Bonnie Griffin
SLS 6030
9/25/2015

Reflection 1: Learning Grammar

In all honesty, grammar is, without a doubt, my least favorite part about learning a language. Having never really taken a class in English grammar, many terms used to explain grammar in French were doubly foreign to me. Even when learning French, grammar was not the highest priority, and to this day remains my weakness in French. While this remains a frustration with upcoming papers to write, I think this will make me more considerate towards my future students who may also have somewhat unpleasant feelings towards grammar. For example, I will want to emphasize the "meaningful principle" (Brandl, 108) when introducing grammar contexts, because students will likely be more receptive when they can see how these concepts would be used in the "real world" to express meaning. Processing demands (109) are also something I will keep in mind, because it's still hard to not be intimidated by pages of conjugation tables. Even with these tools, though, I want to learn more about how to teach grammar to those who, like myself, may have had limited exposure to official grammatical classes in school.

It's interesting to me how different approaches to different aspects of language can lead to a better overall learning experience. I would make the comparison to teaching swimming lessons; do you just throw the new swimmer in the deep end, or teach them first to blow bubbles, to float on their back, to learn the doggie-paddle? From what I can tell, students are "thrown into the deep end" when the class is immediately taught almost entirely in the Target Language - but I learned this is incredibly beneficial to students, and is arguably worth the initial difficulty students have following along. However, regarding grammar, I certainly get the impression that a gentler, gradual progression of learning works best, just like how swimmers first learn one basic stroke at a time. Before taking this class, I would assume it best to do

everything gradually, but I can now see why rich input in the form of a class being spoken almost entirely in the TL is beneficial, but gradual grammar teaching may be better.

I want to share my reaction to the "self-instructional approaches" method, as this particular method really stood out to me. Personally, I don't think this approach is a good idea. Ideally, the strongly motivated student would prepare the night before, miraculously understand the grammatical concepts after studying the textbook, and come prepared for class. However, I'd be curious to see what this approach looks like in an actual classroom. Even if students were disciplined enough to do the reading and studying for the next day's class the night before (which they should be), there is a chance that they either slightly misunderstood the grammatical concepts, or they didn't understand the book's explanation, and they felt lost and frustrated. I feel like this method could give students a lot of anxiety, as they would ask themselves "is this even correct?", and since they would be at home, there would be no professor present they could check their answer with. I'd be interested to hear from professors who use this approach regularly, to see if students like or dislike this method.