

Teaching Philosophy of Second or Foreign Language
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It is a common quote told in different constructs that “different languages are different visions of life” or a Russo-Slavic expression: “for each language learned is another life to be lived.” Perhaps it is best applied in the following example in the words of Flora Lewis: “Learning another language is not only learning new words for things, but learning another way to think about things.” There are lenses which language is seen through, and the means of which are philosophically significant. Our relationship with the world is through language and the ways I have acquired languages, inspired by philosophy, have designed my teaching methods.

My approach to language instruction was initially inspired from reading the works of Wilhelm Von Humboldt, a 18th century Prussian philosopher and philologist. In many of his works, such as the *Philosophy of Language*, the original publications were multilingual; one paragraph was in English and the following may be in German. In reading Humboldt’s books, I bore witness to the effects of choice code switching, shifting between spheres of thought as the languages changed in the text. At this point I understood that Humboldt did so because the ideas were expressed more accurately to the meanings of the text represented in different languages. To the speaker, ideas may be best expressed in one language than another because the deep knowledge one has in their learned language differs from that of their native tongue.

Language in a Sapir-Whorfian ideal simultaneously reflect that the languages are an extension of self and in return the reality of the individual. In a sense, this is the reality of a monolingual, and when a second language is acquired, the person unhinges another reality that they can live. In overlap of linguistic realities, the person can connect to millions, billions of others whereby other means impossible. The learner’s self is expanded and transcends in a higher understanding of humanity. As character and structure of a language expresses the inner life and knowledge of its speakers, languages must differ from one another in the same way and to the same degree as those who use them.

My approach to teaching language is simultaneously from the bottom-up and from the top-down. Analytically, I specialize with morphologically synthetic and polysynthetic languages, those from the Slavic and Finnic families, from which I understand the importance of the smallest word piece’s potential to make the greatest syntactic or pragmatic difference in an utterance. On one hand I approach language as a naturalist, where language is a tool for people to navigate in nexus between cultures. I however extend this ideology to be inclusive to phonologic prosody, the music of language, often the most prominent identifier of language variety. In this approach in combination of functional grammar, a student will have the knowledge to construct utterances in their target language with the ability to make strong and concise statements. Since we require definite constructions in order to make pragmatic precision, lexical variety in combination with prosody is the optimal means of language acquisition from my diverse experience.