods for changing learners' participation behaviors and communication strategies to be used by learners to help them better participate in discussions and request help when necessary. PI also involves clarifying classroom procedures and expectations to clear up any confusion or misconceptions. Since oral correctness is prompted by participation in the classroom, PI can be a simple way to increase oral communication (Tsou, 2005).

The other strategy commonly used is negotiation of meaning. Negotiation of meaning exists in oral communication when students need to negotiate what they hear to clarify the meaning of an utterance (Naughton, 2006). Nakatani (2010) states that there is a positive correlation between negotiation and oral communication ability. The negotiation that occurs between the speaker and the listener can foster oral interaction and more learning opportunities (Naughton, 2006).

Student-centered learning. Student-centered classrooms are quickly taking over the former teacher-centered classrooms as the new norm (Kayaoglu & Saglamel, 2013). King (2012) found five basic conceptions of silence, the most dominant being *the silence of disengagement*. This silence can come from inattention, boredom and apathy and is commonly found in classrooms that take a teacher-centered or lecture-style approach. This is why his second conception of *the silence of teacher-centered methods* is directly connected to disengagement (King, 2012).

Donald (2010) gives several suggestions for teachers to promote oral interaction in the classroom. In order to encourage students to speak, the teacher must first intend to let them do so and provide them with the opportunity. Therefore, the strategies that the teacher selects to be used in class must match this intention. The choice of lesson materials and activities can ultimately pull students toward participation or away from it (King, 2012). Staying away from teacher-centered instructional methods is one way to do this. Teachers should allow students to be involved in some of the decisions regarding the class. This can be done by allowing students to choose their own topics to discuss. This can create more opportunities for students to participate in classroom interaction (Xie, 2009). Zhang and Head (2009) found that when students take on a more active role in their learning by selecting the content, goals and activities to practice their speaking, the students had a positive attitude and increased motivation to speak in the target language.

Modeling. When students are participating in classroom discussions, Donald (2010) notes that teachers should model the correct response as an alternative to stating that the students' utterances are wrong. This negative feedback can cause students to feel embarrassment or shame and may result in student silence. Another suggestion he offers is to allow students to

work in small groups when trying to comprehend and form a response to a question. This provides students with a less stressful environment and can promote oral communication in the target language.

Teachers should model appropriate oral language use to show learners how native speakers use the language (Hernández, 2010). This allows students to be exposed to the oral language in its native form. Teachers may also strategically use students to serve as models for their peers (Kayaoglu & Saglamel, 2013). The teacher may choose a stronger student to orally respond to a question in the target language. After this student has given a model of an appropriate response, the teacher may then call on other students to answer questions. This allows students who may have speaking anxiety to have time to prepare their responses and listen to others speak (Kayaoglu & Saglamel, 2013). Teachers should model how to elaborate on responses and develop an interactive routine to allow students to gain confidence in speaking the L2 (Garbati & Mady, 2015).

Methodology

Research Questions

- a) What do current middle and high school language teachers in Chautauqua County think is the reason for their learners' hesitancy to speak in the target language in their L2 or TL classrooms?
- b) Which teaching practices are these current language teachers using to promote oral communication amongst their students in the L2 or TL in their classrooms?
- c) Which teaching practices have these current language teachers found to be effective in promoting their students' oral communication in the target language?

Purpose

This research study was designed to uncover teachers' thoughts on oral communication in their classrooms. Do teachers find speaking in the TL important? Do teachers give priority to oral communication in the TL? A second goal of this study was to reveal which strategies teachers use to promote oral communication in the TL amongst their students. The final objective of this study was to determine which strategies current language teachers find effective in promoting oral communication in the TL in their classrooms. Do the strategies shown in the research work for current language teachers? Implications of my findings have been included at the end of my research collection and analysis.

Step One: Find a Research Topic

The researcher acquired an interest in world languages in high school when she was first exposed to the Spanish language. While the language was easy to learn and understand, she felt hesitant to answer and speak in the target language in classes both in high school and throughout college. It was not until her semester study abroad program in Spain where she was forced to

orally use the language due to the language barrier she faced when in school, with her host family and out in the community.

Once she received her Bachelor's degree in Spanish Adolescent Education, the researcher further developed an interest in this topic through her teaching experience in a foreign language classroom where she found that out of the four language modalities, students' oral production of the language was the weakest. The researcher also heard similar concerns about students' hesitancy to speak in the target language from other current language teachers. From this information gathered at foreign language and Teaching English to Students of Other Languages (TESOL) conferences and workshops, it is apparent that this is not a problem confined to solely the researcher's classroom.

With language classes existing throughout the world, one can assume that many teachers share the same problem of student reticence, or restriction, when it comes to speaking in the target language. Results from this study will show which teaching practices and strategies current language teachers have found to be successful in promoting oral communication in the target language. These results will benefit language learners by providing them with the most current successful practices in aiding in their oral language communication. The results will also benefit language teachers who struggle to find the best practices for promoting their students' oral communication in the TL in their classrooms.

Step Two: Conduct Literature Review

The literature review analyzed current language teachers' perceptions about oral language production of the target language in their classrooms and the practices they have found to be the most effective in combating this issue. The researcher investigated a number of factors that contribute to the oral use of the target language such as language anxiety, willingness to

communicate, motivation, classroom environment and teacher influence. A number of methods used to increase oral language were also explored including modeling, student-centered learning, authentic encounters and naturalistic immersion.

Step Three: Select Framework

Survey questions were unique to this research survey, yet highly influenced by prior research studies. The author took the liberty of modifying the questions in order to better meet the needs of this particular research study.

Table 2

Framework for survey questions

Number	Item	Justification for asking question
1	What would you consider your teaching style?	Research shows that student-centered classrooms are more likely to promote oral interaction in the target language.
2	How often do you involve your students in the decision making process when it comes to the content, activities and class goals?	To see if there is a correlation between student-centered classrooms and oral participation in the target language
3	How would you rate your students' oral (speaking) participation in the target language in class?	To understand if a lack of speaking in the target language is a reoccurring problem in language classrooms across Chautauqua County.

Table continued

4	How important do you consider oral communication in the target language in your classroom?	Research states that teachers play a large role in the learning process. If they find speaking in the target language important, their students will too.
5	What priority do you give to oral communication in the target language in your classroom?	To see if there is a correlation between how important teachers believe speaking in the target language is and the priority they give to speaking in their classrooms.
6	What have been the toughest barriers in getting your students to speak in the target language? Explain your response.	To find out the root of the problem: Why are students hesitant to speak in the target language?
7	What do you do to create a positive learning environment in your classroom?	Research shows that a positive learning environment can lead to an increase in oral language production in the target language.
8	Please rate the impact each of the following appear to have on students' oral production in your classroom: anxiety, lack of motivation, introversion/ shyness, extroversion, peer support, teacher support, interest in the language	Research shows that each of these categories play a role in students' oral communication in the target language.

Table continued

9	Please rate the impact the following speaking strategies have on oral communication (in the target language) in your classroom: cooperative learning, questioning for information or elaboration, modeling, use of authentic materials, oral presentations, role-play, natural immersion, authentic encounters with the language, communicative language approach	To see which strategies current language teachers find to have a positive and negative impact on students' speaking in the target language.
10	Are there any other strategies not listed above that you use to get your students to speak in the target language? Which of these strategies do you consider to be the most effective? Why?	To get an insight on any effective strategies not mentioned in the research and to get the language teacher's perspective on which they believe to be the most effective at getting students to speak in the target language.

Step Four: Create a Draft Survey

The sole instrument used in this research study was a survey. A survey is a method of gathering the opinions of a selected population on a specific topic or issue (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). This instrument was used to measure teachers' perceptions on oral communication in their classrooms. Surveys were completed independently and anonymously. In order to collect the data, an online survey tool that provides free data analysis for survey responses called Survey Monkey® was used.

Information was obtained by asking questions to stimulate teachers' perceptions of effective strategies for promoting oral communication in their target language classrooms.

Survey questions were developed from previous research on oral communication in the language classroom.

Contingency questions, or follow-up questions were used to improve the quality of the data received (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). These follow-up questions provided further data on the topic. Questions 6 and 10 included these contingency questions to gain more understanding on barriers preventing oral communication and most effective strategies found to promote oral communication.

The first several questions on the survey were designed to give insight on the background of the teacher. The remainder of the survey questions focused on which strategies the teachers are implementing in their classrooms and which they have found to be most effective in promoting oral communication. Please see Table 2.

Step Five: Piloting the Draft Survey

In order to ensure that the survey created for this research was a comprehensible and a valid and reliable means of collecting data, the researcher administered the survey in paper form to two in-service language teachers. Each teacher took the survey individually and offered feedback on which questions they found difficult to interpret and which questions they thought to be too vague. These concerns were addressed in the final survey.

Since the type of language classroom can determine the focus on oral communication, one teacher believed it would be beneficial to add a question in the demographics section. In addition, question 1 was not quite specific enough, even though it offered close-ended responses. Therefore, the wording was changed to ensure that the participants understood that the question was asking about their teaching style.

It was also brought to the researcher's attention in question 6 that teachers may encounter more than one tough barrier when getting students to speak in the target language. Therefore, the wording was modified to allow teachers to list more than one tough barrier. The wording in question 7 was also modified from *comfortable* to *positive*, since one teacher believed that the word *comfortable* may be too broad and ambiguous.

The response options in question 9 were also narrowed to six. The options including the word *moderately* were eliminated due to a concern that the options *slightly* and *moderately* were too similar in nature. Finally, question 10 was modified to include any other strategies that had not yet been listed in the survey.

Step Six: Creating the Online Survey

Once corrections to the survey were made, the researcher purchased a month plan to the Survey Monkey® website. This upgrade from the website's free basic model included added features such as priority 24/7 email support, custom themes and colors, and data reports. The most important reason for purchasing this upgrade was the skip logic, a feature that uses a participant's response to direct them to the next appropriate page of the survey. This feature was essential to the consent question before participants could access the survey.

The official consent was obtained on Survey Monkey® before the survey could be accessed and completed. If the teacher checked the consent box marked "no" the applicant was taken to an alternate screen and be disqualified from the survey using this skip logic feature.

The researcher had the ability to change the settings of each individual question. The option to require an answer for each question was selected for every question. The message "This question requires an answer" came up any time a question was skipped or forgotten by the

participant. This feature ensured that the researcher would receive a complete set of responses from each participant.

The survey was broken up into three separate pages. The first page was comprised solely of the consent statement and the *yes* or *no* options. The second page consisted of the demographics questions to get some background information on each language teacher. The third and final page was made of the ten main survey questions. The demographics section and the ten main survey questions had to be placed on separate pages for the purpose of page numbers. The website automatically assigned each demographic question a number, despite the original paper survey assigning numbers to only the ten main survey questions. In order to avoid the main survey questions receiving a higher question number than originally planned, they had to be placed on their own page so the numbering could start over for these main survey questions.

Once all survey questions were added and edited on the website, the researcher was directed to a final options page where she was able to adjust the final settings of the survey. The option for multiple responses were turned off to avoid teachers responding to the survey more than once. The option to make survey respondents anonymous was also turned on to comply with the consent form prior to the survey.

Step Seven: Piloting the Online Survey

Once the survey was put into electronic form on the Survey Monkey® website, the survey was electronically administered through email to a current in-service language teacher to ensure formatting and accessibility of the survey.

It was conveyed to the researcher that the formatting was clear and the questions and responses were easy to read and understand. The teacher was asked not to submit the survey upon completion in order to maintain accurate results of future survey participants. By doing

so, the researcher was unable to tell if the participant would see a customized *thank you* page after submitting the survey. The teacher piloting the survey was also asked to take the survey a second time. This time, the researcher requested that the teacher deny consent to the survey to be sure the skip logic would work properly and take the participant to the disqualification page.

Step Eight: Identifying Participants and Setting

Participants of this research study included 59 current ENL and World Language teachers at the middle and high school levels throughout Chautauqua County in New York State. There was no prerequisite of time-spent teaching in the field or languages taught. The demographic information of the participants was collected via the survey. Ages ranged from 21 to 65 years old.

All participants received an email (Appendix A) with an explanation of the study to the teachers and they were assured that all information collected would be kept secure and confidential. Emails were sent out in teacher groups by school.

Before research could be conducted and surveys could be administered, consent was obtained from potential participants. This was obtained by means of email. All teachers were contacted via email. The participants were notified of the general purpose of the survey, that this is research and voluntary, and the procedure for completing the survey. As the participants were language teachers, they were all over the age of 18 and not require parental consent in addition.

Step Nine: Human Subject Review Approval

Before approval to conduct research was requested, the researcher submitted her human subject review application to the Human Subject Review Board at the State University of New York at Fredonia. Her application included a description of the setting, participants, and a copy

of the survey instrument to be used in the research. Approval for this project was received on 9-7-2016. A copy of the approval letter can be found in the Appendix (D).

Step Ten: Validity Considerations

The surveys were distributed to middle and high school language teachers throughout Chautauqua County. The researcher anticipated a variance in responses based on the different demographics in the school districts. Each participant was administered the same survey.

It was a potential concern that not many teachers would choose to participate in the survey. There was a possibility that teacher disinterest in completing the survey would increase the risk of not receiving many responses. However, the survey was brief and the questions were kept direct to avoid participant's lack of participation. In addition, the online survey format should have increased participation due to less time required to fill out the survey and answers are instantly submitted electronically. During the online setup of the survey, the option to allow only one response per participant was selected to prevent participants from taking the survey more than once and invalidating the results.

Another validity concern arose while acquiring email addresses for the participants from the school websites. These school websites are open to the public and teachers' positions and email addresses are accessible to the public. However, due the fact that these email addresses were being collected at the beginning of a new school year, there was a possibility that not all school websites and staff directories were up-to-date. Therefore, language teachers hired over the summer may not have been listed on the website. Also, teachers that have changed jobs or schools may still be listed on a school's website.

Step Eleven: Administering the Surveys

Participants were informed through email and directed to a link to complete the online survey on Survey Monkey®. Email addresses for participants were obtained through the schools' websites, which are accessible to the public. The emailed surveys were sent out in groups by school. Upon the online consent, participants completed the survey online and the data from the surveys was received electronically. The survey should have taken teachers approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. Data collected from the surveys was kept confidential. This was made clear to all participants before completing the survey. See Appendix B for survey questions.

Step Twelve: Organize Data

When the surveys were completed the researcher collected all data from the Survey Monkey® website and entered the data into an Excel database. Each row was a respondent and each column was an item on the survey.

Step Thirteen: Data Analysis

Data from each item was extracted from the database to form a display. Each item was graphed using SmartArt in Excel to display results of sample. Data was displayed in pie charts, bar charts, and tables in the results section. These table and figures were used to answer the research questions.

Results

The purpose of this study was to collect data on teachers' perceptions of students' oral communication in their L2 or TL classrooms and which teaching practices they believe to be effective in promoting students to speak in the TL. All surveys were completed during the month of October in 2016.

Demographics of Survey Participants

Fifty-nine middle and high school language teachers in Chautauqua County public schools were emailed to complete the survey. Twenty-five participants completed the survey. Therefore, approximately 42% of the surveys administered were completed. Two participants only completed the demographics section of the survey. Therefore, their responses were not included in the results section. The time-spent teaching in the field amongst the respondents varied from 1 to 35 years at the end of the current school year.

Out of the group of 25 language teachers who completed the survey, 22 teach a Foreign or World Language including Spanish or French. No respondents teach German, the Seneca language or another World Language. Three participants teach English as a New Language.

Four out of 25 participants teach at the middle school level. Seven participants teach at the high school level and the remaining 14 teach both middle and high school levels. Twenty percent of teachers have class sizes of 15 or less while 80% of teachers have class sizes of 15 or more.

Data Analysis of Survey

The questions asked in the survey represented three underlying themes: (1) students' hesitancy to speak in the target language (2) promoting oral communication in the target language and (3) effective practices. Questions 2, 3, 6 and 8 pertain to the first theme. Questions

1, 4, 5 and 7 pertain to the second theme, while questions 9 and 10 pertain to the third theme. Upon collection of the surveys, data was analyzed based on the separate themes of the survey.

Theme one: Students' hesitancy to speak in the target language. Questions 2, 3, 6 and 8 of the survey are a representation of the factors that contribute to students' hesitancy to speak in the target language.

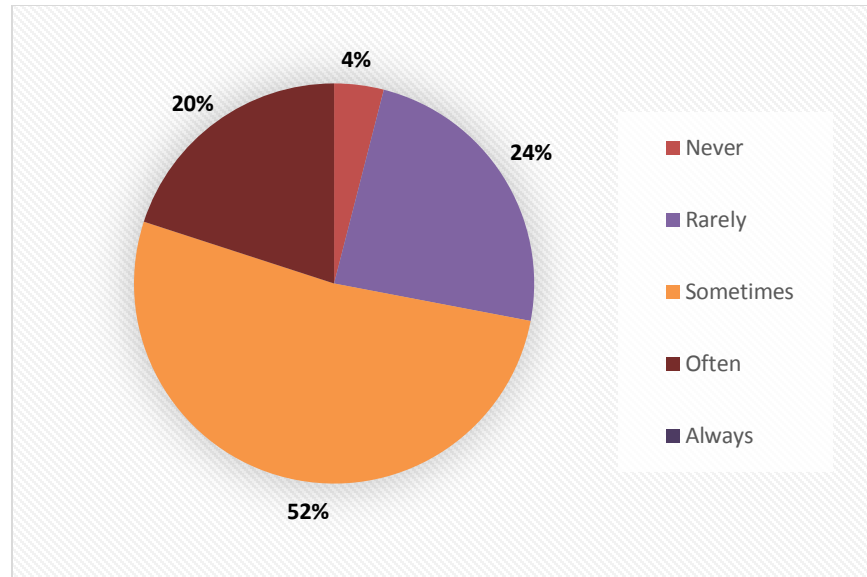


Figure 1. Item 2: How often do you involve your students in the decision-making process when it comes to the content, activities and class goals?

The results shown in Figure 1 represent student involvement in decision-making processes including the class content, activities and goals. Overall, the results of the survey indicated that the majority of teachers (52%) only involve their students in the classroom decisions involving the content, activities used and class goals sometimes. Almost a quarter of respondents (24%) rarely involve their students in the decision-making process while 20% of respondents frequently involve their students. Only 4% of teachers claimed to never involve their students when making any class decisions. No teachers claimed to involve their students in every decision-making process. This data indicates that while many teachers choose to involve their

students in some of the decision-making processes, there are also teachers who choose not to involve their students as frequently or at all.

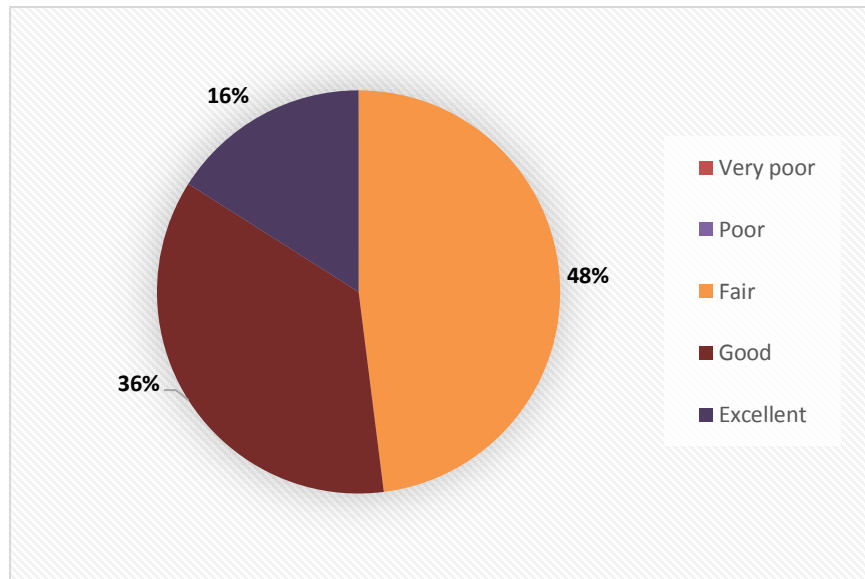


Figure 2. Item 3: How would you rate your students' oral (speaking) participation in the target language in class?

The outcomes from Figure 2 illustrate teachers' perceptions of their students' oral participation in the target language in their classrooms. Almost half of the teachers felt that their students' speaking participation was fair. Thirty-six percent of teachers felt that their students' speaking participation was good while the other 16% felt very secure about their students' oral participation in their classrooms and considered it excellent. No respondents felt that their students' speaking participation was very poor or poor. This data shows that while there are some teachers who feel their students have exceptional speaking participation in class, the majority of teachers believe that their students' speaking participation is only fair or good.

Table 3

Item 6: Teachers' Toughest Barriers in Getting Students to Speak in the Target Language

Respondent	Response
1	Having them be willing to respond. This is their first year learning Spanish and when they are not sure how to pronounce something they are less willing to share.
2	Intimidation, pressure from peers to succeed.
3	Low confidence, not enough time to practice, lack of technology
4	Getting over the mentality that "Spanish is too hard/confusing. Why doesn't everyone just speak English."
5	Accuracy and fluency
6	The single most difficult issue is that they students are often self-conscious. They do not want their classmates hear them making a mistake in the target language.
7	Overcoming their fear of making a mistake or saying something wrong
8	Self-worth of what they are capable, not willing to take a risk
9	The students who don't do their work are the ones who struggle the most when speaking in the TL in class. It's tough to teach motivation.
10	They seem to fall into English without trying to think the target language through.
11	It depends on whether you are asking about teaching Spanish Language Arts or ENL and at which level. For HS ENL the toughest barrier is
12	1. Confidence 2. Encouraging free speech vs. writing first 3. Motivation
13	Both my native English speaking students and my native Spanish speakers choose to utilize only the simplest language, and in an English language, and in an English language arts classroom, the simplest language is never adequate.
14	Afraid to make a mistake and get laughed at
15	The greatest barrier for the majority of my students is shyness and/ or anxiety in front of their native English speaking peers. My students are much more willing to participate in oral communication activities when we are in a stand-alone setting among only other ELLs.
16	Student insecurities about speaking in a foreign language, they often say that it feels weird. Lack of confidence, students say they do not "know Spanish" even if they can effectively communicate.
17	I have 9 th grade Spanish 1 and 12 th grade Spanish 4 JCC. The toughest barrier for Level 1 is the lack of vocabulary to express themselves and peer pressure. Level 4 students have very few barriers, other than lack of vocabulary knowledge to speak to topics of interest.

Table continued

18	I used to have trouble getting them to maintain the duration of a speaking activity in the target language. Since incorporating a rubric, my students do a great job of staying in the target language and heeding corrections. My rubric requires 4 things from them for a 100% staying in the target language, following directions (including verbal correction), using new vocabulary, and using appropriate grammar/ full sentences.
19	My students are in the beginning stages of their Spanish learning. Orally producing the target language is (in my opinion) one of the last communication modes to master. Many of my students are afraid to speak out loud in class in English, let alone a different language. They are nervous to mispronounce the words. When I do partner speaking activities, several students still revert to English, even in a less stressful environment.
20	Being judged by their classmates
21	Having the opportunity to speak individually with all students to give feedback with such big class sizes. Having students not hold back due to feeling embarrassed about making mistakes.
22	I never seem to have enough time, have to cover the material and students need to learn the material before they can use it. Other than that, probably students are a little afraid to speak in the TL.
23	Fear. Students are nervous about making mistakes. Once they get over the fear of imperfection they are much more willing to use the target language, even if they need help or make mistakes.
24	8 th graders are very self-conscious
25	Fear of mistakes, they do not want to be corrected or look wrong in front of peers. Apathy, students are in the class without a true care for learning the language.

The data in Table 3 demonstrates what language teachers believe to be the toughest barriers in getting students to speak in the target language in their classrooms. While each participant's response was unique, there were several central ideas that were visible throughout the responses. Some of these ideas included being embarrassed or nervous, feeling judged by peers, self-consciousness, lack of confidence, pressure from peers, the fear of mistakes, and the students' willingness to speak in the target language. Respondent 10 addressed the issue of "falling back to English" Macintyre and Legatto (2011) acknowledged this same idea in their research. For learners to acquire the language, they must communicate in the target language using underdeveloped L2 skills. Furthermore, the loss of confidence during the use of L2 can

lead to abandonment of communication and affect WTC. Kang (2005) states that a learner’s sense of security directly affects their willingness to speak in the target language.

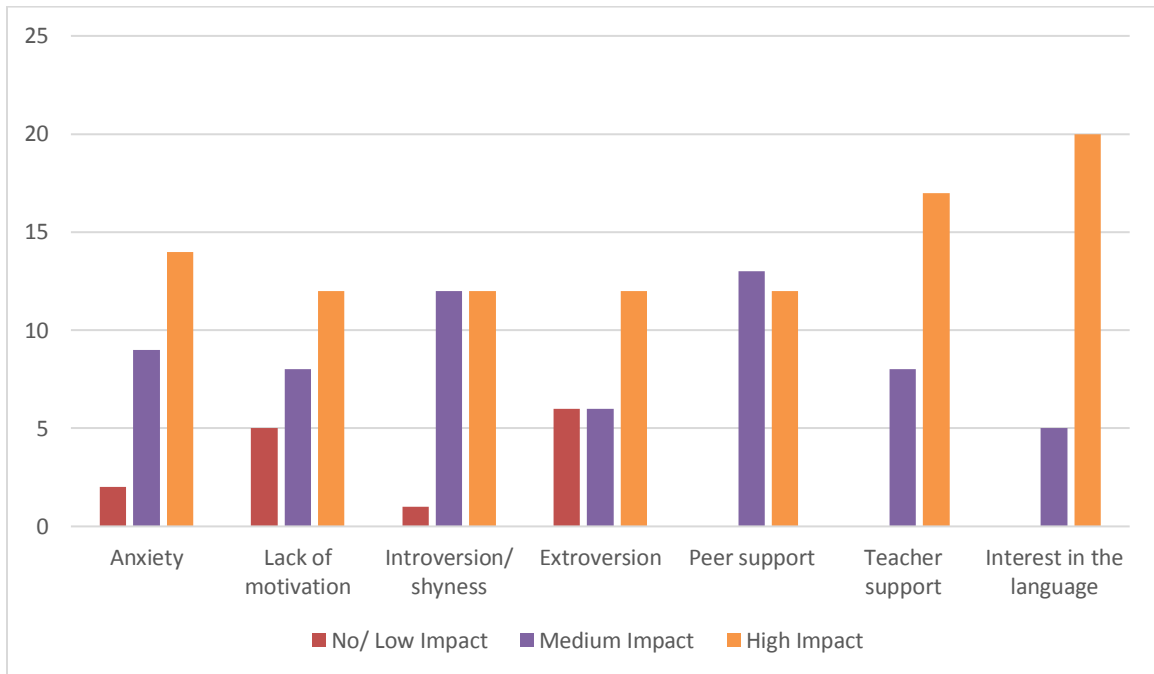


Figure 3. Item 8: Please rate the impact each of the following appear to have on students’ oral production in your classroom.

The data that is illustrated in Figure 3 represents the factors that may contribute to students’ hesitancy when speaking in the target language in the language classroom. According to the participants, 20 out of 25 participants marked that interest in the language highly impacts oral production while the remaining 5 participants marked that it has a medium impact. No teachers marked that interest in the language has little or no impact on oral participation. Teacher support also was marked as “high impact” by 17 out of 25 participants and “medium impact” by the remaining 8. No participants believed that teacher support has little or no impact on students’ oral production.

Peer support received almost equal scores from participants. Twelve participants selected that peer support has medium impact on speaking in the target language while 13 participants selected “high impact.” While most participants (12) selected “high impact” for the factor of extroversion, the remainder of the marks were equally divided between “no/ low impact” and “medium impact.” On the other hand, only one participant stated that introversion or shyness has little or no impact on oral participation. The remaining participants’ responses were evenly split between “medium impact” and “high impact.” The final two factors on item 6, anxiety and lack of motivation, both followed the same pattern with responses. The majority of participants responded “high impact.” The second highest number of responses was for “medium impact” and finally “no/ low impact” received the fewest marks. It was interesting that almost all categories received the most ‘high impact’ responses from participants.

Theme two: Promoting oral communication in the target language. Questions 1, 4, 5, 7 are a representation of teachers’ feelings towards students’ speaking in the target language and strategies used by teachers to promote oral communication.

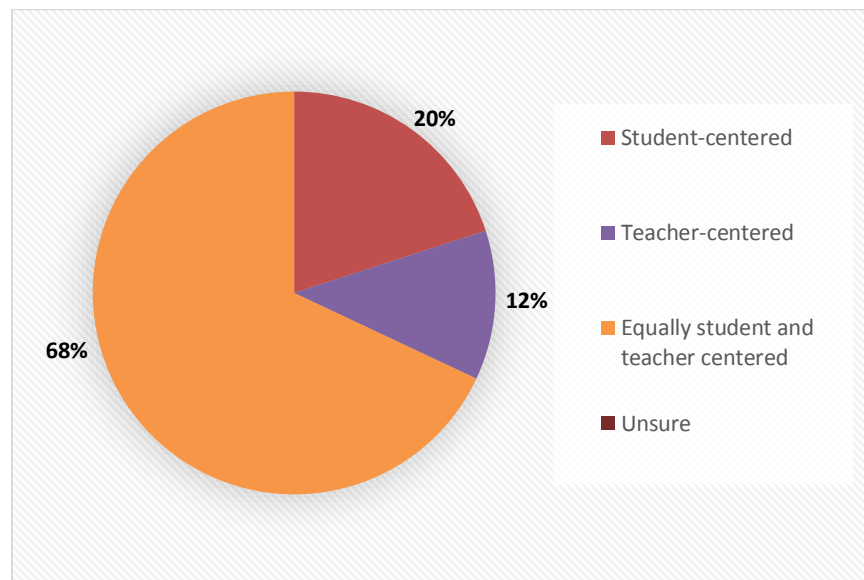


Figure 4. Item 1: What would you consider your teaching style?

The data shown in Figure 4 represents the different teaching styles used by the respondents in their own language classrooms. The majority of respondents (68%) marked that they have an equally student- and teacher-centered teaching style. Twenty percent of teachers feel they have a student-centered teaching style, while the smallest percentage of teachers (12%) consider their teaching style to be teacher-centered. There were no respondents who were unsure of their teaching style.

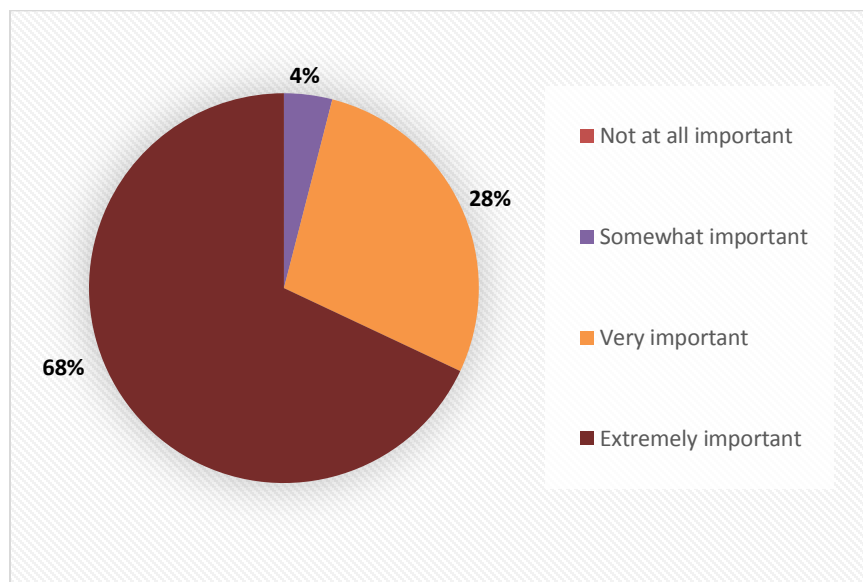


Figure 5. Item 4: How important do you consider oral communication in the target language?

The results shown in Figure 5 reveal how important respondents feel speaking in the target language is. The majority of teachers (68%) felt that speaking in the target language is extremely important. Twenty-eight percent felt that speaking is very important while only 4% of respondents felt that speaking is only somewhat important. No respondents felt that oral communication has no importance. This data demonstrates the importance speaking in the target language holds to participants.

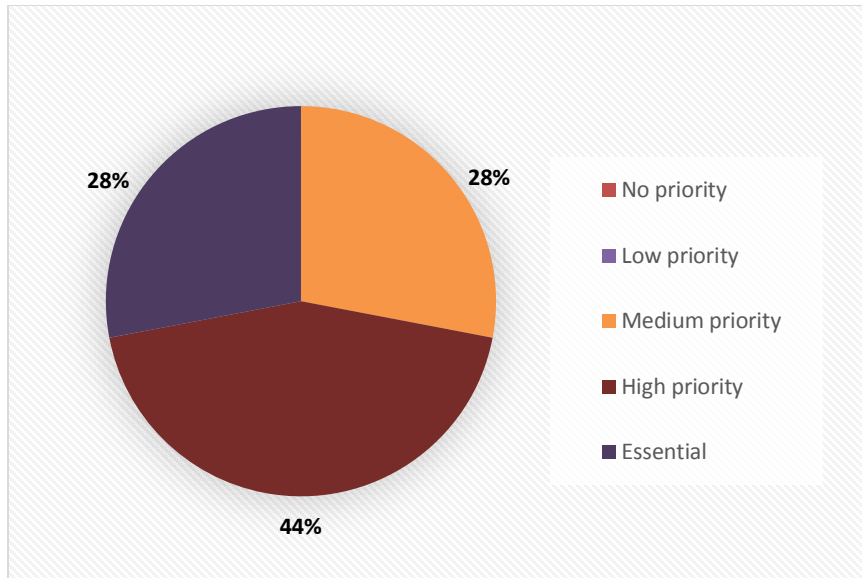


Figure 6. Item 5: What priority do you give to oral communication in the target language in your classroom?

Figure 6 represents the priority that teachers give to oral communication in the target language in their classrooms. The majority of teachers (44%) give high priority to oral communication. Just over a quarter of the respondents (28%) believe that speaking in the target language is an essential element in their language classrooms. Twenty-eight percent of teachers also felt that speaking should be given medium priority. No teachers felt that they give no or low priority to speaking in the target language. This data illustrates the priority language teachers give to speaking in the target language in their classrooms.

Table 4

Item 7: What do you do to create a positive learning environment in your classroom?

Respondent	Response
1	Make it informal and low risk. They first do things on their own, then with a partner/ small group, and then we regroup as a class.
2	Bolster the idea that language classrooms allow mistakes. Fess up to my mistakes, and use smaller group communication activities.
3	Classroom visuals and decorations, my attitude and openness, my availability to students
4	Students are told at the beginning of the year that this is meant to be a learning experience and that no one is expected to become bilingual by the end of their foreign language classes in high school. When students make errors, no one is allowed to laugh or correct them rudely. They are encouraged to provide positive feedback and to simply correct errors gently with comments such as "I think it's pronounced like this..." or "The YO form always ends in an 'o' so it should be..."
5	constant practice with guided instruction
6	I try to use humor and levity to help the students relax. We also repeat specific phrases in conversation (saying Bonjour in the morning, practicing the weather). This seems to help the students gain confidence. We also have a saying, "what happens in French class, stays in French class!" That means that they are not allowed to tease each other outside of class over what might happen during class time.
7	get to know my students and try to relate to them
8	constant encouragement, easy going, make it fun
9	I frequently use praise words in Spanish, and insist that we are all respectful of each other and quiet when someone is speaking.
10	Try to make it comfortable
11	*Items may be left blank if I have different answers for different students/ goals/ conditions.
12	1. Create my speaking topics around their interests weekly.
13	I use data analysis (in which the students are involved as both collectors and analyzers) and careful observation of what I describe as micro-misbehavior to keep everyone on task and engaged with the learning. [I manage things like where student's toes point and data points like how many pen tips are touching paper at a given time.] When everyone is on task, it is easy for me to have positive interactions with students, and because there is no bullying or off-task outbursts, it is easy for students to have positive interactions with one another.
14	positive feedback, positive corrections, sense of humor

Table continued

15	I reassure my students that mistakes are accepted and expected. My students understand that I, by no means, expect them to be perfect. When needed, I have also had discussions with their English speaking peers about accepting mistakes and why it is so important to not ridicule or embarrass another student when he/ she makes a mistake.
16	Group and partner activities, rewards, participation points, daily routine and schedule, encouraging working together.
17	I differentiate tasks according to learning levels. This helps to make more students feel successful. Also, positive feedback works best with my students.
18	I do not allow put downs of the self, others, or language. I try to foster excitement about learning Spanish.
19	I try my best to let my students know that my room is a safe place. I tell them it is ok to mispronounce the words at first. What is most important is to try. I also try to not immediately correct my students' Spanish. I'm not looking for perfection. I'm looking for the desire to use a language.
20	Positive proactive approach to behavioral issues Emphasize treating others the way you want to be treated Model ideal behavior Positive Reinforcement
21	I try to always explain why we are doing something and how it will benefit them in the future. I push for them to try because mistakes are ok as long as we are learning from them. I build relationships with my students and let them know I care for them and their success in and out of school.
22	Everyone is encouraged to participate/ answer in the TL. The room is colorful, displays many different aspects of the TL culture, promoting the TL. We often do short, informal speaking tasks in TL.
23	I do a great deal of scaffolding. I design projects in cooperation with my students, with emphasis on authentic oral and written communication. I allow them to lead me to the topics in which they are interested. This provides powerful motivation because the students truly want to communicate their opinions, ideas and commentary.
24	Move slowly at first to give them confidence in class at their 1 st exposure to a LOTE. Do a variety of speaking activities that are in pairs or groups of 4- not in front of the entire class. Is a student makes a mispronunciation when offering up an answer to the entire class- I say "oops – not quite – let's all practice that one" and I have the entire class repeat after me with the correct pronunciation. If I call on someone to answer and they are struggling – I will say "that is a rough one – let's all practice it" and have the entire class repeat it after me. I do not single students out to have to repeat the word or phrase all by themselves.
25	Allow a lot of paired work. Try to incorporate student interests. I am flexible based on student needs.

Table 4 is a collection of teachers' responses to the survey question of what they do to create a positive environment in their classrooms. There appeared to be quite a variation in the responses. However, there were several common themes throughout the responses. One common theme was making students feel comfortable. Participants offered a variety of ways to achieve this. Getting to know students and their interests was mentioned by several respondents. One respondent specifically wrote that he or she used the students' interests in speaking activities. Simple suggestions such as making the classroom an inviting and comfortable place with visuals and colorful décor were also offered in several responses.

Teacher modeling and guided instruction was also a common thread among responses. This directly aligns with research from Kayaoglu & Saglamel (2015) that says teachers are an important variable in the learning process. Several respondents wrote that teachers' expectations also influence the classroom environment. Students should know that making mistakes is okay. Teachers' choices in the class have a lot of influence on the classroom environment. Beginning with small groups and working up to whole class. Not putting students on the spot, familiarizing students with the content, having a sense of humor and providing encouragement and excitement can also lead to a positive classroom environment according to respondents.

Theme three: Effective practices. Questions 9 and 10 are a representation of which teaching practices these current language teachers have found to be effective in promoting their students' oral communication in the target language.

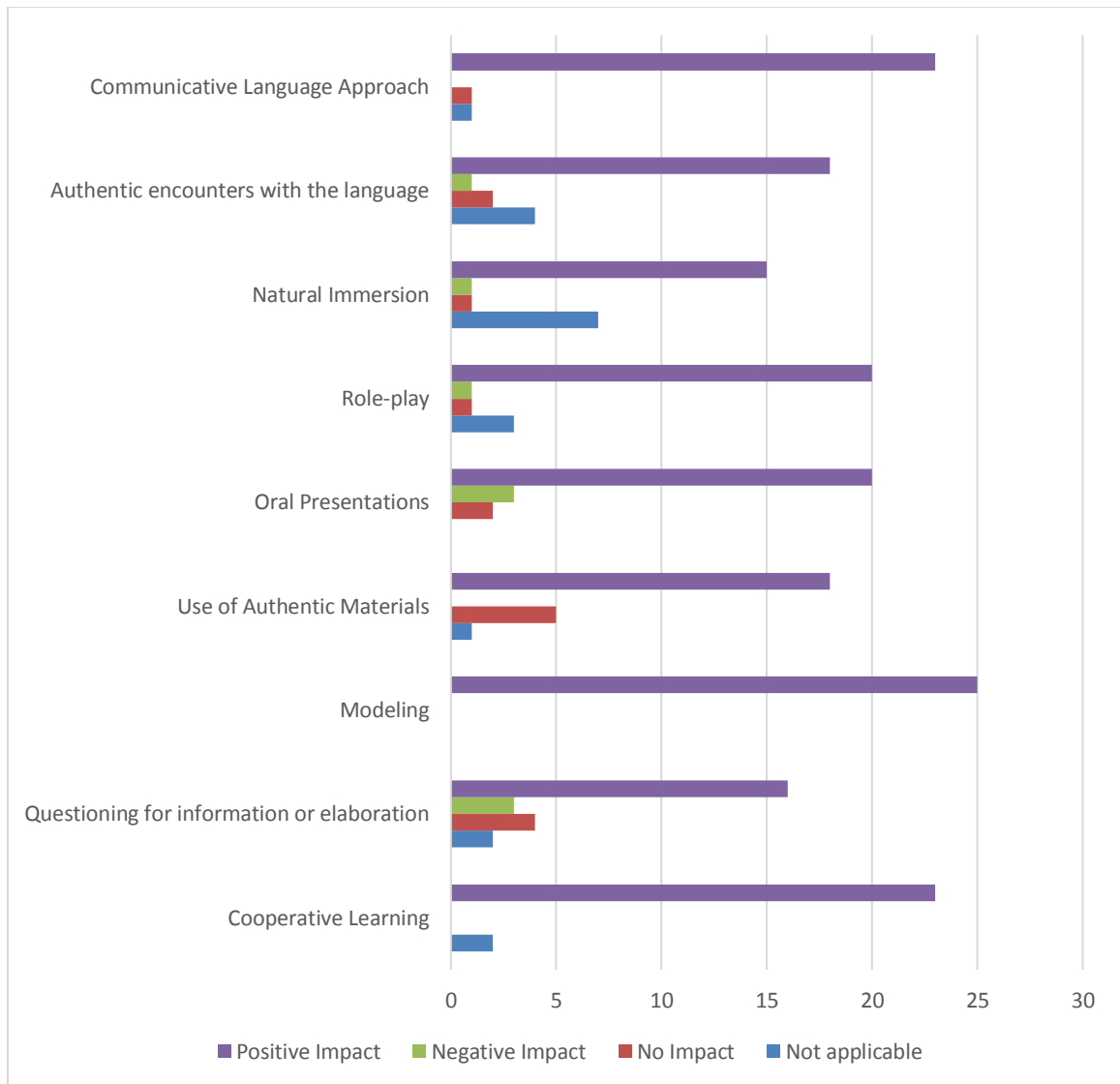


Figure 7. Item 9: Please rate the impact the following speaking strategies have on oral communication (in the target language) in your classroom.

Figure 7 is a representation of the impact different speaking strategies have on oral communication in the target language in respondents' classrooms. The data clearly indicates that the majority of participants believe that each of these strategies have a positive impact on speaking. One-hundred percent of participants marked that modeling has a positive impact on oral communication. Twenty-three out of 25 participants agreed that both Communicative Language Approach and cooperative learning have a positive impact on speaking in their

classrooms. Out of all nine speaking strategies, the most respondents believed that natural immersion was “not applicable” to the question. This could be because participants were thinking of the limited or lack of opportunities their students have with natural immersion. Twenty percent of respondents, the highest percentage of all the strategies, also believed that the use of authentic materials has no impact on students’ speaking in the target language.

Table 5

Item 10: Strategies not listed in item 9 that you (the teacher) use to get your students to speak in the target language. Which of these strategies do you consider to be the most effective? Why?

Respondent	Response
1	None that I can currently think of.
2	Gallery walk (falls into communicative approach) Creative partner creation activities (writing skits, creating puzzles) in groups
3	No
4	I use cooperative learning as the main instructional strategy. Students are speaking and listening in every single activity to focus on the importance of communication. I think this is most effective because through speaking and listening, the reading and writing skills develop themselves. Speaking and listening are done the most in any language and are the most important skills to master.
5	One must constantly use a variety of strategies
6	Many of the strategies listed I will use with ‘think time’ That is, I allow the students time to process and even write a response or a dialogue to practice. As the lesson progresses, they become less reliant on the written and have begun to memorize the interactions and the L2 can begin to be use more naturally. I also use ‘I can...’ statement pages to help guide the students’ conversations when they are working with their classmates. This also helps to build their confidence as they begin to have a visual reminder of how much they have learned.
7	practice practice practice try try try
8	Visuals
9	No
10	.
11	Kagan structures

Table continued

12	I put up 3 controversial photos each day, i.e. social media topics (appropriate), world issues, tragedy, ANYTHING THAT SPARKS OPINION.....I set a timer for 10 minutes.....we usually go 25. This is Spanish 9 and only 4 weeks in. Yes, I am guiding, but they are part of the conversation. It's my favorite part of class.
13	The entire concept of limiting yourself to research-based teaching strategies to help students acquire language is very constricting. I have had great success utilizing purposeful group by everything but academic ability. An apathetic, disengaged, Spanish speaking male will learn more when partnered with the girl in class that the students consider beautiful. He many not care about learning English, but he does want to impress her. [I use many such pairings that don't depend on academics, not all of them include beauty as a prerequisite.] Constructing a classroom that harnesses peer pressure as a positive aspect of adolescent development is also helpful. Setting up a room so that students MUST all participate will make students encourage each other to participate so all I have to do is stay out of the way and watch the learning happen.
14	group work, choral response (early in units), bribery
15	I consider cooperative learning and authentic encounters with the language to be most effective. Additionally, while I find all of the listed strategies to be important, Fostering opportunities for students to interact with their peers in authentic situations, increases their abilities to communicate effectively in real world, school and social settings.
16	I think continual practice every day is the most effective no matter what method you use to encourage students to speak.
17	No
18	See above rubric. Also, providing meaningful student choice input (open ended questions, etc.) seems to be the most motivating for students.
19	n/a
20	Students must speak in the target language to leave the classroom and to ask for supplies.
21	No
22	List is complete. Questioning and role-play work very well.
23	I have used the TPRS method in the lower levels. It is very effective and engaging and promotes a great deal of oral communication.
24	Communicative Language Approach is the most effective because I design the activity to reach the objectives of the lesson and the meaningful/personalized aspect interests the students in engaging meaningfully in the activity.
25	I use speaking assessments. Natural immersion is most effective, as it is the best opportunity for real conversation and seeing the language in a purposeful way.

Table 5 is a collection of participants' responses to the survey question of which strategies not listed in item 9 that teachers use to get their students to speak in the target language. Many of the teachers found other strategies not found in the research to be very effective. These responses ranged from general to specific. Several respondents felt that the list in Item 9 was complete and did not offer any other strategies. Other respondents felt that the strategies mentioned in Item 9 were the most effective in getting students to speak in the target language. Some respondents did not offer any response at all. Other responses not mentioned in the previous question included fostering opportunities for students to practice speaking, practice, visuals, Total Physical Response (TPR) and using a variety of strategies.

Discussion

The research study produced several results. These results will be evaluated as they compare to reviewed literature and relate to the original questions of this study. The purpose of this study was based on three research questions:

- a) What do current middle and high school language teachers in Chautauqua County think is the reason for their learners' hesitancy to speak in the target language in their L2 or TL classrooms?
- b) Which teaching practices are these current language teachers using to promote oral communication amongst their students in the L2 or TL in their classrooms?
- c) Which teaching practices have these current language teachers found to be effective in promoting their students' oral communication in the target language?

All Participants Felt that Speaking in the Target Language is Important

All teachers who participated in this study felt that speaking in the target language holds a high level of importance in the language classroom. While the majority of teachers consider oral communication in the target language *very important* or *extremely important*, one teacher in the study felt that speaking is only *somewhat important*. These responses concur with prior research stating that oral communication is a desired element in the language classroom (de Saint Léger & Storch, 2009; Garbati & Mady, 2015; Rossiter et al., 2010).

All Participants Felt There Are Barriers to Students' Speaking in the Target Language

While no teachers felt that their students have *very poor* or *poor* speaking participation in the target language in class, all teachers felt that there were numerous barriers that prevent students from speaking. The teachers showed a strong understanding of these barriers in their responses which included feelings of embarrassment or nervousness, feeling judged by peers,

self-consciousness, lack of confidence, pressure from peers, the fear of mistakes, and the willingness to speak in the target language. These factors directly align with research from Mejía (2014) concerning stressors such as these and how they can generate anxiety.

Anxiety is a major factor studied in countless research studies dealing with language acquisition. All but two participants agreed that anxiety has a medium or high impact on oral production. This data coordinates with prior research from studies by Gregersen (2007), Jeong et al. (2015) and Kayaoglu and Saglame1, (2013).

When asked about the other factors that affect oral communication on Item 10 in the survey, the majority of participants felt that each factor had some impact on students' oral production in the target language. *Interest in the language* was the factor that received the highest number of marks from participants for having a high impact on oral production. Not one participant selected that it had no or low impact. Motivation to learn a language can have a large effect on the speaking proficiency of language learners (Hernández, 2010).

The majority of participants also believed that the other themes including lack of motivation, introversion/ shyness, extroversion, peer support and teacher support all impact oral production in the target language.

Successful Practices that Help to Promote Oral Communication Vary by Teacher

Item 9 in the survey asked participants to rate the impact different speaking strategies found in prior research have on students' oral communication. The majority of participants felt that all strategies, which included the communicative language approach, role play, oral presentations, the use of authentic materials, modeling, questioning and cooperative learning, have a positive impact on speaking in the target language.

Despite Item 9 asking respondents for other strategies *not* mentioned in the previous survey question, cooperative learning was mentioned again in several responses to Item 10 of the survey. The small groups typically associated with this strategy offer a more relaxed setting for language students. Students also use the language in a productive manner that is not as threatening (Mercer, 2015).

While some teachers believed that this list of strategies was complete, others found strategies not mentioned in the research to also be effective in promoting speaking. Personalizing the lessons to meet the needs of the students, finding ways to motivate the students, and simply providing students the opportunity to orally use the language were all mentioned.

While authentic encounters with the language and natural immersion were mentioned in prior research as being successful in promoting speaking in the target language, several participants felt that these strategies did not apply to their classroom or had no impact or a negative impact on oral production. In fact, natural immersion received the fewest number of responses for *positive impact*. This correlates to the research of Pellettieri (2011) which states that with limited resources and authentic situations, teachers can face difficulty with immersing the students in the L2 and its culture.

Research also shows that student-centered classrooms are more likely to promote oral interaction in the target language. Only 20% of teachers stated that they have a student-centered classroom. The majority of teachers (68%) stated that they have an equally student and teacher-centered classroom while the remaining 12% specified that their classrooms are teacher-centered. Student-centered classrooms allow students to make more choices about the content, and thus stay more engaged during the lesson as stated in research by Xie (2009).

Teachers Play a Large Role in the Language Classroom

Based on the results of the survey, teachers control many factors in their language classrooms that directly link to their students' oral production of the common language. Modeling, creating a positive classroom environment, their teaching style, how much they involve their students in the classroom decisions and the priority they give to speaking in the target language.

All participants felt that modeling has a very positive impact on oral communication. This data correlates with research from Garbati and Mady (2015), Hernández (2010) and Kayaoglu & Saglamel (2013). Modeling can involve exposing students to the language, showing students how to elaborate on verbal responses, demonstrating correct responses and pronunciation of the language.

While modeling can also be carried out by other students, teachers are still the ones who make this decision in their language classrooms according to research by Kayaoglu & Saglamel (2013). Teachers strategically use certain students to model information or respond to questions.

There are other decisions that teachers must make in the language classroom that has an effect on their students' production of the spoken target language. Creating a positive learning environment is one of these influential factors. Respondents to the survey stated that making the students feel comfortable plays a very large role. This can be attained through a teacher's sense of humor, helping students gain confidence in the language and fostering excitement. This is comparable to research by Mejías (2014) and Riasati (2014) who emphasize the importance of a positive classroom environment in that it can help to reduce anxiety.

The relationships that exist in the classroom also contribute to learning goals. Several teachers' responses revealed the importance of building relationships with their students and getting to know their students' interests to incorporate them into class content and speaking

exercises, as well as fostering positive relationships amongst peers. Teachers should help their students gain confidence in the target language. This is directly aligned to research by Kayaoglu and Saglamel (2015) which states that a teacher's support directly influences students' feelings about the target language. Forming daily routines, knowing how to appropriately group students and using a variety of strategies are just a few other recommendations offered by participants to encourage oral use of the target language in class.

Limitations

There were few limitations of this study that should be mentioned. The first limitation was the number of participants who fully completed the survey. This limitation was anticipated due to the limited number of schools in Chautauqua County. The schools in this sample are all relatively small schools with few language teachers employed in each school. The time of year when the surveys were administered may have also been a factor in the low return rate. While nearly half of the teachers chose to participate in the study, the other half may have been busy with the start of the school year.

The second limitation was from the number of years of teaching experience participants had. Six participants have 5 years of teaching experience or less. After more years of teaching, these 6 participants may have been able to offer more thorough responses. Inversely, there were 7 participants who had 20 or more years of teaching experience. There is a possibility that these teachers may feel out of touch with current practices and unable to give as current of responses.

Suggestions for Further Research

This topic generated a considerable amount of interesting data. If research on this topic were to continue, I would recommend that it be extended to include the language students' point of view. This would provide a better understanding of what they feel to be the barriers when it

comes to speaking in the target language, as well as what encourages them to speak. Moreover, conducting a comparison study on what teachers believe to be successful and what students find to be successful may provide additional information on successful practices for language teachers to use in their classrooms.

Further studies could also look at student demographics in order to see what other influences there are on their learning and performance. It would also be interesting to find out how much prior training teachers have received on strategies for promoting oral production, as well as whether the majority of strategies used in the classroom have been teacher-created or if they stemmed from a particular location, such as a workshop or textbook.

Conclusion/ Implications

This research study was designed to help determine which teaching practices middle and high school language teachers in Chautauqua County have found to be effective in promoting students to speak in the target language. It is important to look at how these results have answered the research questions and add to the existing literature to the topic. Overall, the attitudes from the teachers on effective strategies in promoting oral communication were positive. While teachers acknowledged there are many barriers that prevent students from speaking in the target language such as fear of making mistakes, there were especially high levels of support for speaking in the target language. It appears that language teachers in Chautauqua County are already using many of the strategies that appeared in the research including cooperative learning, modeling and creating a positive classroom environment. While responses from the participants supported the previous literature and research, teachers also gave several opinions and strategies not found in research. The respondents offered positive suggestions including personalizing lessons to meet the needs of the students, finding ways to

motivate the students, and providing students opportunities to orally use the language. It can be implied that language teachers in Chautauqua County are doing what they feel is necessary to help their students succeed. While there are some similarities amongst the respondents, their responses did vary. Teachers must do what they feel is necessary to reach their goals and choose the best methods that support these goals. Although the survey responses were not entirely conclusive, it appears that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach that can be taken in a language classroom.

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Appendix A

Email and Consent Form for Participants

Dear Language Teacher:

I invite you to participate in a research study entitled: *Promoting Oral Communication in the Target Language: Teachers' Perceptions of Effective Strategies*. I am currently enrolled in the TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) Master's Program at SUNY Fredonia, and I am in the process of writing my Master's Thesis under the supervision of Dr. Kate Mahoney. The purpose of this study is to gain insight on teachers' perceptions of oral communication in the target language, and to determine which strategies teachers find effective in promoting oral communication amongst their students. To determine these effective strategies, I have designed a short survey to be completed. I really appreciate you taking the time from your busy schedule to support this research.

If you choose to participate, you will complete a VOLUNTARY survey that will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. No names or email addresses are required to participate. Participation in the study is independent of your teaching assignments and evaluations. If you VOLUNTARILY choose to participate in the study conducted by Kayla Saff, please complete the following survey on SurveyMonkey.com™ by clicking the link below.

Your participation in this research project is completely voluntary and you may decline to participate altogether. There are no risks to participation. Your responses will remain confidential and anonymous.

- By participating in this survey I give consent to participate in this study done by Kayla Saff. I understand that I am completing a voluntary survey and that my name will not be used.

[Surveymonkey link](#)

Your participation is greatly appreciated.

If you should have any questions, please contact:

Kayla Saff
TESOL student at SUNY Fredonia
Spanish Teacher at Falconer HS
saff8694@fredonia.edu
or

Dr. Kate Mahoney
Associate Professor TESOL at SUNY Fredonia
kate.mahoney@fredonia.edu
716-673-4653
or

Judith Horowitz

Human Subjects Administrator and Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, Sponsored Programs
and Faculty Development, SUNY Fredonia

Phone: 673-3335 email: judith.horowitz@fredonia.edu

*Appendix B***Survey/ Questionnaire*****Demographics***

Language(s) Taught: English Spanish French German
Seneca Other _____

Grade Level(s): middle school high school both middle and high school

Class sizes: 15 or less 15 or more

Home languages of students: *choose all that apply*

English Spanish Chinese German Dutch French Other _____

Which of the following describes the type of language class you teach?

Foreign/ World Language English as a New Language (formerly ESL)

What is the highest level of education that you have attained?

Bachelor's degree
Working on a master's degree
Master's degree
Working on a doctoral degree
Doctoral degree

At the end of the current school year, how many years will you have been teaching? _____

1. What would you consider your teaching style?

Student-centered Teacher-centered Equally student and teacher centered Unsure

2. How often do you involve your students in the decision making process when it comes to the content, activities and class goals?

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

3. How would you rate your students' oral (speaking) participation in the target language in class?

Very poor Poor Fair Good Excellent

4. How important do you consider oral communication in the target language?

Not at all important Somewhat important Very important Extremely important

5. What priority do you give to oral communication in the target language in your classroom?

No priority Low priority Medium priority High priority Essential

6. What have been the toughest barriers in getting your students to speak in the target language?

Explain your response.

7. What do you do to create a positive learning environment in your classroom?

8. Please rate the impact each of the following appear to have on students' oral production in your classroom.

	No/ Low Impact	Medium Impact	High Impact
8.a anxiety			
8.b lack of motivation			
8.c introversion/ shyness			
8.d extroversion			
8.e peer support			
8.f teacher support			
8.g interest in the language			

9. Please rate the impact the following speaking strategies have on oral communication (in the target language) in your classroom.

	Not applicable	No Impact	Negative Impact	Positive Impact
9.a Cooperative Learning				
9.b Questioning for information or elaboration				
9.c Modeling				
9.d Use of Authentic Materials				
9.e Oral Presentations				
9.f Role-play				
9.g Natural Immersion				
9.h Authentic encounters with the language				
9.i Communicative Language Approach <i>(choosing activities that foster meaningful and authentic language use)</i>				

10. Are there any other strategies not listed above that you use to get your students to speak in the target language?

Which of these strategies do you consider to be the most effective? Why?

Appendix C

CITI Form

**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS REPORT***

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Kayla Saff (ID: 3844238)
- **Email:** saff8694@fredonia.edu
- **Institution Affiliation:** SUNY - College at Fredonia (ID: 273)
- **Institution Unit:** Language, Learning and Leadership
- **Phone:** (716) 673-3111

- **Curriculum Group:** Human Research
- **Course Learner Group:** Group 1.
- **Stage:** Stage 2 - Refresher Course

- **Report ID:** 16836229
- **Completion Date:** 06/21/2016
- **Expiration Date:** 06/21/2018
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 100

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY

	DATE COMPLETED
SBE Refresher 1 – Defining Research with Human Subjects (ID: 15029)	06/21/16
SBE Refresher 1 – Privacy and Confidentiality (ID: 15035)	06/21/16
SBE Refresher 1 – Assessing Risk (ID: 15034)	06/21/16
SBE Refresher 1 – Research with Children (ID: 15036)	06/21/16
SBE Refresher 1 – International Research (ID: 15028)	06/21/16
Biomed Refresher 1 - Instructions (ID: 960)	06/21/16
SBE Refresher 1 – History and Ethical Principles (ID: 936)	06/21/16
SBE Refresher 1 – Federal Regulations for Protecting Research Subjects (ID: 937)	06/21/16
SBE Refresher 1 – Informed Consent (ID: 938)	06/21/16
SBE Refresher 1 – Research with Prisoners (ID: 939)	06/21/16
SBE Refresher 1 – Research in Educational Settings (ID: 940)	06/21/16
SBE Refresher 1 – Instructions (ID: 943)	06/21/16

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

CITI Program
 Email: citisupport@miami.edu
 Phone: 305-243-7970
 Web: <https://www.citiprogram.org>

**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT REPORT****

** NOTE: Scores on this Transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- **Name:** Kayla Saff (ID: 3844238)
- **Email:** saff8694@fredonia.edu
- **Institution Affiliation:** SUNY - College at Fredonia (ID: 273)
- **Institution Unit:** Language, Learning and Leadership
- **Phone:** (716) 673-3111

- **Curriculum Group:** Human Research
- **Course Learner Group:** Group 1.
- **Stage:** Stage 2 - Refresher Course

- **Report ID:** 16836229
- **Report Date:** 06/21/2016
- **Current Score**:** 100

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT
SBE Refresher 1 – History and Ethical Principles (ID: 936)	06/21/16
Biomed Refresher 1 - Instructions (ID: 960)	06/21/16
SBE Refresher 1 – Federal Regulations for Protecting Research Subjects (ID: 937)	06/21/16
SBE Refresher 1 – Informed Consent (ID: 938)	06/21/16
SBE Refresher 1 – Research with Prisoners (ID: 939)	06/21/16
SBE Refresher 1 – Research in Educational Settings (ID: 940)	06/21/16
SBE Refresher 1 – Instructions (ID: 943)	06/21/16
SBE Refresher 1 – International Research (ID: 15028)	06/21/16
SBE Refresher 1 – Defining Research with Human Subjects (ID: 15029)	06/21/16
SBE Refresher 1 – Assessing Risk (ID: 15034)	06/21/16
SBE Refresher 1 – Privacy and Confidentiality (ID: 15035)	06/21/16
SBE Refresher 1 – Research with Children (ID: 15036)	06/21/16

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

CITI Program
 Email: citisuport@miami.edu
 Phone: 305-243-7970
 Web: <https://www.citiprogram.org>



*Appendix D***HSR Approval**

7 September 2016

Kayla Saff
c/o Kate Mahoney, Ph.D.
Language, Learning and Leadership
College of Education
The State University of New York at Fredonia

Re: Kayla Saff—Promoting Oral Communication in the Target language: A look at Teachers' Perceptions of Best Practices

Your research project using human subjects has been determined Category 1, Exempt, under the United States Department of Health and Human Services Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Public Welfare, Part 46 Protection of Human Subjects, 46.101, Subpart A (b) (1) and/or (2). This document is your approval and your study titled "Promoting Oral Communication in the Target language: A look at Teachers' Perceptions of Best Practices" may proceed as described. **Your approval is valid from September 7, 2016 through November 10, 2016.**

Thank you for keeping the high standards relating to research and the protection of human subjects under the auspices of the State University of New York at Fredonia.

Thank you for keeping the high standards relating to research and the protection of human subjects under the auspices of the State University of New York at Fredonia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith M. Horowitz".

Judith M. Horowitz, Ph.D.
Associate Provost, Graduate Studies, Sponsored Programs
and Faculty Development
Human Subjects Administrator