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Exploring the Construct of Teacher Self-Disclosure and its Connection to Situational Interest, Intended Effort, and the Learning Experience in a Foreign Language Learning Context

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Exploring the Construct of Teacher Self-Disclosure and its Connection to Situational Interest, Intended Effort, and the Learning Experience in a Foreign Language Learning Context

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Dedication

Für meine Oma Jutta und das Bildungswesen im Allgemeinen.

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Exploring the Construct of Teacher Self-Disclosure and its Connection to Situational Interest, Intended Effort, and the Learning Experience in a Foreign Language Learning Context

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Educators are commonly concerned about how to trigger students' interest in the classroom, as well as how to create a learning experience in which students are engaged and motivated to invest effort and time. Similarly, researchers have explored these variables and aimed to establish a better understanding of how students' interest is developed. Yet, less attention has been paid to teacher self-disclosure as a factor in students' learning experiences and interest development. Although teacher self-disclosure has commonly been addressed in connection with the teacher-student relationship it has not been linked to interest development. Therefore, with the goal of exploring the construct of teacher self-disclosure, this study explored associations and interactions of perceptions of teacher self-disclosure and of students' individual and situational interest in a language learning context. In addition, students' ratings of the learning experience and intended effort were added to investigate associations between these student variables and their perceptions of teacher self-disclosure and interest.

Data were collected in language classes of 16 different instructors. In total, 185

students participated in the qualitative part of the study, Phase 1, by filling out surveys at the beginning and end of the semester. For the main analysis, correlation and regression analyses were used in order to explore the relations between students' perceptions of teacher self-disclosure and initial individual interest, situational interest, the learning experience, and intended effort. Further, a total of nine instructors and eight students participated in the qualitative part, Phase 2, by agreeing to be observed and interviewed. Here, the focus was on describing and assessing the use of teacher self-disclosure in language classes,

Results indicated that teachers were rated as varying in their self-disclosure, but that self-disclosure did not account for much of the variance in students' situational interest. Qualitative results showed that students perceived teacher self-disclosure to be an important communication strategy and one of the influential variables an instructor can bring into the learning experience. Overall, this study makes a contribution to understanding the complexity and interactions of student and teacher variables that are crucial to establish a functioning student-teacher relationship and subsequently healthy learning experience.

Table of Contents

List of Tables……xiv

List of Figures……..……..xvi

Chapter 1: Introduction……...……1

Statement of the Problem……..……2

Self-Disclosure…….……4

Various perspectives on the construct of self-disclosure…….……5

Defining teacher self-disclosure……..……6

Teacher self-disclosure and students' learning…….……..7

Interest……10

Differentiating individual and situational interest…….11

Situational interest and students' learning…….12

Foreign Language Learning……...13

Characteristics of language classes in America…….13

Approaches to the study of interest in teaching foreign languages…...…16

Intended effort and the learning experience in learning a foreign language……18

Purpose of the Study……..20

Research Questions……....22

Research questions for Phase 1…….…….22

Research questions for Phase 2…….……....26

Conclusion……..……..27

Chapter 2: Literature Review……..…..28

Teacher-Student Relationships…….…….28

Self-disclosure……...……...…31

Defining self-disclosure…….31

Teacher self-disclosure…….…….…33

Defining teacher self-disclosure……34

Discussion on the effects of teacher self-disclosure……..…35

Approaches to teacher self-disclosure in

language learning……...38

Learner Motivation-related Variables……39

Interest……40

Definition of interest……..……40

Individual interest and situational interest…….41

Self-disclosure and situational interest……..43

Intended effort and the learning experience: two constructs form the

language learning literature……46

Conclusion…….……49

Chapter 3: Method……50

Phase 1…….……..50

Recruitment……51

Courses and participants……53

Background information……53
Measures ……...55
Initial individual interest……55
Perception of teacher self-disclosure…..……...……56
Intended effort……57
The learning experience scale……...…….…57
Situational interest…….……58
Procedures…..…….…59
Data analysis…….……..…59
Phase 2…….……...…60
Courses and participants……61
Demographic information……...…61
Procedures……..……63
Class observations…….…….63
Interviews……...64
Informal instructor interviews……64
Formal instructor focus group interviews……..65
Student interviews……..66
Data analysis…….……..…67
Constant comparative method……67
Coding……..…….….68
Data credibility…….…..68

Addressing biases……...68

Chapter 4: Results……70

Preliminary Analyses……70

Results for RQ 1……..……..71

Initial individual interest measure (Time 1)…….……71

Individual interest measure (Time 2)…….……75

Situational interest measure…….……..77

Intended effort measure…….....78

Learning experience measure…….……...79

Perception of teacher self-disclosure measure……...……81

Results for RQ 2……..……..85

Results for RQ 3……....87

Time 1……87

Time 2……89

Main Analyses: Phase 1 (Quantitative)……..94

Results for RQ 4……94

Results for RQ 5……97

Results for RQ 6……..100

Main Analyses: Phase 2 (Qualitative)……..……105

Results for RQ 7 and RQ 8……..106

Observational data…….…..106

Instructor interview data……..111

Instructors' perception of teacher self-disclosure……114
Student interview data……..122
Students' perceptions of teacher self-disclosure……..123
Results for RQ 9……..…132
Instructors' perceptions of relationships between teacher self-disclosure, students' situational interest, intended effort, and the learning experience…….132
Students' perceptions of relationships between teacher self-disclosure, students' situational interest, intended effort, and the learning experience…….138
Conclusion……...142
Chapter 5: Discussion…….144
Connections between Teacher and Student Variables…….144
Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Results……..…151
Implications for Future Research and Theory…….152
Implications for Practice……..156
Limitations……...159
Conclusion……...162
Appendix A: Phase 1 – Time 1 Survey……....164
Appendix B: Phase 1 – Time 2 Survey…….……...165
Appendix C: Phase 2 – Classroom Observation Sheet……169
Appendix D: Phase 2 – semi-structure interview questions……170

Bibliography……171

List of Tables

Table 1: Basic instructor information, Phase 2...……...……62

Table 2: Basic student information, Phase 2……..63

Table 3: Means and standard deviations for initial individual interest (Time 1).……..74

Table 4: Means and standard deviations for all measures by speaker status……..……...86

Table 5: Means and standard deviations for all measures by professional status…..……87

Table 6: Means and standard deviations for all measures by gender…….…...90

Table 7: Means and standard deviations for intended effort by ethnicity……..…..……..91

Table 8: Means and standard deviations for perception of self-disclosure, learning experience, situational interest and individual interest (Time 2) by requirement……..…93

Table 9: Means and standard deviations for intended effort by requirement…….…...93

Table 10: Means and standard deviations for measures at Time 2……95

Table 11: Correlation matrix for all measured variables……...97

Table 12: Mean and standard deviations for perception of teacher self-disclosure and the three levels of situational interest……..98

Table 13: Correlation matrix for perception of teacher self-disclosure and the three levels of situational interest……...…….99

Table 14: Regression model for situational interest and teacher self-disclosure, including initial individual interest as a covariate…….……..100

Table 15: Beta weights for regression models predicting situational interest…...……..101

Table 16: Regression model for intended effort, situational interest and teacher self-disclosure, including initial individual interest as a covariate……..……102

Table 17: Beta weight for regression models predicting intended effort……..……..…..103

Table 18: Beta weight for regression models predicting learning experience……..…...104

Table 19: Regression model for the learning experience and initial individual interest…….…….105

Table 20: Perception of teacher self-disclosure by data sources……...……..112

Table 21: Codes from interview data: instructors' view of teacher self-disclosure……115

Table 22: Codes from interview data: students' view of teacher self-disclosure……124

List of Figures

Figure 1: Proposed relationships and interactions of the variables……21

Figure 2: Boxplots for initial individual interest (Time 1).……..……..72

Figure 3: Means for initial individual interest (Time 1) by language…….……...73

Figure 4: Boxplots individual interest (Time 2).…….…..75

Figure 5: Means for individual interest (Time 2) by language.…….76

Figure 6: Boxplots for situational interest…….77

Figure 7: Boxplots for intended effort.……...……...78

Figure 8: Means for intended effort by language.…….……..…79

Figure 9: Boxplots for the learning experience……..……80

Figure 10: Means for learning experience by language.……..…….…81

Figure 11: Boxplots for perception of teacher self-disclosure……...82

Figure 12: Boxplots for perception of teacher self-disclosure by instructor.…..……...83

Figure 13: Means for perception of teacher self-disclosure by language..……83

Figure 14: Means for perception of teacher self-disclosure by instructor..……...84

Figure 15: Means for initial individual interest by requirement……..…….…….89

Figure 16: Means for perception of teacher self-disclosure by classification...……92

Figure 17: Total number of observed *personal* self-disclosure by instructor..……109

Figure 18: Total number of observed *distanced* self-disclosure by instructor……...….110

Figure 19: Combined totals of observed *personal* and *distanced* self-disclosure by instructor...……..…….110

Chapter 1: Introduction

One learning environment is never equal to another, as each occasion of learning is made up of diverse features that – in combination with the interactions of those engaging in and with it – allows for creating unique learning experiences. Some of these features are especially characterized by all that connects the ones who instruct, for example teachers, with the ones who are there to receive instruction, for example students. On the one hand, these links are established by individual factors that are brought into the experience, such as prior knowledge, certain levels of motivation, interest, effort, and so forth, and on the other hand by the factors that play a role in developing a relationship between both sides, such as expectations, interactions, and discourse. Mutually, teachers and students shape and influence one another to create an experience that ideally generates learning. In many cases, students enter (or exit) a learning environment propelled by a certain degree of interest (or lack thereof). However, the degree of interest can change as a result of the relationship, characterized by the exchanges that constitute the learning experience. Along with factors that characterize a student-teacher relationship, the goal of this study was to investigate students' perceptions of teacher self-disclosure as a contribution to students' situational interest, and potential effects on their intended effort and learning experience when learning a foreign language.

Within the last 30 years, the construct of interest has gained popularity in academic research and has been analyzed in various ways; for example in connection

with instructional strategies, such as task-based interest, or the ways it may influence or be influenced by the learning environment (Alexander & Jetton, 1996; Fraser & Picket, 2010; Schiefele, 1996; Wang, 2012). Most recently, situational interest has been found to be especially important in the context of assessment and classroom management (Rotgans & Schmidt, 2011b; Schraw, Flowerday & Lehman, 2001). However, most studies are based on assessing students' situational interest when engaging with instructional materials such as texts. Rotgans and Schmidt (2011a, 2011b) called for investigating the teacher's impact on students' situational interest in diverse learning contexts. One angle from which to do so is to look at how college students' perceptions of teacher self-disclosure may be associated with situational interest and predict the learning experience and intended effort of those students engaging in language learning.

Statement of the Problem

It is a challenging task for every teacher to organize and manage a class in such ways as to utilize strategies that are effective in creating a pleasant and stimulating learning environment in which students exert effort and learn. In this context, the construct of interest has received attention and established itself in the literature. For example, it has been found to be a predictor of students' academic achievement and learning (Bergin, 1999; Hidi, 2006; Mitchell, 1993; Murphy & Alexander, 2002; Schraw, Flowerday, and Lehman, 2001). The focus of most of these studies was on characteristics of learning tasks or materials found to be essential in triggering and maintaining situational interest. Only a few recent studies (Kim & Schallert, 2014;

Rotgans & Schmidt, 2011b) have begun to investigate the significance of the instructor or other factors within the immediate environment that eventually support interest and interest development. Although the literature has focused primarily on task-based interest development and skill development, teachers should not be left out of the equation as they are a key element in presenting such tasks, and serve a valuable role in providing instructional feedback that promotes learning processes.

From a different perspective, students' interests, along with other factors such as extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, values, and goal orientations, have been linked to teacher-student relationships and interactions, and consequently have informed instructional strategies (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). In addition, several studies (Andersen, Norton, & Nussbaum, 1981; Downs, Javidi, & Nussbaum, 1988; Nussbaum & Scott, 1979; Sanders & Wiseman, 1990; Scott & Nussbaum, 1981; Sorensen, 1989) that examined teacher immediacy behaviors have reported that teacher communication behaviors, teaching strategies, and interactional processes can have an effect on student motivation and learning outcomes.

In line with this idea, the literature on teacher self-disclosure describes the relationships of verbal as well as physical disclosures enacted by the teacher with, for example, classroom participation and out of class communication behaviors (Fusani, 1994; Goldstein & Benassi, 1994). Furthermore, Cayanus and Martin (2008) found that teacher self-disclosure is related to interest. Unfortunately, most of the literature on self-disclosure remains incomplete and controversial due to an inconsistent agreement in the current literature on interest across disciplines, as well as questionable methodological

approaches that have been applied to investigate relationships between teacher self-disclosure and variables such as interest or effort. In Chapter 2, I discuss these issues in more detail.

Therefore, in this study, I explored how students' perceptions of their teacher's self-disclosure were associated with their situational interest, as well as intended effort and the learning experience. Furthermore, the relationships among these variables were examined, and individual interest at the beginning of the semester was considered as well. Quantitative analyses, using scales to measure the variables, were supplemented by an extensive qualitative exploration to allow for a richer understanding of the construct of teacher self-disclosure and its interrelationships with situational interest and other factors.

Finally, the study was embedded in a certain educational context, namely foreign language learning. In the next sections of this chapter, I discuss in general the literature on the central constructs of self-disclosure, interest, intended effort and the learning experience. Furthermore, I provide a brief rationale for having chosen foreign language learning environments as the context for the study.

Self-Disclosure

In everyday life, we draw from our personal experiences not only to understand our actions and interpersonal relationships but also to make decisions about the future. Our experiences shape our actions, and us, and we oftentimes use these personal experiences as examples by self-disclosing them to others. Sometimes, we simply intend to share our experience, but we may as well utilize these self-disclosures as vivid

examples to inform or even teach others. Yet, by choosing to self-disclose information, we allow others to enter our personal space, and we simultaneously give away some of the control over the experience or the self-disclosed information in specific. Therefore, who self-discloses what and to whom under what circumstances or in what situations has become a matter of interest in academic research. In the following subsections, I briefly outline the origin and approaches to self-disclosure and further define teacher self-disclosure.

Various perspectives on the construct of self-disclosure. The concept of self-disclosure emerged in the discourse on transparency and the self (Jourard, 1964, 1971) in the field of communications studies. Research on who self-discloses what, as well as how, when, to whom, and with what effects information is disclosed continued especially in the field of psychotherapy (Derlega & Berg, 1987) and communications in which it has been primarily described as the (un)intentional revealing of information about one's self (Nussbaum & Scott, 1979). The general definition was later extended to include the more specific nature of the information that was disclosed ranging from areas such as education, experiences, friends and family, beliefs, opinions, leisure activities, to personal problems (Downs, Javidi & Nussbaum, 1988).

In the field of relationship studies, the focus was placed on emotional self-disclosure with attention to differences in self-disclosure by gender (Snell, Miller & Belk, 1988; Derlega & Berg, 1989). Research showed further that the role and gender of the recipient of the disclosed information seems to be as important as the information and

gender of the discloser in the first place (Snell, Miller & Belk 1989). Dindia and Allen (1992) acknowledged these findings but, instead of looking at gender differences, called for more research on the goals of why one chooses to self-disclose. This question becomes especially important in a learning environment and should also be raised about the instructor who chooses to self-disclose. Creating a better understanding of what the construct of teacher self-disclosure means and entails may help guide towards analyzing effective or strategic use of self-disclosure and the impact it may have on learning.

Defining teacher self-disclosure. The term teacher self-disclosure appeared shortly after the construct of self-disclosure was established in communications studies, and used to describe intentional and unintentional verbal disclosures about the self by the teacher in an instructional situation (Nussbaum & Scott, 1979). On the one hand, it proved itself as a verbal strategy to enhance teacher immediacy, which had been primarily defined by physical communication, such as body language, gaze, or gestures that teachers use when interacting with their students inside the classroom (Christophel, 1990; Sanders & Wiseman, 1990). On the other hand, in different disciplines, the construct of teacher self-disclosure has yet to be recognized, as many ideas represented in research around communication behaviors in the classroom overlap in their essence with teacher self-disclosure (Anderson, Norton & Nussbaum, 1981; Mazer, Murphy & Simonds, 2007; Myers, Mottet & Martin, 2000). It remains an important task to define clearly the construct's parameters and to distinguish it from other concepts that have been discussed in the literature.

For this study, only verbal acts of self-disclosure were of concern, and it was necessary to clarify what type of teacher self-disclosure such verbal acts entail. Phase 2 of the study challenged the existing definition(s) of teacher self-disclosure, and supported efforts to create a clear understanding of the construct. Yet, to begin the research in Phase 1, I had to choose an initial definition, and I began with the following: teacher self-disclosure is any personal information that is verbally disclosed by a teacher inside a learning environment and is characterized by amount, valence, and relevance. In a discussion of the usefulness of teacher self-disclosure as an instructional tool, Cayanus (2004) found these three aspects to be the most likely contenders in explaining other effects that self-disclosure may have on learning.

Teacher self-disclosure and students' learning. Research on teacher self-disclosure has focused on the students and their reactions. The most commonly cited studies are Nussbaum and Scott (1979), Scott and Nussbaum (1981), Sorensen (1989), and Wheeless and Grotz (1976), who approached the issue with varying methods. Considering the age of these studies one may argue that methodology and results are possibly outdated, especially when the goal is to apply or relate them to today's educational spheres. In fact, replicating these studies and potentially improving measures or methods may grant us further insight on the issue. Nevertheless, research has advanced modestly over the last 20-25 years.

Christophel (1990) found self-disclosure to be a predictor of affective and cognitive learning and behavioral intent, which opened up the path to the discourse on

motivation and emotion research. Anderman and Andermann (2010) strengthened the claim that self-disclosure supports motivation inside the classroom, and a fair number of master's theses and dissertations (Sydow, 2008; Geiger, 2000; Sweeney, 1994; Converse-Weber, 1992; Weiler, 2009; Aubry, 2009) have explored self-disclosure in several ways and documented the importance and interest that exists in the construct. Unfortunately, however, the more recent literature on self-disclosure in the field of education does not seem as cohesive as the literature on self-disclosure in relationship studies or communication studies. Karaduz (2010) wrote about linguistic acts that can initiate a positive emotional effect in the student. Although he did not call these acts *self-disclosure*, his descriptions relate closely to what has been discussed as teacher self-disclosure elsewhere. For example, he described how teachers who use a personal story as an example in a classroom discussion can elicit positive reactions in their students and impact their learning behaviors.

Gray, Anderman, and O'Connell (2011) aimed to identify good teachers as they were perceived by students and investigated what support teachers need to support motivation and learning in their students. Results suggested that student engagement was part of the answer and that the teacher could (and should) utilize strategies to support and foster student engagement on behavioral, emotional, and cognitive levels. In their model, self-disclosure was mentioned as an influential factor directly tied to relevance, with the claim that self-disclosure is useful for both supporting understanding and for building and maintaining rapport.

According to Gayle et al. (2006), there is still a gap in the research in terms of defining self-disclosure and exploring positive and negative examples of teacher self-disclosure and student perceptions. They stated, "the answer to the question of the value of self-disclosures may be quite complicated" (p.25). Nevertheless, it seems that the teacher has become more recognized by researchers. Gayle et al. further advanced the need to examine the role and effectiveness of international instructors in the context of classroom communication.

Along the same lines, Waldeck, Kearney, and Plax (2001) called for more research in diverse/global instructional situations and described the need in light of the changing face of education in relation to issues of diversity in a growingly global sphere. In fact, there are no studies examining how instructors actually use self-disclosure, for example, by way of discourse analysis, observations, or in-depth interviews, that would reveal concepts and allow to derive a theory of how self-disclosure works and interacts with students' learning processes, either cognitively or behaviorally.

Generally, the established research has focused on the student and the effect of instructional methods on affect and learner outcome, rather than on the instructor and his/her role and actual methods (Sorensen, 1989; Zhang, Shi, Luo, & Ma, 2008; Zhang, Shi, & Hao, 2009). More recent research (Punyanunt-Carter, 2006) included a look at international and graduate instructors, whereas other studies (Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007; Cho, 2007) have explored the use of technology and social networks, focusing on the "if and how" of instructor self-disclosure.

Overall, results on student perceptions of teacher self-disclosure are mixed (Nussbaum & Scott, 1979; Scott & Nussbaum, 1981; Sorensen, 1989; Zhang et al., 2008) and appear to be highly dependent on the teacher's use of self-disclosure, for example, its relevance or credibility (Cayanus & Martin, 2008; Gray, Anderman, & O'Connell, 2011; Wheeless, Witt, Maresh, Bryand, & Schrodt, 2011), or more generally, the course studied (Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007).

If self-disclosure can be used as a strategic tool to promote learning and improve positive learning outcome, it makes sense to explore how it functions in relation to other important classroom and learning variables, such as interest or effort. In the following section, approaches to and research on interest are outlined.

Interest

Interest is often described in connection to motivation, either as a variable of motivation or as being directly tied to it. In fact, in some fields, such as language acquisition, this is still the case, and interest has not yet gained much consideration as its own independent factor. Research on interest, however, has significantly grown within the last 20 years with an increase in studies investigating its potential in learning and instruction. In addition, defining interest has shaped the discussion of the construct progressively, summarizing it as "a psychological state of engaging or reengaging with particular content such as objects, events, or ideas over time" (Hidi & Renninger, 2006, p.112). In this context, several features of interest and how it develops have been commonly accepted, as for example, the role of the environment and the interactions

taking place in it. Early on, researchers agreed on a differentiation between individual and situational interest (Hidi, 1990), which will be discussed in the following.

Differentiating individual and situational interest. When we discuss interest and interest development, it is important to recognize that interest has two facets: a general interest in a class subject that is brought into a class, such as a language, math, biology, or interest on a smaller scale, such as in the moment triggered by the text or activity used in class. Hidi and Renninger (2006) named four sequential phases in their four-phase model of interest development that further speak to the two facets of interest. Here, triggered situational interest is followed by maintained situational interest, from which an emerging individual interest results that eventually leads to a well-developed individual interest.

Hidi and Renninger (2006) defined situational interest as the "focused attention and the affective reaction that is triggered in the moment by environmental stimuli, which may or may not last over time" (p.113), and individual interest as "a person's relatively enduring predisposition to reengage particular content over time as well as to the immediate psychological state when this predisposition has been activated" (p. 113). With this understanding, they established grounds for the importance of situational interest to precede individual interest as well as to be essential in interest development altogether.

The four-phase model of interest development further emphasizes the importance of affect, value, and cognitive processes that have been shown to have varying degrees of

importance at different points in time as interest develops. The focus of my study was on beginning language students, who may or may not have already begun the process of developing an interest in the respective language that they were studying. This was taken into account by using an initial individual interest measure. Furthermore, by exploring the relationships between teacher self-disclosure and interest, I addressed whether and how interest development may be influenced in the first phase of the model, such as by a factor that triggers interest.

Situational interest and students' learning. Mitchell (1993) defined situational interest to be based on two variables: *catch* and *hold* interest. He theorized that catch interest stimulates students' interest instantaneously in either cognitive or sensory form, whereas hold interest is based on the idea that students are invested in keeping their interest by creating meaningfulness in the learning context. Situational interest therefore plays a direct role in student learning as it relates to student attention, participation, and communication. In a language-learning environment, this becomes especially important as the nature of the class is interactive and continuously demands student involvement. The impact that teacher self-disclosure may have on situational interest, whether it be on hold or catch interest, can potentially translate in intended effort and the learning experience overall.

Foreign Language Learning

In this section, I review broadly the task of learning a foreign language in class settings, as this was the context of my study of self-disclosure and interest. There are many reasons why someone starts and persists to learn a foreign language. One person may choose to learn a language solely out of personal reasons, being intrinsically motivated or having a high individual interest in the subject, whereas another may do so only to fulfill a school requirement or to be a more competitive candidate on the job market. Coffey and Street (2008) discussed these factors as creating a language-learning project for a learner, in which goals, identity, as well as the environment, inform the learner's actions. Similarly, socio-political circumstances may impact the choices and persistence in learning (Brandt, 2001; Lantolf, 2000; Pienemann, 1981; Rampton, 1995).

Whatever the underlying motivation may be, learning a language is a project that requires effort and time. Some of the major approaches in language learning and teaching are discussed below, followed by a discussion of the constructs of intended effort and the learning experience when learning a language, constructs that were central to my study.

Characteristics of language classes in America. Most universities in the United States offer language classes to their students. Oftentimes, learning a language is even considered a prerequisite to be allowed to pursue certain academic majors, and in many cases, language study is tied into a degree plan as it is held valuable not only to know the language as a skill itself but also to learn from the cognitive engagement that goes with

the acquisition processes of a language. Usually, the variety of languages offered depends on demand and availability of instruction.

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages developed Standards for Foreign Language Learning (1996) to propel foreign language education and to prepare instructors for their tasks in teaching. These standards have since informed language instruction and curricula on multiple levels. In addition, language educators understand the need for certain classroom structures and management. These issues include class size, contact hours, extra-curricular offerings, and instructional approaches.

Although some languages are more popular, which means that there is a higher demand for classes, many institutions provide multiple sections of the same language so as not to exceed a certain class size. Though numbers vary, enrollment of 20 to 25 students per class is usually understood to be the upper limit for language teaching. Yet, languages for which there may be a high demand but a lack of qualified instructors may see class sizes that are even twice as big. This is often the case for Asian languages that have gained sudden popularity in recent years. By contrast, class sizes of 5 to 10 students in one class may not be uncommon for smaller language departments of so-called "less frequently taught" languages, such as Scandinavian or Slavic languages. These numbers are a result of these and many other factors that are in constant flux due to the influence of external forces.

The National Standards are therefore also useful in guiding the coordination of multi-section language classes. At smaller institutions, it is common to find only one

instructor responsible for a certain language, whereas bigger institutions or those with successfully integrated language programs will have a greater number of instructors. Moreover, if a school offers a graduate program in the language, it is common for graduate students to teach undergraduate language classes. On the one hand, they gain valuable teaching experience, which is especially important for those wanting to enter academia, and, on the other hand, they can finance their own education with their teaching.

Oftentimes, graduate instructors teaching language classes are international students or students with heritage background in the according language who can bring to life the cultural and linguistic background of the language class embraces. Thus, it is of importance to explore aspects of cultural differences through the lens of teacher self-disclosure in a language-learning context. Specifically, potential differences in students' perceptions of teacher self-disclosure in classes of native or non-native speakers may provide grounds for further investigation or may help establish a deeper understanding of how teacher self-disclosure functions in a learning environment in which the personal message cannot necessarily be separated from the material taught.

There is a general consensus on contact hours that a student should be receiving when learning a language. Depending on the type and level of the class, five contact hours split up across three to five days are considered standard. Many programs have established intensive classes that meet up to five times per week for the duration of at least one hour. Although contact hours usually refer to time spent in class, in light of

new technological advances and an overall increase in online classes, hybrid models are making their way into foreign language education.

Finally, the power of choice to study a certain language still remains with the student. This implies a certain level of initial individual interest in a student who chooses to study a language. In the next section, I outline how foreign language educators have approached the construct of interest in foreign language teaching.

Approaches to the study of interest in teaching foreign languages. In the field of foreign language teaching and learning, also frequently referred to as second language acquisition, research has primarily focused on form versus meaning as well as on type of input and outcome. For example, grammar-oriented approaches, such as the grammar-translation method were popular until the 80s and then made room for communicative approaches, allowing for a focus on the negotiation of meaning and use of interactional activities rather than on form (Breen & Candlin, 1980; Canale, 1983). Although linguistic acquisition and processing remain important goals in language learning, other factors and approaches, such as social aspects or learner-centered methods, have gained consideration in the literature and practice (Ellis, 1997).

In addition, an interest in learners' individual differences has allowed for research coming from other disciplines to inform the field. Yet, in some cases, research remained parallel with little influence on one another, and this is probably why the construct of interest in foreign language learning is primarily seen as a part of motivation and has often been discussed in combination with other affective variables (Krashen, 1982;

Gardner, 1985 & 2010; Dörnyei, 1994; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009), whereas in educational psychology, it has been discussed as a distinct variable, separate from motivation.

In the literature on foreign language learning, Krashen (1982) discussed what he called the affective filter theory, which consists of (a) motivation, claiming that those with high motivation generally achieve higher, (b) self-confidence, claiming that high self-confidence and a good self-image support achievement, and (c) anxiety, claiming that low anxiety, whether it be personal or classroom anxiety, and is beneficial in language learning. He further argued that the "filter hypothesis implies that our pedagogical goals should not only include supplying comprehensible input, but also creating a situation that encourages a low filter" (p. 32). In that context, Lin (2008) found Krashen hypothesized three factors positively to influence students' motivation and their engagement in the language learning process.

It remains to be explored whether teacher self-disclosure can have a positive effect on students engaged in learning a language, as it may support lower classroom anxiety and enhance the overall learning experience, and by triggering and/or maintaining situational interest, rather than motivation, can influence intended effort and therefore achievement. Because much formal exposure to a foreign language takes place in the language classroom, research needs to address further issues pertaining to possible influences of instructional strategies and discourse moves in such language acquisition environments that constitute the learners' experiences.

A careful examination of teacher self-disclosure as an instructional tool, and attention to its potential impact on students' situational interest and consequently intended effort and their learning experience, the latter emerging from the literature on motivation in language learning (Papi, 2010; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009), may connect constructs across several literatures. Results from such an examination may eventually inform a discussion on the role of the instructor and his/her communication strategies in triggering and/or maintaining interest, and of the value of using students' intended effort and learning experience as additional outcome indicators over and above performance.

Intended effort and the learning experience in learning a foreign language. Some of the most popular studies surrounding language learning are concerned with a learner's motivational and identity system. Dörnyei (2004) coined the term *L2 Motivational Self System* (L2MSS). Although the concept of the L2MSS does not directly target the role of situational interest or teacher self-disclosure, it encompasses aspects that suggest that associations may exist that could potentially lead to a better understanding of student motivation to learn. For the purpose of this study, the L2 ought-to self as well as the L2 ideal-self as used in the L2MSS were of no direct concern. However, the idea of the learning experience as part of a language learner's motivation was considered as a central part of the analysis. In the next section, I provide reasons for the focus on the learning experience for the study.

Within the L2MSS, the individual learner becomes central, and his/her motivation the focus. However, researchers from this perspective have not discussed interest but see

it as implied by the construct of motivation. Thus, the L2MSS seems lacking and incomplete if one understands motivation and interest to be separate constructs. A reason why interest is not included explicitly may be because Hidi and Renninger's (2006) four-phase model of interest development emerged around the same time as the L2MSS became a greater element in second language research (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). In the L2MSS, motivation is the primary concern, yet within the L2MSS, the term interest is used to identify motivational issues. For example, cultural interest is said to be an influential part within the L2MSS, especially in the formation of the L2 ought-to and L2 ideal self. Thus, my study has the potential to bring the literature on interest to inform and advance the field of second language acquisition, specifically in motivation research.

Papi (2010) used the L2MSS to explain how the motivational self-system relates to anxiety and intended effort. While it validated the construct of the L2MSS, he found that the strongest relationships to these variables were coming from the learning experience, which he defined as "learners' attitudes toward second language learning and (…) affected by situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience" (p. 469).

The learning experience therefore appears to be a valuable component in language learning and may be nicely tied to teacher self-disclosure. As previously described, teacher self-disclosure is a situational phenomenon and thus can potentially be seen as a part of the situated learning experience. Whether self-disclosure can be associated with learners' attitudes towards learning, however, was what my study aimed to reveal. The hypothesis I tested was that the more positive these attitudes are, the more attractive the

learning experience. Furthermore, a positive learning experience may be associated with triggered and maintained interest and lead to a stronger sense of intended effort.

Intended effort is another variable that has been discussed in relation to the L2MSS. Papi (2010) found that intended effort is "a mediating factor between motivation and success" (p. 468). In fact, he demonstrated how the learning experience had the strongest relationship with intended effort.

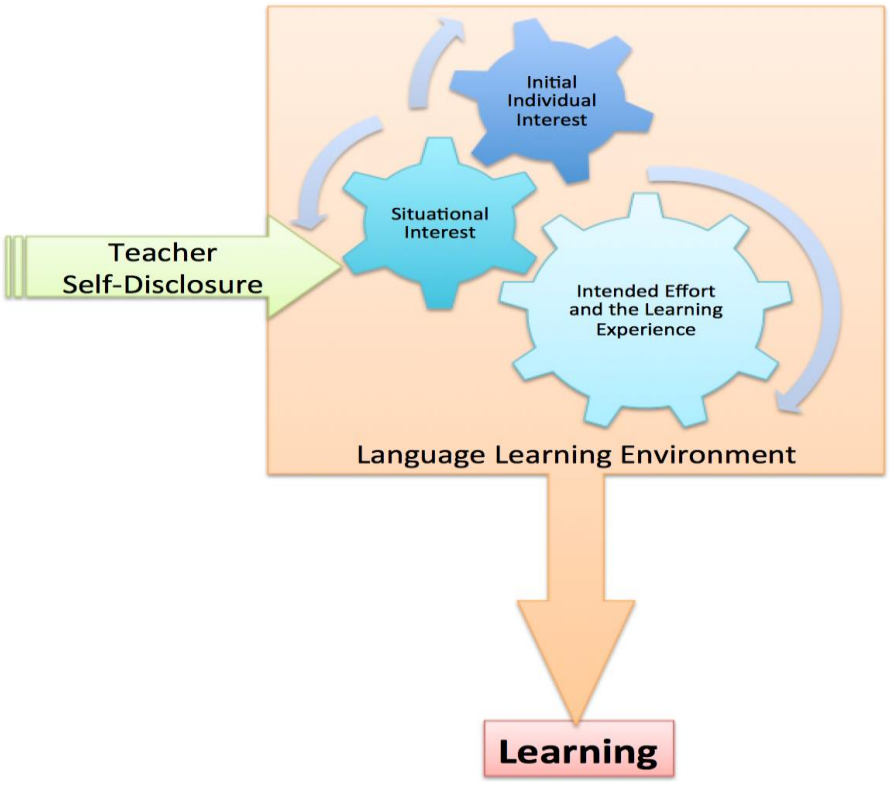
Furthermore, informing research on the issue of distinguishing motivation from interest, my study tested whether intended effort is in any way associated with situational interest and/or teacher self-disclosure. Assuming that positive self-disclosure leads to a heightened sense of the learning experience, I expected that the combination of self-disclosure and situational interest variables would be significant predictors of the learning experience and intended effort scores.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the construct of teacher self-disclosure as well as to investigate whether teacher self-disclosure was associated with students' situational interest. Further, the aim was to examine if these two constructs would predict intended effort and the learning experience of beginning language learners, while taking into consideration their initial individual interest to study a foreign language of their choice. The relationships I posited and tested through specific research questions are illustrated in the following model (see figure 1).

The model illustrates the overall hypothesis that initial individual interest to study a foreign language initiates the learning cycle and is further propelled by situational interest that will trigger intended effort and the learning experience to produce a learning outcome. Teacher self-disclosure is included as an external force that is hypothesized to stimulate situational interest further and therefore functions as a catalyst in the learning cycle. The model does not show the opposite direction, however, acknowledging a negative cycle will be important for the interpretation and discussion of the results.

Figure 1. Proposed positive relationships and interactions of initial individual interest, situational Interest, perception of teacher self-disclosure, intended effort, and the learning experience in a language-learning environment.



Research Questions

The research questions guiding my study are presented next. In general, the focus of this exploratory study was to create a better understanding of the construct of teacher self-disclosure and to identify relationships between perceptions of instructor self-disclosure with individual interest, situational interest, intended effort, and the learning experience. The study consisted of quantitative and qualitative components. The following research questions are divided into Phase 1 and Phase 2 respectively. The final research question targets a synthesis of both phases' questions.

Research Questions for Phase 1. The quantitative phase included exploratory statistical analyses using t-tests, ANOVAs, correlation and regression, as well as a calculation of internal consistency to investigate the measures used, and to explore any relationships that may exist between the variables. These are the research questions guiding these statistical analyses. The first three research questions are preliminary and used to establish the main analyses needed to be distinguished by language, or gender, for example.

Research Question 1 (Preliminary). *Are there any significant differences for the measured variables between a) languages for all measures, and also b) for instructors on the measure of student perception of teacher self-disclosure measure?*

Rationale. This question aimed to answer preliminary questions about general group differences that might exist and is grounded in the exploratory nature of the study. If analyses show differences across languages, further analyses and considerations for

interpretation should include investigations of underlying reasons for such differences, perhaps suggesting potential programmatic differences in the coordination of language programs. Additionally, results could shed light on further analyses of teaching methods and offer insights in how the language learning experiences of students in higher education are shaped. Finally, results to this research question may inform how to approach further statistical analyses.

Research Question 2 (Preliminary). *Are there any significant differences attributable to speaker status or professional status of the instructors when exploring the measures?*

Rationale. Similarly, information about the instructors needed to be taken into consideration for the full understanding and exploration of the constructs and results obtained in this study.

Research Question 3 (Preliminary). *Are there any significant differences attributable to students' gender, ethnicity, age, classification, prior experience, and requirement fulfillment, when measuring individual interest, situational interest, teacher self-disclosure, intended effort, or the learning experience?*

Rationale. Exploring the measures is tied to the sample and context from which data were collected. In specific, using students' demographic background information and evaluating the measured construct-related outcomes was necessary to allow me to examine the variables as they related to sample-specific characteristics.

Research Question 4 (Main). *Is perceived teacher self-disclosure associated with students' individual as well as situational interest, intended effort, and their rating of the learning experience?*

Rationale. Research has shown that teacher communication behaviors, such as self-disclosing personal information can trigger students' willingness to participate in classroom learning (Goldstein & Benassi, 1994; Karaduz, 2010). This was shown to be mediated by relevance, valence, and amount of teacher self-disclosure (Cayanus & Martin, 2008). Participation is a result of engagement with the learning situation for which interest has been found to be essential. Therefore exploring the association of teacher self-disclosure with the variables may reveal that it can predict higher situational interest, intended effort, or the rating of the learning experience. Furthermore, Papi (2010) has previously found a positive relationship between intended effort and the learning experience in a language learning setting, a finding that deserves replication.

Research Question 5. *Is perceived teacher self-disclosure differently associated with the three levels of situational interest, namely triggered situational interest, maintained feeling and maintained value situational interest?*

Rationale. Here, triggered situational interest might show the strongest relationship as self-disclosed information may relate to features that create what Mitchell (1993) called *catch interest*, comparable to the first level of Hidi and Renninger's (2006) situational interest. Yet, if the self-disclosed information is seen as relevant to the class, both maintained feeling and value interest might show a relationship as well.

Research Question 6. *Does perceived teacher self-disclosure, situational interest, or a combination of both variables predict intended effort and a positive learning experience when taking individual interest in consideration as a covariate?*

Rationale. Anderson, Norton, and Nussbaum (1981) as well as Downs, Javidi, and Nussbaum (1988) discussed how teacher communication is related to student learning; but there is no recent research connecting teacher communication to situational interest, effort, or the learning experience. In addition, research on interest has shown a significant relationship between situational interest and performance (Bergin, 1999; Rotgans & Schmidt, 2011b; Schiefele, 1996) whereas self-disclosure has been found to predict classroom participation and communication (Cayanus, 2004; Goldstein & Benassi, 1994; Zhang, Shi, & Hao, 2009). Therefore, a combination of both variables may be associated with intended effort and the learning experience. Further, it remained to be tested whether there is a link between situational interest and a positive learning experience. Nevertheless, some research alludes to the value of interest as a whole for the experience in the classroom (Bergin, 1999; Schiefele, 1996; Schraw, Flowerday, Lehmann, 2001).

Individual interest and situational interest are closely related (Hidi & Renninger, 2006), making it imperative to include this measure to identify any moderating effects initial individual interest may have on situational interest. Similarly, there may be a relationship between individual interest and the other variables, as individual interest has previously been found to be influential in teacher-student relationships and learning

processes (Bergin, 1999; Lawless & Kulikowich, 2006; Murphy & Alexander, 2002). Thus individual interest was used as a covariate.

Research Questions for Phase 2. The qualitative phase was aimed to explore and validate results from Phase 1 in order to fill out the picture of teacher self-disclosure, and its relationship to the other variables. The following research questions were answered using constant comparative method and triangulation of multiple data sources, including interviews, observations and reflections.

Research Questions 7 and 8. *How do students and instructors characterize, describe and evaluate teacher self-disclosure? What differences between students' and instructors' descriptions, if any, can be noticed?*

Rationale. Although the original definition of self-disclosure (Jourard, 1964; Jourard, 1971) informed early research on teacher self-disclosure (Scott & Nussbaum, 1981, Down, Javidi, Nussbaum 1988) and resulted in diverse appreciation of the construct, it remains necessary to explore the construct as a situational practice, to inform its definition and application for the purposes of instructional development. The questions served a descriptive and exploratory purpose. My hope is that results will contribute to a better understanding of the construct of teacher self-disclosure as it might be present in a language-learning environment.

Research Questions 9. *How, if at all, do students and instructors describe potential relationships of teacher self-disclosure with individual and situational interest, intended effort, and the learning experience?*

Rationale. Similar to Questions 7 and 8, the aim was to allow the qualitative data to inform construct development for a better and deeper understanding of the learning experience.

Conclusion

I have now introduced the constructs central to my study and presented the research questions necessary to explore the relationships and interactions that might hold between these constructs. In sum, through careful examination of teacher self-disclosure as an instructional tool and attention to its association with students' situational interest, intended effort, and the learning experience, this study sought to contribute to the conversation in the field on teacher variables.

In the following, I review the existing literature in detail. In Chapter 3, I discuss the methodology and data analyses procedures that were used to carry out the study. In Chapter 4, I review the results and finally in Chapter 5 I bring it all together in the discussion, including implications and directions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In chapter 1, I articulated the purpose of this study, outlined the major constructs of interest, and explained the research questions. To investigate whether students' perceptions of teacher self-disclosure is associated with students' situational interest, intended effort, and the learning experience and to inform the definition and understanding of teacher self-disclosure as a construct useful as an instructional tool, this second chapter presents the literature on the central constructs. My understanding of the relationship among these variables is situated in the literature on teacher-student relationships, learner variables, and foreign language learning. Therefore, in the following sections, I discuss the constructs and interrelationships as emerging from their respective literatures.

Teacher-Student Relationships

Teacher-student relationships are at the heart of instructional interactions, characterized by certain behaviors, communication strategies, and beliefs of those wanting to achieve effective teaching and learning (Beishline & Holmes, 1997; Long & Sparks, 1997; Sullivan, Riccio, & Reynolds, 2008; Zigarovich & Myers, 2011). Furthermore, teacher-student relationships are critical to classroom climate, influence the learning processes between and within individual learners, and can change over time (Gehlbach, Brinkworth, & Harris, 2012; Slater, 2004; Spilt, Koomen, & Thijs, 2011). For example, Komarraju, Musulkin, and Bhattacharya (2010) investigated how teacher-

student interactions were associated with the development of students' academic self-concept, motivation, and achievement. Thus, the nature of teacher-student relationships has been and continues to be of interest for educators and researchers wishing to understand various educational environments.

Recently, Gehlbach, Brinkworth, and Harris (2012) explored factors that potentially impact teacher–student relationships and student outcomes over the span of a school year. Their findings strongly suggest that situational factors as well as the role of the teacher, his/her instructional methods and interactional practices, influence student motivation and learning. Nevertheless, like many researchers before them, these authors concluded by calling for research exploring these factors.

In addition, current conceptions of teaching have further discussed relational teaching as comprised of mutual responsibilities, such as engagement, empathy, and empowerment (Edwards & Richards, 2002). Noddings (2012) conceptualized teaching in her construct of the ethic of care and the caring relation in teaching. She theorized about the nature of personal relationship, as well as what elements are found to be necessary to establish and maintain trust and care and the responsibilities springing from teacher-student relationships. She especially focused on the value of the processes involved in discourse, such as listening and reflecting as well as careful consideration of how we respond. "Dialogue is fundamental in building relations of care and trust" (Noddings, 2012, p.775).

Consequentially, it is not surprising that much research aims to explain how classroom communication functions in instructional situations (Gayle, Preiss, Burell &

Allen, 2006). Although communication can also be physical, such as by the way a teacher (or student) is dressed, moves, or engages with the other, the focus for my study was placed on verbal exchanges that occur inside a classroom.

Verbal communication has received much attention in the literature (Andersen, Norton, & Nussbaum, 1981; Downs, Javidi, & Nussbaum, 1988; McCroskey, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2006). For example, an association has been found between student communication motives, such as functional, participatory, or excuse-making, and their seeking of information as well as how they perceive the communication style of their instructors (Myers, Mottet, & Martin, 2000; Myers, Martin, & Mottet, 2002). In a later study, Mansson, Myers, and Martin (2011) discussed more specifically the traits of argumentativeness and aggressiveness and correlated these with students' motives for communicating with their instructors, revealing that argumentativeness was used for more favorable communication, such as relational or functional motives whereas aggressiveness proved significant for unfavorable communication such as excuse-making.

Although these studies have focused on student communication style, instructor communicator style or communicative strategies are just as important. Considering not only what, how, and with what motives or goals instructors communicate is an important field of educational research. In this context, literature has also discussed the issue of teachers' use of self-disclosure, such as by revealing personal information or using personal stories as classroom examples (Cayanus, 2004). In the next sections, I will discuss the construct of self-disclosure and teacher self-disclosure in more detail.

Self-Disclosure. In everyday interactions, we frequently share information with one another. Oftentimes, the information we share is personal and can serve purposes such as identifying ourselves in response to others by giving our name or revealing our feelings. Several factors influence, however, what we disclose, to whom we disclose, and why we are disclosing certain information. To foster an understanding of the concept of self-disclosure in general, I first discuss the problem of its definition, and then review in more detail how it has been used in instructional contexts by way of a focus on teacher self-disclosure.

Defining self-disclosure. Jourard (1971) conceptualized the term *self-disclosure* in her work *Self disclosure: An experimental analysis of the transparent self* (1971), and greatly influenced research in the field of communication studies and beyond. Many studies in which Jourard was involved dealt with different aspects connected to self-disclosure, such as gender (Jourard, 1961; Jourard & Landsman, 1960; Jourard & Resnick, 1970) and roles (Jourard, 1970; Jourard & Jaffe, 1970; Jourard & Richman, 1963), as for example, the influences of disclosures between interviewers and their interviewees.

Jourard developed and used in many of her studies a self-disclosure questionnaire that covered attitudes, values, interests, tastes, personality, as well as body and sexuality, to explore the idea of making ourselves "transparent" when we communicate with one another. Self-disclosure is understood to impact relationships between individuals and within groups. Especially in the field of psychotherapy (Derlega & Berg, 1987) and

communications, research on who self-discloses what, as well as how, when, and with what effect, then continued.

During this initial era, the general definition of the term was described as the intentional as well as unintentional revealing of private or personal information about one's self (Nussbaum & Scott, 1979). Later, the definition was extended to include the different areas that personal information can cover, ranging from education, experiences, friends and family, beliefs, opinions, leisure activities, to personal problems and political or religious views (Downs, Javidi, & Nussbaum, 1988).

The concept of self-disclosure gained popularity also in gender research, especially in terms of emotional self-disclosure. Snell, Miller, and Belk (1988) developed the Emotional Self Disclosure Scale (ESDS) and found women and men to be similar in their willingness to self-disclose. Some findings showed that women were higher in self-disclosure than men when disclosing information about depression, fear, or anger to friends or to their spouse, suggesting that it was important to consider not only the nature of the disclosure but also the recipient, that is, the person to whom one is self-disclosing. In fact, the gender and role or position of the person to whom the self-disclosure is directed has been found to be equally significant as gender and type of disclosed information of the one disclosing the information (Snell et al., 1989).

Dindia and Allen (1992) found comparable results when they investigated 205 studies in a meta-analysis. However, one may criticize that the studies in the meta-analysis were highly diverse. For example, methods applied in the studies included observations, self-report, as well as different questionnaires and scales. In addition, the

samples each of the studies used varied greatly in size and demographic make-up. Nevertheless, Dindia and Allen attempted to close the ongoing discussion on gender differences and self-disclosure, acknowledging that,

> Future research on sex differences in self-disclosure should study the different goals that lead men and women to self-disclose, the effect of different goals on men's and women's self-disclosure, and whether, given similar goals, men and women differ in their self-disclosure. (p. 117)

Turning attention to goals and motives of self-disclosure is in fact important to advance the research and find new answers. Moreover, goals and motives are influenced by environmental factors, such as the settings and circumstances in and under which communication takes place. In an educational context, the teacher may choose to self-disclose information in a classroom while teaching. His/Her goals will be influenced by the parameters of the class, and many factors, such as learner variables, become important. To explore these issues, the following sections deal with research on teacher self-disclosure.

Teacher Self-Disclosure. Teachers are situated in a specific environment, an instructional setting that is characterized by the interactions that take place and the relationships that develop in it. As previously discussed, these interactions and relationships further influence the learning and the experience as a whole. Further, teachers are in the position of defining the goals and structures of a class, which is commonly done through frequent communication inside and outside the classroom walls.

Nevertheless, what instructional strategies, including modes and motives of communication, are used is in the hands of the instructor him/herself.

This is why in an educational setting, the teacher is in the unique position of being able to use self-disclosure in instruction in any way he/she chooses. What researchers understand teacher self-disclosure to entail is discussed in the following section, followed by a discussion on what relationships between learning or learning-related variables and teacher self-disclosure have been explored in the general literature, as well as in foreign language contexts.

Defining teacher self-disclosure. Research on what became the term *teacher self-disclosure* started soon after Jourard's (1964) discussion of the transparent self. Recognizing self-disclosure in instructional settings was approached primarily through the students' lens, focusing on students' perceptions of their teachers' self-disclosure, or by looking at what factors made self-disclosure a valuable part of the applied instructional practices (Nussbaum & Scott, 1979; Scott & Nussbaum, 1981; Sorensen, 1989; Wheeless & Grotz, 1976). For example, Down, Javidi, and Nussbaum (1988) coded transcripts of audio-taped lectures to analyze teachers' verbal communication and explored the teachers' use of self-disclosure, humor, and narrative. Their findings showed that all three variables improved the clarity of the information presented.

The methods that were used in these early studies ranged from recording and transcribing audio-recordings of lectures to collecting and analyzing survey data. Overall, results pointed to the value of using self-disclosure in instructional settings, but it is arguable whether one can relate these results to today's educational spheres. For

example, institutional policies, curricula, and the demographics of students and faculty may have changed significantly. As a consequence, it may be worthwhile to replicate some of these studies to improve measures and methods as well as to provide further insight on the conceptualization of teacher self-disclosure. Yet, these early findings have established grounds for the usefulness and importance of teacher self-disclosure and generated a consensus on how to understand teacher self-disclosure.

In sum, the most important characteristic that distinguishes teacher self-disclosure is that it is situated in an instructional environment, such as a classroom. However, at this point, researchers have yet to come to a consensus on whether teacher self-disclosure includes both verbal and physical disclosures, as well as whether it is confined by classroom walls or extends beyond to include self-disclosure that can occur when students and their teachers meet on coincidence, as when shopping for groceries.

For the purpose of this study teacher self-disclosure was defined as the intentional as well unintentional revealing of personal or private information within the classroom during the time of instruction. Yet, it is important to acknowledge other channels through which teacher self-disclosure could potentially take place. The next section deals with the literature on the effects of teacher self-disclosure. Here, I will include only those studies that meet my definition of the term as discussed above.

Discussion on the effects of teacher self-disclosure. As mentioned, older studies (Downs, Javidi, & Nussbaum, 1988; Scott & Nussbaum, 1981; Sorensen, 1989) found that self-disclosure is a primary factor – usually interpreted on a continuum from positive

to negative – that impacts teaching effectiveness, and is closely related to classroom climate, liking of a course or teacher, as well as student learning outcomes.

Nevertheless, a few studies in the last 20-25 years have begun to advance the research on teacher self-disclosure. It was found that teacher self-disclosure is a verbal strategy that can be utilized to enhance teacher immediacy (Christophel, 1990). However, the literature also generated some confusion, as teacher immediacy was primarily measured through physical indicators, such as language, gaze, or gestures that teachers used in their interactions with students inside the classroom. Yet, Sanders and Wiseman (1990) showed how verbal as well as non-verbal strategies improve learning, and others incorporated self-disclosure in their understanding of communication styles and behaviors (Anderson, Norton, & Nussbaum, 1981; Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007; Myers, Martin, & Mottet, 2001; Myers, Mottet, & Martin, 2000). Oftentimes, self-disclosure was placed in close connection with verbal and non-verbal immediacy behaviors.

Christophel (1990) found that teacher self-disclosure predicts affective and cognitive learning and behavioral intent, thereby making a connection to the field of motivational and emotional research. In that context, Gray, Anderman, and O'Connell (2011) argued that positive self-disclosure inside the classroom was supportive of the development of motivation, that remained to be explained how it can be initiated in the learning environment. Myers, Mottet, and Martin (2000) and Myers, Martin, and Mottet (2002) may provide an initial rationale. They found that teacher self-disclosure was in relationship with the use of humor as well as relevance of the disclosed information.

Gray et al. (2011) explored students' perceptions of what they understood to be *good* teachers and tried to identify what it is that teachers needed in order to create a motivational learning experience. Student engagement proved to be an essential part and simultaneously raised the question about what strategies should be utilized to enhance student engagement. Their model depicted self-disclosure as a significant factor of relevance, which in turn was described as important when creating and implementing a success-oriented strategy. Here, self-disclosure was assumed to be essential for understanding as well as for building and maintaining rapport.

According to J. McCroskey, Richmond, and L. McCroskey (2006), researchers still need to explore and define positive and negative teacher self-disclosure and gain a better understanding of students' perceptions and the possible effects of self-disclosure. They stated that "the answer to the question of the value of self-disclosures may be quite complicated" (p. 25). Along similar lines, Waldeck, Kearney, and Plax (2008) called for more research in diverse or global instructional settings. In light of the changing face of education through technology, they described the need for further investigation of teacher-student communication in the use of email or social networks. A few studies (Mazer et al., 2007; Cho, 2007) have focused on the use of technology and social networks and have begun the discussion about teacher self-disclosure in online communities, but a thorough examination of what forms or types of self-disclosure instructors actually employ or prefer to use, and why remains to be done. Observations and in depth interviews are necessary to reveal possible benefits or disadvantages of self-disclosure in such teacher-student communication.

More recently, Punyanunt-Carter (2006) looked at international and graduate instructors and on student perceptions of teacher self-disclosure. Results were mixed, and it appeared that perceptions were highly dependent on the teacher or course studied (Cayanus & Martin, 2004). If self-disclosure can be utilized as a strategic tool to promote learning and improve positive learning outcomes, it makes sense to study how self-disclosure is actually done in certain contexts.

In fact, Antaki, Barnes, and Leudar (2005) discussed the difficulty of even identifying self-disclosure in discourse and questioned strongly whether results can be generalized. They argued for the meaningfulness of self-disclosure "in production" and called for an understanding of self-disclosure as an interactional and situated practice. Therefore, it would seem important to establish a clear understanding of what is understood by self-disclosure by grounding it in a particular context. For this study, this was achieved by looking at teachers and students in language learning settings. The next section discusses existing literature on self-disclosure in this particular context.

Approaches to teacher self-disclosure in language learning. Because my study was situated in a language learning environment, I wanted to review literature within the field of second language acquisition that looks at self-disclosure, but found it impossible to locate any studies or research that looked at self-disclosure – whether it be teacher or student self-disclosure, verbal or physical, inside or outside the classroom – in a language learning context. I assume that the construct of teacher self-disclosure, which originated in the field of communication studies, has not yet made its way into second language

studies, especially if we understand it to carry potential to impact learner variables, as the ones discussed in the following sections.

A similar situation is present for the research on the construct of interest, which will be discussed in the following sections. Language acquisition research has increasingly concentrated on motivation as well as on identity studies (Block, 2009; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009; Gardner, 2010; Murray, Gao & Lamb, 2011; Ortega, 2009). Ortega (2009) called the area of motivation in second language acquisition "a vibrant landscape of change," implying countless opportunities to explore and advance research. Therefore, I now turn to explain constructs related to motivation, namely, interest as well as intended effort, and the learning experience.

Learner Motivation-related Variables

In the previous sections, I touched upon issues that illustrate the complexity of teacher-student relationships and focused on the construct of self-disclosure as one variable that can potentially influence other variables that eventually and ideally lead to learning. In the next sections, I discuss the literature of three learner variables that are equally important, namely the constructs of interest, intended effort, and the learning experience.

Interest. We sometimes talk about interest and motivation without giving it much thought. We say that we are interested (or not) in a task or activity, or we talk about being motivated (or not) to do a task or activity. In educational settings, both motivation and interest are said to influence the learning outcome. Therefore, researchers have found it important to differentiate the two. Research on interest has significantly increased within the last two decades. In fact, the sharp increase in motivational research has brought with it the question of whether interest is already included in current motivational constructs, or whether it is a construct deserving separate attention.

For example, leading motivational theorists Ryan and Deci (2000) used the term *inherently interested* when defining intrinsic motivation in self-determination theory. However, researchers have continued to debate whether interest is similar to or the same as intrinsic motivation. Schiefele (1991) discussed how aspects of interest have been neglected, and approached the topic by examining the interrelations of interest with motivation and learning. He rooted research on interest historically, for example, in the work of Dewey (1913) and James (1950) who discussed the concept as a personal matter that plays an influential role in learning. However, Schiefele further expounded on how interest can be defined and employed in various ways in explaining differences in learning.

Definition of interest. As a consequence, attempting to define interest and developing a theory of interest has further characterized the recent research. Renninger, Hidi, and Krapp (1992) described interest as "a critical bridge between cognitive and affective issues in both learning and development" (p. xi). In their development of a

theory of interest, they argued for a differentiation between *situational* and *individual* (also called *personal*) interest. In their later work, Hidi and Renninger (2006) elaborated on this idea and developed a four-phase model describing how interest develops and establishes itself. Hidi and Renninger also discussed the implications these changes in interest have for researchers when talking about and using the construct in their research.

Subsequent research (Durik & Harackiewicz, 2007) also connected individual (or personal) interest directly to how an individual approaches a certain task. By contrast, situational interest depends on factors that can lie outside the individual, but are yet important and impactful to the task. In the following, I review definitions of individual and situational interest.

Individual interest and situational interest. Individual interest has primarily been described as a long-term characteristic of a person who repetitively engages in an activity or task within a certain domain or knowledge area. Schiefele (1991) identified a feeling-related component that he described as the "association of an object or object-related activity with positive feelings, especially enjoyment and involvement" (p. 303), and a value-related component as the "attribution of personal significance to an object" (p. 303). Studies exploring this idea primarily have done so by using students' engagement with text (Durik & Harackiewicz, 2006; Lehman, Schraw, McCrudden, & Hartley, 2007; McCrudden & Schraw, 2007; Schiefele 1996).

Alexander and Jetton (1996) suggested that importance is a key element in successful interest development in text-based learning tasks, and Lawless and Kulikowich (2006) later explored the impact of domain knowledge on interest. In both

studies interrelations existed that further pointed to the need to examine situational interest more closely. Situational interest has theoretically been described as an antecedent to personal interest, but so far only a few recent studies (Harackiewicz et al., 2008; Linnenbrink-Garcia, Patall, & Messersmith, 2012) have established that individual interest can also change, or result from, situational interest.

Durik and Harackiewicz (2007) defined situational interest as "a reaction to specific cues in the environment (…)[as well as] captivating or attention grabbing (…) [and] bound to the particular situation" (p. 598). In addition, Mitchell (1993) and later Harackiewicz et al. (2008) distinguished situational factors that influence interest as "catch" and "hold" interest. *Catch interest* can be seen as the equivalent of what Schiefele (1991) named the feeling-related component of individual interest and is defined as "affective reactions," whereas *hold interest* is the value-related component defined as "feelings about and personal valuing" (Harackiewicz et al., 2008, p. 109). Clearly, the main point of situational interest when applied to course-related learning is that it is situated in the course, the material, and potentially the teacher of the course.

To date, research is still inconclusive and does not yet answer how situational interest impacts the classroom environment, or what instructional characteristics may be necessary or beneficial to promote situational and eventually individual interest. Linnenbrink-Garcia et al. (2010) discussed scales used to measure situational interest and developed a refined version of the situational interest survey. Similar to Mitchell (1993) who separated situational interest into *catch* and *hold* interest, they made a division between triggered and maintained situational interest. However, in their studies, they

came to the conclusion that it may be necessary to include the notion of maintained situational interest value. Thus, they proposed a three-factor model for use in future research studies. In my study, this suggestion was taken up, and the three-factor model of the situational interest survey was used to identify how it is associated with teacher self-disclosure and whether a combination of teacher self-disclosure and situational interest predicted intended effort and/or the learning experience.

Self disclosure and situational interest. In connecting and evaluating the research on interest as it may relate to self-disclosure, I found studies that suggest the nature of self-disclosed information may impact triggered situational interest (catch interest). For example, Cayanus and Martin (2004) claimed that self-disclosure can positively influence students' interest, if the self-disclosure is, for example, embedded in an example that helps explain relevant class material. However, they did not differentiate between individual or situational interest, and their work is not clearly grounded in the current interest literature.

By definition, self-disclosure is a situational phenomenon that influences interactions by one person revealing information about himself/herself exposing the private self through such information to an audience. Therefore, it is interesting to examine whether teacher self-disclosure in particular will be more associated with triggered or with maintained situational interest, or will be impactful in combination. Further, I was interested in exploring what it would take to utilize self-disclosure to initiate interest in a learning situation.

Further, in language learning, it has been shown that those who develop higher individual interest, or what in that context is more commonly referred to as intrinsic motivation, are more likely to succeed in the often lengthy period of language study (Csiziér & Dörnyei, 2005a; Csiziér & Dörnyei, 2005b; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009; Kinginger, 2009). Thus, it is compelling to investigate issues that can help those whose interest is less strong and less integrated.

Looking specifically at situational interest in combination with teacher self-disclosure may be productive in terms of suggestions for instruction. Nonetheless, it was important to measure students' initial individual interest and include it as a moderating variable to obtain a clearer picture of combining students' perceptions of teacher self-disclosure and situational interest as predictors of intended effort and the learning experience.

Although recent studies (Durik & Harackiewicz, 2007; Chen, 2010) have discussed the potential benefits of improving situational interest to strengthen individual interest, findings are mixed, and the focus has been on a differentiation of situational and personal interest. As mentioned previously, most of these studies have used written texts as the environment or context about which to measure interest and have looked at students' engagement and learning in these contexts. However, my study focused on oral teacher-student interactions, thereby broadening the kinds of contexts included. Including the teacher may lead to results that can challenge the discourse. Hidi and Renninger (2006) already proposed that teacher enthusiasm may play a role in the development of sustained interest, and Kim and Schallert (2014) demonstrated such a

connection. On the other hand, it may also be that such attempts result in negative effects. This has been discussed in a few studies (Lehman et al., 2007; Schraw & Lehman, 2001).

Finally, Linnenbrink-Garcia, Patall, and Messersmith (2012) investigated the antecedent as well as consequences of situational interest. They provided further evidence that situational and personal interests are related and associated with the learning that takes place in the classroom as well as with the instructional practices used by the instructor. According to their study, triggering situational interest would be one of the variables the instructor could control. For example, as applied to my study, strategically employing self-disclosure might increase situational interest or effort. Situational interest is said to show a positive effect on maintained interest when real-life connections are achieved. Self-disclosure, if credible and accurate, could provide such a connection and could foster external motivation to learn.

These findings and lines of reasoning suggested that how to establish and help students develop situational interest is a fundamental problem in learning. Although individual and situational interest may be equally important, it seems that situational interest may be more important when it comes to classroom practices as it may suggest ways of improving instruction to support students' interest development. Thus, in this study, emphasis was placed on situational interest and how it may be associated with teacher self-disclosure, and ultimately with intended effort and the learning experience. The focus lies also on the environment in which learning takes place, specifically characterized as language learning classrooms.

Intended effort and the learning experience: Two constructs from the language learning literature. In the literature surrounding foreign language acquisition, the construct of interest is still primarily understood as a part of motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009; Gardner, 2010; Hinkel, 2011). One promising approach is the second language motivational self theory or system or L2MSS (Dörnyei, 1994; 2005; 2009) in which the individual learner becomes the central element and which focuses on motivational issues influencing the learning process and learner's identity development.

The concept of the L2MSS is based on the literature about self-theories, more specifically informed by Markus and Nurius (1986) and their possible selves theory. Furthermore, self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987) plays an important role, as it presents the idea that one's self-concept can help motivate actions to decrease the gap to one's ideal-self. This is achieved through imagery, where a vivid and plausible future self-image promotes motivation to attain this self. Dörnyei (1994; 2005; 2009) further expanded on Gardner's (1985) theory of *integrativeness,* which described language learning as partly motivated by the attitudes learners hold toward speakers of a language and their community. An integrative orientation is said to come about through the desire to communicate with this community and eventually to be a member of the language community and culture.

Dörnyei (1994) criticized the emphasis in Gardner's model on instrumentality of the language and his reliance on attitudes towards a community or the entire culture of the target language. Dörnyei advocated that there are many more variables influencing motivation and proposed his model of the L2MSS. His tripartite model explained the

motivation of language learners to be made up of the Ideal L2 Self, the Ought-to Self, and the Learning Experience. His original research was based on Hungarian students learning English and led him to create a representation that showed the relationship of factors leading to integrativeness and eventual language choice and efforts (2005; 2009). The closest links to the possible ideal L2 self are attitudes toward speakers of the target language previously influenced by the vitality of the community speaking the language. Another influence is instrumentality.

However, as mentioned previously, the L2MSS seems incomplete and lacks the notion of understanding motivation and interest to be separate constructs. One reason the construct of interest is not included as an explicit part within the L2MSS may be because Hidi and Renninger's (2006) four-phase model of interest development emerged at about the same time the L2MSS was conceptualized in foreign language research (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). In L2MSS, motivation is the primary concern, yet within the L2MSS, the term *interest* is used to identify motivational issues.

For my study, two variables, intended effort and the learning experience, come from the literature on the L2MSS. Papi (2010) used the L2MSS to explain how it affects anxiety and intended effort. His study not only validated the construct of the L2MSS but found that the strongest relationship to these variables was coming from the *learning experience*, which he defined as "learners' attitudes toward second language learning and (…) affected by situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience" (p. 469).

The *learning experience* is a valuable piece in language learning, and can nicely be tied to teacher self-disclosure. As previously described, teacher self-disclosure is a situational phenomenon in the hands of the teacher and thus can potentially be seen as a part of the situated learning experience. Whether it influences learners' attitudes towards learning, however, is what my study aimed to explore. My hypothesis was that the more positive these attitudes were, the more attractive would be the learning experience. Furthermore, a positive learning experience may be associated with triggered and maintained interest and lead to heightened intended effort.

Intended effort is one of the many variables that have been discussed as related to the L2MSS. Papi (2010) found that *intended effort* is "a mediating factor between motivation and success" (p. 468). In fact, in his model, he demonstrated how the learning experience had the strongest relationship with intended effort. In the context of the L2MSS, the learning experience was further significantly affected by the L2 ideal self, but the L2 ought-to self showed no significant impact on the learning experience. To keep the focus on teacher self-disclosure and situational interest, I excluded measures of these L2 selves in my study and instead, concentrated on the intended effort and learning experience variables.

Conclusion

With this literature review, I have aimed to establish that teacher-student-relationships and learner variables present key factors for successful learning. Much of the presented literature points to the idea that self-disclosure may be a powerful tool in educational settings. However, the literature spoke to the need for more studies.

Research on self-disclosure has not yet been related to the issue of situational interest, intended effort, or the learning experience; however, I saw great potential in exploring their associations. My expectations were not only that those language instructors, who self-disclose strategically, will be perceived more positively, but also that teacher self-disclosure would be positively related to students' situational interest, intended effort, and their learning experience. The aim of my study was to illuminate the discourse on self-disclosure and to connect it to several research areas.

In the next chapter, I discuss the method I used to go about answering the research questions posed in Chapter 1.

Chapter 3: Method

The primary objective of this study was to investigate whether students' perceptions of teacher self-disclosure are related to students' situational interest, their intended effort, and the learning experience. This included assessing the measures used in this study via quantitative analyses, such as exploratory t-tests, ANOVAs, correlations and simple regressions. Another objective was to understand better if and how teachers use self-disclosure in language classes, as well as how the students perceive it. This included qualitative analyses of observations and interviews.

In order to explore these objectives, the study was designed to consist of two phases, a quantitative phase for which data were gathered in the beginning and at the end of one long semester, and a qualitative phase for which data were collected during the same semester. All data were collected from students studying different languages in beginning language classes. Below, the phases are explained separately in terms of their procedural and analytical approaches.

Phase 1

The first phase used a quantitative methodology. Data for this phase were collected in the form of surveys; the first survey distributed in the beginning of the semester (referred to as Time 1) and the second survey close to the end of the semester (referred to as Time 2). In the following sections, recruitment, courses and participants,

measures, procedures and the analytic approach for data collection and analysis are described.

Recruitment. For the purpose of this study it was necessary to contact and recruit language instructors and their students of diverse beginning language classes. At the institution where data collection took place, a large research-intensive university in the U.S. southwest, language classes were usually capped at 25 students. However, the number of students per class varied, because less commonly taught languages often had smaller class sizes.

Popular languages that commonly tend to have full classes included Spanish, German, and French, whereas smaller class sizes were more typical for languages such as Arabic or Russian, although numbers fluctuated. Bigger class sizes were also possible, especially for languages that have very recently gained a higher demand, but for which there are fewer qualified instructors available, such as for Asian languages like Chinese.

To assure a diverse but consistent sample, I aimed to recruit classes that had four or more sections of a beginning language class. Languages that met this criterion at the institution where the study was carried out were German, Spanish, Italian, French, Russian, Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese. Of these, I attempted to recruit two to four sections per language. Therefore, I began by contacting program coordinators or chairpersons.

The Departments of Arabic and French decided not to support my study. Thus, of the remaining languages, I contacted class instructors and asked them first if they were

willing to be part of the study. I then arranged to visit their classes to present my study and recruit their students. At this point, I also inquired about willingness from the side of the instructor to partake in Phase 2.

A total of 16 instructors (three instructors of Spanish, two instructors of Chinese, one instructor of Japanese, one instructor of Italian, two instructors of Russian, and seven instructors of German) were willing to partake in Phase 1, and of these 16, a total of nine instructors (both instructors of Russian, the instructor of Italian, two instructors of Spanish, and four instructors of German) expressed willingness to be observed and interviewed as part of Phase 2.

When visiting the classes of the 16 participating instructors, I collected students' email addresses and contacted students electronically to provide them with the survey links. To match surveys from Time 1 and 2, I asked students to further provide their school IDs; however, no other identifying information was requested to assure students' privacy and confidentiality. Furthermore, students were asked if they were interested to take part in an interview for Phase 2, and were also informed, that they could change their mind about their participation in the study at any point in time, and without fearing any repercussions.

Students completed the surveys outside of class on their own time. In the following, I provide detailed information about the sample, including demographic background of the participants, and further describe the measures used on the surveys.

Courses and Participants. In total, 16 instructors representing six different languages were willing to allow me to recruit their students for phase one data collection. Three instructors of German were men, while all other instructors were women. Class sizes ranged from 15 to 25 students.

Background Information. In Phase 1 at Time 1, a total of 185 participants began "Survey 1," and a total of 153 participants validly completed it. These individuals provided information on their initial individual interest in studying the language of their choice, named their instructor, and provided further background information.

In order to supplement the survey data, students were asked to provide demographic information on a brief questionnaire (see Appendix A). In this questionnaire, students were asked about their gender, ethnicity, age, and class rank. In addition they were asked if they had studied the language before in a formal context, whether the course fulfilled a curriculum requirement, and in a brief written response, to give a reason for why they are taking the course.

Of all 153 participants, 47.1% reported to be female and 52.9% male, 71.9% represented age group 18-20, 20.3% fall into age group 21-24, 5.2% age group 25-29, and 2.6% were older than 30 years of age. In terms of ethnicity, 67.3% reported to be White/Caucasian, 13.1% Asian, 11.1% Hispanic/Latino, 5.9% bi/multiracial, and 2.6% Black/African American. College level classification was reported as 12.4% freshmen, 47.1% sophomores, 19.6% juniors, 15% seniors, and 5.9% who identified as "other" which included graduate students or professionals, who enrolled in a language class.

In terms of languages, 39.2% were studying German, 18.3% Italian, 11.8% for each Japanese and Russian, 11.1% Spanish, and 7.8% Chinese. Participants took classes with one of 16 instructors: one instructor with two classes of Japanese (with a total of 18 participants who completed Survey 1), one instructor with two classes of Italian (with a total of 28 participants), two instructors of Russian (with seven and 11 participants), two instructors of Chinese (with six participants respectively), three instructors of Spanish (with three, five, and nine participants), and seven instructors of German (with five, seven, seven, seven, nine, 11 and 14 participants).

Further, 73.9% of the students indicated that the language class fulfilled a college requirement and 26.1% said it did not, or that they were not sure. Of the participants, 32.7% responded that they had prior experience in the language. Finally, all but five participants briefly described their motivation for the chosen language class (to be reported later).

At Time 2 of Phase 1, a total of 103 participants started "Survey 2", and 83 participants (53% female and 47% male) provided the names of their instructors, their gender, and completed all measures of perception of teacher self-disclosure, effort, the learning experience, and situational interest. However, only 59 individuals provided their student IDs and could be matched to the data they had provided in the first survey.

Of all participants who provided their university ID, I was able to match Surveys 1 and 2 to address my research questions. There was only one student who completed all measures at both times for Spanish Instructor 2, so that I had to delete this class from further analyses. Further, there were no matched surveys for Spanish Instructor 3 and

Russian Instructor 1 to be included in the analyses, leaving a total of 13 instructors and 59 student participants.

Measures. Data collection involved the completion of surveys measuring the constructs of individual interest, situational interest, intended effort, perception of teacher self-disclosure and the learning experience. I adjusted the measures' scales to offer more scale points (1 to 7 instead of 1 to 5) and to avoid obstacles in data analysis and interpretation. All measures ranged from 1 to 7 (with their respective meanings, 1 being the negative and 7 the positive ends). In addition, wording was changed to fit a language class environment. For the surveys, as they appear in the appendices, LANGUAGE (in all caps) was used as a placeholder that was replaced with the language appropriate for particular respondents' class language. The measures used at Time 1 (see Appendix A) and Time 2 (see Appendix B), including the reliabilities of the scales, are described below.

Initial Individual Interest. To assess initial individual interest, students completed an interest questionnaire adapted from Linnenbrink-Garcia et al. (2010). The original questionnaire consisted of a total of eight items on a 5-point scale and reported a Cronbach's alpha of .90, indicating an internal consistency considered to be high (Cortina, 1993).

As mentioned previously, a wider range was used in this study with students rating all items on a scale from 1 (not at all true) to 7 (very true). Because students are taking a beginning language class, I first had to rephrase the items that were originally

used to assess individual interest in math, and, secondly, I needed to change items from present tense to future tense, as students were completing the survey at the beginning of the semester in the fall (beginning of a new academic year). For example, one item was changed from "Math is practical for me to know" to "LANGUAGE will be practical for me to know" (see Appendix A).

With these changes, I aimed to capture students' initial individual interest before much exposure. For the reason of simple comparisons, individual interest was again assessed as part of the second survey at the end of the semester (see Appendix B). Here, the present tense was used.

A reliability test (Cronbach's alpha) of the measure using SPSS to ensure that the scale had good reliability resulted in Cronbach's alpha showing good reliability at .85 for both initial individual interest on Survey 1 (N=153) as well as on Survey 2 (N=59). These results confirm reliability of the scale as it had been reported in the literature.

Perception of Teacher Self-disclosure. The measure of students' perceptions of teacher self-disclosure was adapted from a measure on perceptions of teacher self-disclosure by Cayanus and Martin (2008). Cayanus and Martin (2008) reported that item-total correlations indicated that the items were on average consistent with the rest of the scale. Items 4, 12, 14, and 18 were negatively worded and needed to be reverse-coded in the analysis to have high scores reflect greater perceived instructor self-disclosure.

The 18 items on the scale asked students to rate their instructor holistically, as experienced over the course of the semester, and to avoid rating him/her upon immediate

feelings of a single class session, with 1 = not at all true and 7 = completely true. Students completed the measure (see Appendix B) at Time 2 after several weeks of exposure to the instructor and the language class. Reliability testing showed a high Cronbach's alpha of 0.89. Here the sample size was N=59.

Intended Effort. To assess the degree of students' intended effort, I used an intended effort scale that had been applied in foreign language research by Papi (2010). He reported a Cronbach's alpha of 0.80, which is considered a good level of reliability. Items for intended effort were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree). The scale was given to the students at Time 2 (see Appendix B). Here, reliability with N=59 proved to be high with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87.

The Learning Experience Scale. To assess the learning experience component, I also used Papi's (2010) items. In his study, he found a significant association between the learning experience and intended effort. Both scales are based on Dörnyei's (2003; 2006; 2009) guidelines to assess students' motivational self-system to learn a second language. Therefore, the items have been successfully applied in language learning settings, and report an internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha at 0.85, which is a good level of consistency.

Similarly, strong results for the internal consistency of the learning experience scale can be found in other recent studies using the scale in varied forms (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). For my study, items for the learning experience were assessed on a 7-point scale (7 = very much; 1 = not at all). Questions targeting the atmosphere and enjoyment of the class as a whole were administered at Time 2 (see Appendix B). The

reliability analysis with my sample (N=59) again verified excellent reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.90.

Situational Interest. To capture students' situational interest, the questionnaire targeted triggered situational interest (what has been called *catch interest*) and maintained situational interest (what has been called *hold interest*), divided into feeling and value components. Participants rated the extent to which they agreed with each item on a 7-point scale (7 = strongly agree; 1 = strongly disagree). In an attempt to improve the fit of the model and as a result of a series of studies, Linnenbrink-Garcia et. al (2010) suggested the use of a refined version of a situational interest scale that they called the Situational Interest Survey. On grounds of their research, they eliminated some items, changed wording, and reversed scoring. The final survey includes an equal number of four items for each of the three subdivisions of situational interest. The reported Cronbach alphas ranged from good to high, with 0.86 for triggered situational interest, 0.92 for maintained situational interest feeling, and 0.88 for maintained situational interest value.

Again, for my study, wording needed to be adjusted to fit a language class environment. Further, instead of referring to the school year, the reference used here was "semester." For example Item 5 now read "What we are learning in LANGUAGE class this semester is fascinating to me." The survey (see Appendix B) was administered at Time 2 to allow students to place their language learning in the situational context after having being exposed to the class for a certain amount of time. The reliability using the present sample data (N=59), revealed a high Cronbach's alpha of 0.94.

Procedures. At Time 1, students who provided me with their contact information and expressed their willingness to participate in the study received an email with a link to the survey on an online survey tool, named Qualtrics. "Survey 1" (see Appendix A) included the demographic background questionnaire and a measure of initial individual interest. Further, they were asked to provide their ID for matching purposes. Reminders to complete "Survey 1" were sent out several times until the middle of the semester.

At Time 2, students were contacted via email again and were provided with a link for "Survey 2" (see Appendix B). They were asked to provide their ID again, and then to complete the four short measures, asking about perception of teacher self-disclosure, situational interest, effort, and the learning experience. In addition individual interest was assessed again using the same measure as at time 1. Reminders were sent out until the semester was officially over.

Data Analysis. In order to address my research questions, I followed the model that I introduced in Chapter 1 in that data analysis was performed in several steps. The first step was to describe results of the measures for the overall sample. The data analyses included exploring demographic information in relationship to the measured outcomes on the scale for initial individual interest. Here, variables such as language, age, and gender were compared to identify any significant differences. These analyses were performed using t-tests and one-way ANOVAs.

The primary data analysis, investigated data of the paired data from both Times 1 and 2. Again, using SPSS, t-tests, and one-way ANOVAs were used to test for

differences between variables on the measures. Further, a correlation matrix of all measures was produced to identify any relationships among the constructs. Finally, a regression was performed to understand which variables most contributed to predicting the outcome variable, situational interest.

For the regression, initial individual interest was used as a covariate. Using regression analyses is a tool to explore the potential associations between teacher self-disclosure and situational interest, factoring in initial individual interest. Further, including the learning experience and intended effort was meant to help identify more complex issues and shed light on what contributes to situational interest in the first place. Alas, these analyses were meant to inform Phase 2 and the closer examination of teacher self-disclosure.

Phase 2

In Phase 2 of the study, I used qualitative methods (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The data gathered in this phase was to supplement and help explain or expand on information obtained in Phase 1. Specifically, the aim was to improve the understanding of how self-disclosure is perceived and how it is manifested in an instructional setting, here a language-learning environment. Further, the goal was to create a well-rounded picture of the construct of self-disclosure and contribute to a description of its (successful and unsuccessful) use or non-use in instructional settings. As part of this, both student and teacher perspectives were investigated with multiple observations and interviews.

Courses and Participants. A total of nine instructors, eight women and one man who were also participating in Phase 1, agreed to take part in Phase 2. They represented the following languages: Russian (2), Spanish (2), Italian (1), and German (4). I then contacted their students to recruit them for interviews. A total of eight students, four men and four women, were interviewed. They were enrolled in Spanish (1), Russian (1), German (5), and Italian (1). Relying on the willingness of instructors and students to participate in Phase 2 in addition to Phase 1, I was unable to select and chose instructors or students based on scores received on the measures or in terms of language being taught or studied.

All 17 participants in Phase 2, instructors and students, received pseudonyms in order protect their privacy. In the following, instructors and students are described in terms of their demographic background information.

Demographic information. Whereas students' demographic information was obtained in Phase 1, instructors participating in the study were asked to provide background information about their experiences and training as language instructors. This not only included information of previously taught courses, but also basic information, such as gender and status.

The information was then tabulated (see Table 1). In order to classify instructors by their instructional experience, I determined levels from novice to expert according to years of experience, using "Novice" for up to three years, of experience, "Intermediate" for up to five, "Advanced" for up to seven, and the "Expert" level for those who held a

Ph.D. and had 8+ years experience. Similarly, I tabulated basic background information for the student participants in Phase 2 (see Table 2).

Table 1. Basic information about the instructors participating in Phase 2.

Instructor	**Language**	**Gender**	**Status**	**Experience**	**Speaker Status**
Magda	Russian	Female	Professor (Ph.D)	Program Coordinator; Expert	Native Speaker
Lena	Russian	Female	Graduate Student	GAI; Intermediate	Native Speaker
Licia	Italian	Female	Professor (Ph.D.)	Professor; Expert	Native Speaker
Fiona	Spanish	Female	Graduate Student	GAI; Novice to Intermediate	Non-native Speaker
Cara	Spanish	Female	Graduate Student	GAI; Novice	Non-native Speaker
Uschi	German	Female	Graduate Student	GAI; Advanced	Native Speaker
Lidia	German	Female	Graduate Student	GAI; Intermediate	Non-native Speaker
Sarah	German	Female	Graduate Student	GAI; Novice	Non-native Speaker
Andrew	German	Male	Graduate Student	GAI; Advanced	Non-native Speaker

Table 2. Basic information about the students participating in Phase 2.

Student	Language	Instructor	Age group/ Classification	Gender	Prev. Exp.	Req.
Magnus	Spanish	Fiona	30+; Post-bachelor/ law degree	Male	Yes	Yes
Hannah	German	Andrew	18-20 Freshman	Female	No	Yes
Brian	German	Andrew	21-24 Junior	Male	Yes	Yes
Anna	German	Sarah	18-20 Sophomore	Female	No	Yes
Helen	German	Sarah	21-24 Sophomore	Female	No	Yes
Aaron	German	Uschi	18-20 Sophomore	Male	No	Yes
Kate	Italian	Licia	18-20 Sophomore	Female	No	No
Richard	Russia	Lena	30+ Professor	Male	No	No

Procedures. Several steps were taken for the qualitative part of the study. The data sources included class observations, interviews with students, informal interviews with instructors, and formal focus groups with instructors. Next, each data source is described in more detail.

Class observations. Each class was observed twice over the course of the semester: the first time around the fifth week and the second time around the tenth week of the semester. My hope was to capture the interactions and communication of the instructor at different points within the usual length of a semester. The observations focused on identifying moments of self-disclosure and students' reactions to such

incidents. To take useful notes that would facilitate comparisons and to help to make self-disclosure visible, I designed an observation sheet to guide the note taking while observing (see Appendix C). Further, writing reflective memos immediately following the observations supplemented the observational data that were collected in the observation sheet.

Interviews. Interviews with instructors were done in two formats: informal interviews before or after observed classes and a formal interview at the end of the semester. Interviews with students were only done formally. More detail about these informal and formal interviews and data recording is provided below.

Informal instructor interviews. Informal interview data were based on conversations with the course instructors before and after each of the scheduled observations. Prior to an observation, instructors were asked to describe briefly their objectives, goals, and overall lesson plans for the upcoming class. To help me organize the observations, I asked instructors to provide a copy of their lesson plan for the observed class period; however, in most cases instructors only verbally shared this information.

After observing the classes, I approached instructors only if students did not have any need to talk to their instructor right after class. In some cases, instructors did not have time to talk to me and the informal interviews did not take place. Whenever I did get the chance to talk to instructors, I asked them to provide personal impressions, and brief reflective statements on how they experienced the class with reference to the lesson plan.

Any information and additional observations obtained during the informal interviews were recorded in the form of memos and summarizing notes and contributed to the overall data on the classes' interactions and communication.

Formal instructor focus group interviews. For formal interviews, instructors had the option between individual or focus group interviews. All nine instructors signed up for one of two focus group interviews, each lasting about one hour. These were audio-recorded and later transcribed. The focus group interviews took place in a quiet place on campus and during a convenient time. Instructors signed up for a time that fit their schedule. Focus Group 1, consisted of one instructor of Italian, two instructors of German and two instructors of Russian, and Focus Group 2 was made up of two instructors of Spanish and two instructors of German, one of whom was a male instructor.

For these focus groups, the primary goal was to facilitate a fruitful discussion on teacher self-disclosure and its use in the language classroom. Semi-structured questions (see Appendix D) were used to guide the conversation and develop an organic discussion on teacher self-disclosure, its use as a teaching tool, and its advantages and disadvantages. As part of these discussions, instructors were also asked to define self-disclosure and articulate their attitude towards it in instructional settings. Finally, they were asked to reflect on incidents in which they remembered using self-disclosing information, and how they had experienced their use of self-disclosure.

Also, the focus group discussion focused on students' reactions to self-disclosure and its advantages and disadvantages when interacting with students, as well as how self-disclosure might relate to students' overall and situational interests. The nature of a

language class was another point of discussion, and we discussed factors that were specific to a language class and thus different from other types of classes. Again, the focus was placed on self-disclosure as situated in such an environment.

Student interviews. Students were also given the choice between individual and focus group interviews. All students signed up for focus groups, except for one female student of Italian, who was in an individual interview. Thus, I conducted one individual interview and two focus group interviews, one of which consisted of two female learners of German taking a class from the same instructor, and another focus group with one male student of Spanish, one male student of Russian, and one male and one female student of German taking a class with the same instructor, and another male student taking German with another instructor. Each interview lasted about 30 minutes, were audio-recorded, and later transcribed.

The interviews were guided by semi-structured questions (see Appendix D) focusing on students' understanding of self-disclosure, their stance on teacher self-disclosure, as well as a reflection and evaluation of selected incidents of self-disclosure as the student remembered them from the semester's language class. Further, students were asked to reflect on connections between self-disclosure and their momentary interest (situational interest) during the class, and were further invited to compare courses and instructors on their use of self-disclosure. Finally, speculations and assessments about the use and effects of self-disclosure in the classroom were points of discussion with which I closed the interviews.

Data Analysis. As discussed previously, many questions still exist about the use of teacher self-disclosure. Data sources were triangulated by evaluating notes of class observations, interviews with instructors, and interviews with students, and used to allow concepts to emerge. Class observations served the purpose of seeing the instructors and their (non-) use of self-disclosure in the classroom, as well as to note the overall context and potential situated reactions from students.

Interviews were used to triangulate conclusions from data sources. They were separated into three types: informal instructor interviews, instructor focus group interview, and student focus group interviews. With the goal to identify underlying themes that could potentially advance the understanding and discussion on teacher self-disclosure and its usefulness in instructional settings, I used qualitative methodology (Agee, 2009; Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). More specifically, Corbin and Strauss' (2008) grounded theory approach was applied in data analysis. Thus, derived themes to summarize and describe the teacher self-disclosure in as much detail as possible.

Constant comparative method. An integral part of a grounded theory approach is the method of constant comparison. First, open coding allowed for organizing information obtained in the interviews and observations. The coding procedures are described in more detail below.

Generally, by repetitive comparison of the data, I allowed concepts to emerge. Concepts and patterns observed then guided the theory development about the concept of teacher self-disclosure as it presented itself in a language-learning environment, and its connections to and interactions with other variables such as situational interest, effort,

and the learning experience. Any new variables that were not measured in the quantitative phase of the study were recognized and discussed.

Coding. At the beginning of the coding process of the data derived from constant comparison, it was important to investigate whether use of self-disclosed information was intentional, situated, strategic/planned, or unintentional. This focus helped to explain further how self-disclosure was used.

I used a free coding software, namely QDAP, which allowed me to code my data multiple times, at different times of the analysis. In this way, I aimed to increase the validity of the codes and eventually, of the themes I developed. The final step was to articulate a working theory of teacher self-disclosure in a language-learning environment.

Data credibility. Generally, data credibility was addressed by the recruiting procedure and the extent of contact with each person, the multiple data sources as well as the extent to which data were evaluated and reevaluated. Further, student interviews and instructor interviews were coded independently, and separate theories about teacher self-disclosure were allowed to emerge at first, and were then later combined into one.

Addressing biases. As the researcher of this study and a language teacher myself, it was important to make explicit my personal opinions, understandings, and use of self-disclosure in the language classroom. To do so, I video-taped several of my own classes and watched them to evaluate my own teaching in terms of the use of self-disclosure. I further invited my students to complete the surveys and specifically evaluated and compared their perceptions of teacher self-disclosure to my own perceptions of how I felt I applied self-disclosure in my class.

Doing so helped me to be more objective and less influenced by the research as it provided me with a chance to compare my reality to the reality as perceived by my students. Reflections were recorded in memos and used as reminders during the coding process of the actual data discussed previously.

Chapter 4: Results

This section is organized by the two phases of data collection. Thus, results of the study are presented in two parts: results for the quantitative analyses, Phase 1, and results for the qualitative analyses, Phase 2.

In Phase 1, I first measured students' initial individual interest in studying the language in which they were enrolled. Second, I measured in students' perceptions of teacher self-disclosure, their situational interest, effort, and their overall learning experience toward the end of the semester. My interest was in potential relationships among these variables.

In Phase 2, I explored the construct of teacher self-disclosure and students' interest qualitatively via student and teacher interviews and classroom observations. The second section focuses on the qualitative analyses and presents categories and themes that emerged during the coding and evaluation process.

Before addressing these two phases, however, I present results of the preliminary research questions.

Preliminary Analyses

To answer the three preliminary research questions, I used descriptive statistics, t-tests, and ANOVAs to identify and organize group differences by language, and where applicable, by instructor characteristics. The three preliminary research questions were:

RQ 1. Are there any significant differences for the measured variables between a) languages for all measures, and also b) for instructors on the measure of student perception of teacher self-disclosure measure?

RQ 2. Are there any significant differences attributable to speaker status or professional status of the instructors when exploring the measures?

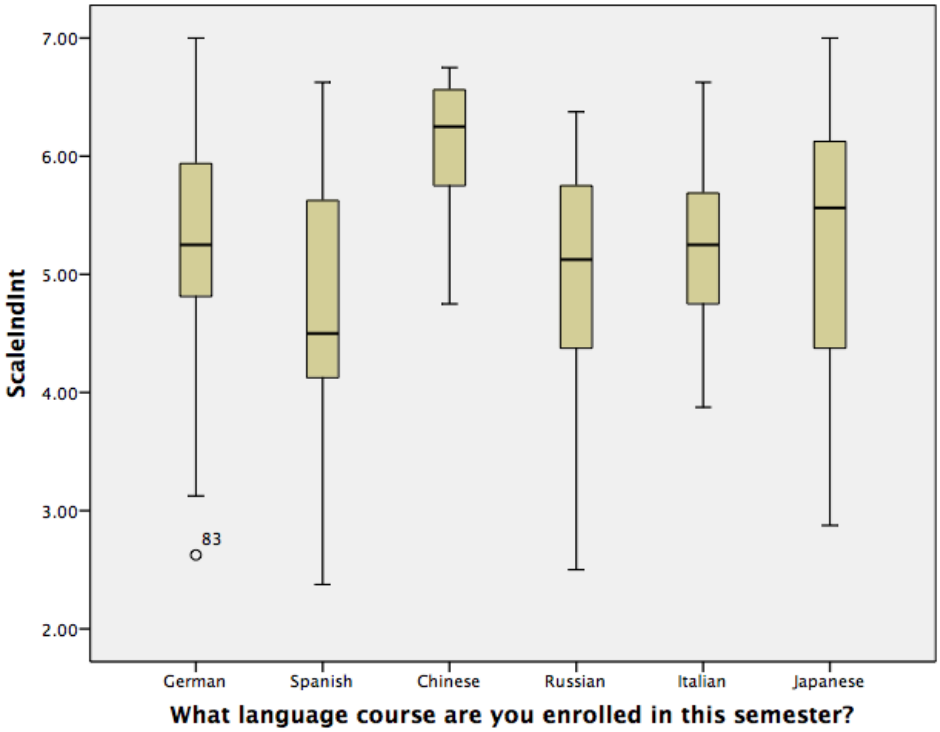
RQ 3. Are there any significant differences attributable to students' gender, ethnicity, age, classification, prior experience, and requirement fulfillment, when measuring individual interest, situational interest, teacher self-disclosure, intended effort, or the learning experience?

Results for RQ 1. I depict the results for research question 1 by addressing each measure separately. It is important to keep in mind that the sample size differed at Time 1 from Time 2. A total of 153 participants validly completed Survey 1. In addition to background information, these individuals provided information on their initial individual interest in studying the language of their choice, and named their instructor. At Time 2, a total of 59 participants completed the other measures, namely individual interest at Time 2, situational interest, perception of teacher self-disclosure, intended effort, and the learning experience along with their IDs to be matched to Survey 1. In addition, boxplots analyses and subsequent eliminations of outliers caused a change in total sample sizes for some analyzes.

Initial Individual Interest Measure (Time 1). At the beginning of the semester, students revealed a generally high interest in the study of languages with a mean for all

153 participants (N=153) of 5.2 (SD=1.0; Range=2.4 to 7) on a 7-point Likert scale. Evaluation of the boxplots showed one outlier for the language category (see Figure 1). In order to keep as many cases as possible, but yet protect the accuracy of subsequent analyses, I decided to delete only extreme outliers. Therefore, I did not need to delete any cases when analyzing data by language classes.

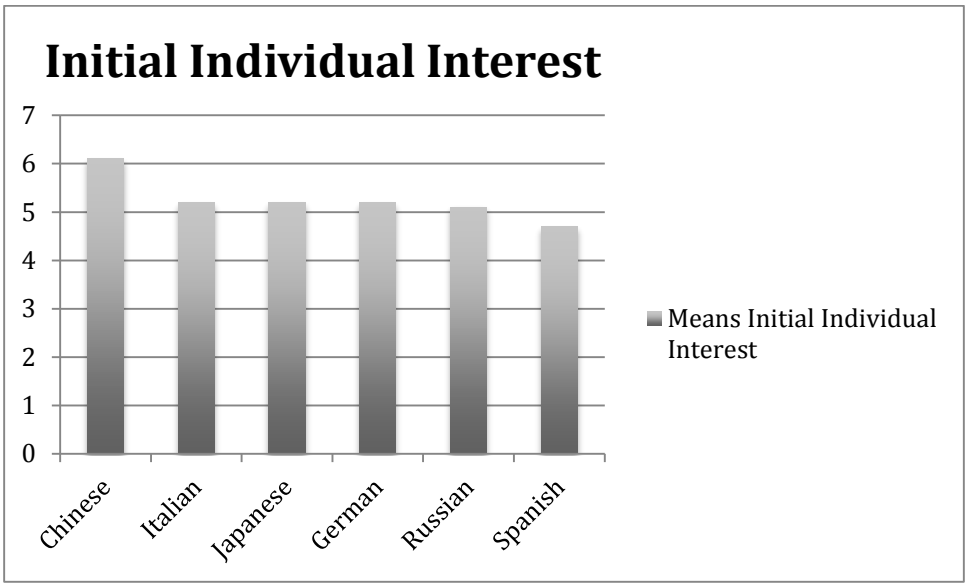
Figure 2. Boxplots showing outliers, means, and dispersion by language for the measure of Initial Individual Interest (Time 1).



Examining the boxplots (see Figure 2) and the descriptive data (see Figure 3) further revealed that Spanish could be identified as scoring lowest on individual interest

(M=4.7; SD=1.1; n=17) and Chinese the highest (M=6.1, SD=0.6; n=12). The means of the remaining languages were in between these two, with means of 5.2 for German (SD=0.9; n=60), Italian (SD=0.7; n=28) as well as Japanese (SD=1.1; n=18) and a mean of 5.1 for Russian (SD=1.0; n=18).

Figure 3. Means for the measure of Initial Individual Interest by language.



A one-way ANOVA was used to test for differences of initial individual interest among the six different languages. Levene's test of homogeneity of variances suggested that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met ($p>0.05$). The language groups differed significantly, $F(5, 147) = 3.3$, $p<0.05$. Post-hoc analyses, using Tukey HSD revealed that participants who were enrolled in Chinese (M= 6.1) had a significantly higher individual interest than students enrolled in Spanish (M=4.7), German (M=5.2), and Russian (M= 5.1), with $p<0.05$.

In sum, this result suggests that choice of language affects students' individual interest levels. Those enrolled in Chinese reported a significantly higher individual interest than students of Spanish, German, or Russian.

Finally, I used a one-way ANOVA to test for differences of initial individual interest of the 59 participants, whose data was used for Time 2 analyses. Descriptive statistics (see Table 3) reveal similar results to the analysis of the entire sample; however, no significant differences were found by language, which can be explained by decrease in power. Furthermore, group sizes vary and the means for Spanish (M=5.4) and Russian (M=5.7) are based on the responses of two and three students respectively. As a result, students' of Spanish and Russian are no longer representative for students with the lowest initial individual interest scores.

Table 3. Means and standard deviations for the measure of Initial Individual Interest.

Initial Individual Interest (Time 1)	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
Chinese	7	6.1	0.7
Russian	3	5.7	0.6
Spanish	2	5.4	1.0
Italian	9	5.3	0.5
German	31	5.3	1.0
Japanese	7	5.2	1.2
Total	59	5.4	0.9

Individual Interest Measure (Time 2). Towards the end of the semester, the overall mean for individual interest for all 59 paired participants (N=59) remained at M=5.4 (SD=0.9; Range= 3.4 to 7) on the same 7-point Likert scale for the measure of individual interest at time 2.

After examining the boxplots for individual interest by language at Time 2, no extreme outliers were detected, and none deleted from the data set. A one-way-ANOVA was conducted to test for statistical significance. Again, no statistical significance was found among languages.

Figure 4. Boxplots showing no extreme outliers and dispersion by language for the measure of Individual Interest (Time 2).

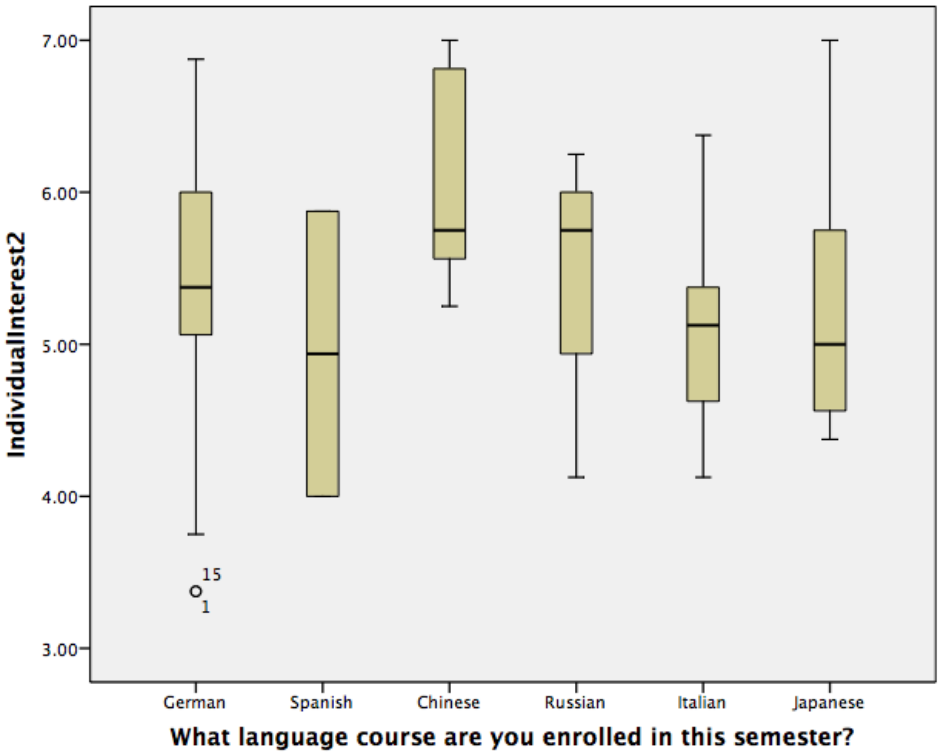
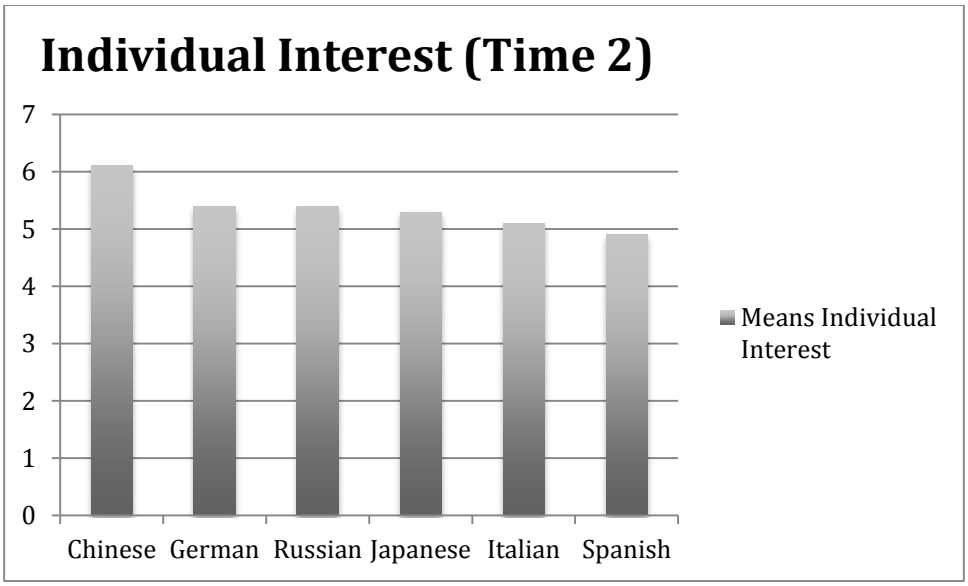


Figure 5 displays the means by language in decreasing order. According to the descriptive data, individual interest for students enrolled in Chinese remained the highest at Time 2 (M= 6.1; SD=0.7; n=7). However, the mean for Russian fell to M=5.4 and for Spanish to M=4.9. Contrary, the mean for students of German increased by 0.1 to M=5.4. The mean for Japanese increased by 0.1 (M=5.3; SD=1.0; n=7) and decreased by 0.2 for Italian (M=5.1; SD=0.7; n=9).

Figure 5. Means for the measure of Individual Interest by language at Time 2.

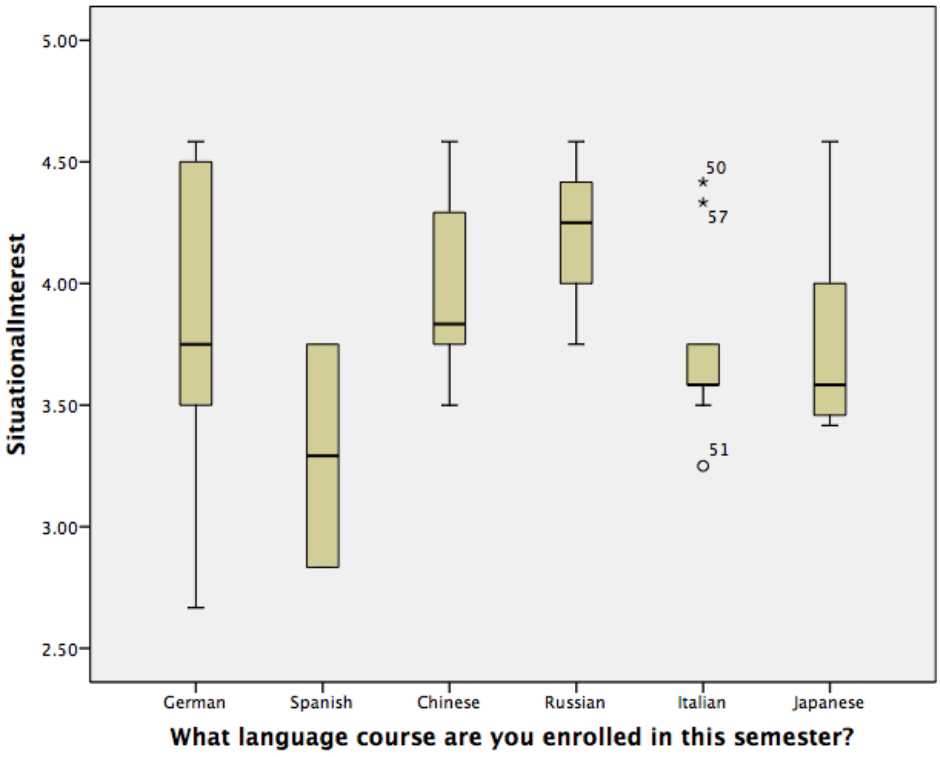


In general, these results matched the results of initial individual interest assessed at Time 1 and indicated that individual interest remained relatively stable over the course of the semester. Further, the data reinforced the claim that students of Chinese display a generally higher individual interest in the language course.

Situational Interest Measure. For the situational interest measure, I began by examining the box plot to identify any outliers that might impact the data. Two extreme outliers (case numbers 50 and 57) were detected and removed from the data set before examining means (see Figure 6).

The overall mean for situational interest for the remaining 57 paired participants (N=57) was recorded at M=3.8 (SD=0.5; Range=2.7 to 4.6), which is slightly above the mid-point of the 7-point Likert scale. Further, a one-way-ANOVA was conducted but showed no significant differences by language.

Figure 6. Boxplots showing two extreme outliers and dispersion by language for the measure of Situational Interest.



Intended Effort Measure. For the measure of intended effort, the overall mean for all paired participants (N=59) was moderately high with M=5.0 (SD=1.2; Range=1.0 to 7.0) on a 7-point Likert scale. The boxplot analysis (see Figure 7) did not show any extreme outliers, and thus, no cases had to be deleted prior to the one-way-ANOVA. The test for mean differences by language did not show any significant results.

When the scores are organized by language in decreasing order (see Figure 8), the highest intended effort score was found in the students of Chinese and the lowest for students of Italian (M=4.7; SD=0.9; n=9) and German (M=4.9; SD=1.4; n=31).

Figure 7. Boxplots showing no extreme outliers and dispersion by language for the measure of Intended Effort.

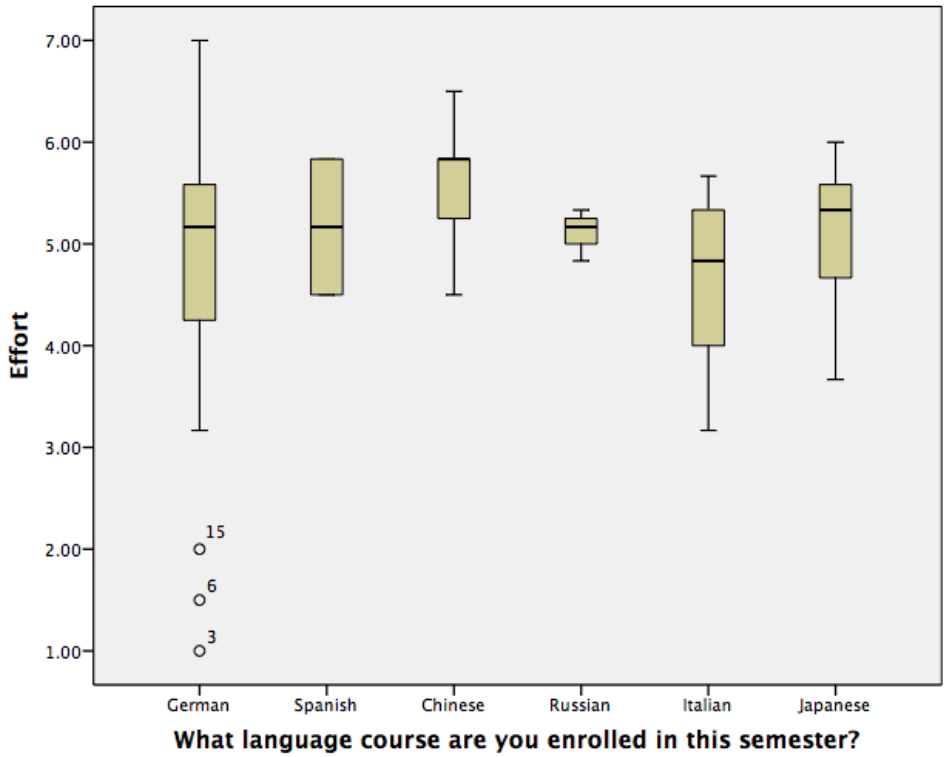
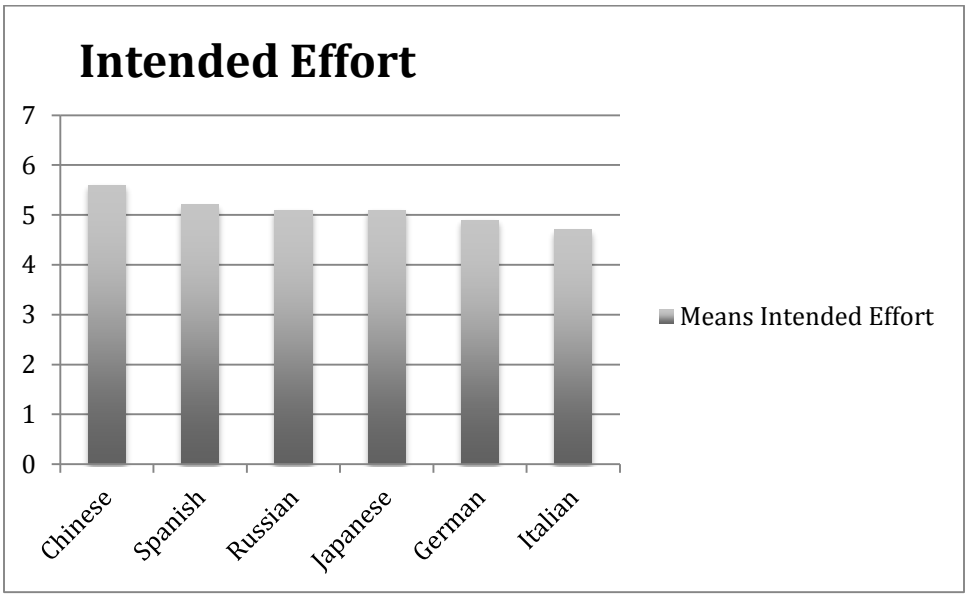
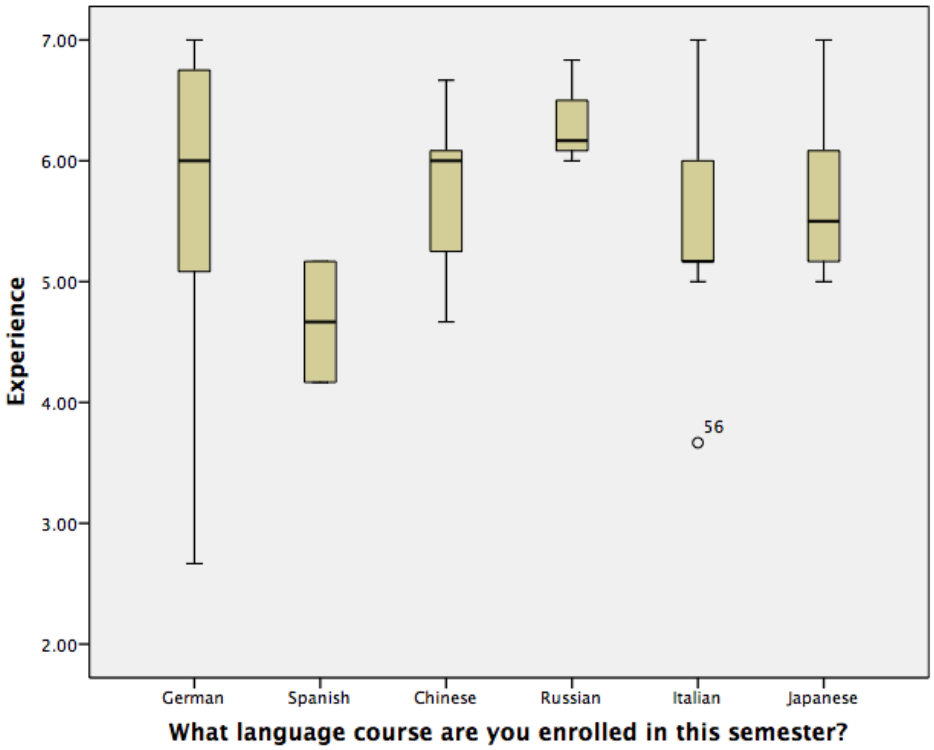


Figure 8. Means for the measure of Intended Effort by language.



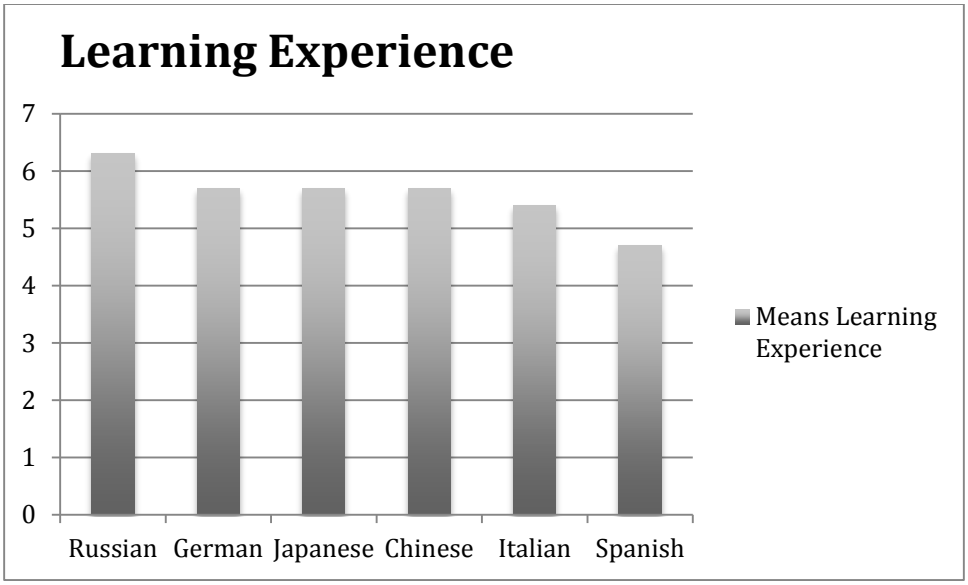
Learning Experience Measure. According to the boxplots for this measure (see Figure 9), no extreme outliers were detected, and no cases had to be removed before assessing the means by language for the learning experience measure. The overall mean for all languages (N=59) was recorded at M=5.7 (SD=1.0; Range=2.7 to 7), which can be considered high on a 7-point Likert scale. Further, a one-way ANOVA did not reveal any significant mean differences by language.

Figure 9. Boxplots showing no extreme outliers and dispersion by language for the measure of Learning Experience.



When comparing the descriptive statistics, however, students of Russian reported to have the most positive learning experience (M=6.3; SD=0.4; n=3), whereas the students of Spanish reported a less positive learning experience (M=4.7; SD=0.7; n=2). Students of the other languages fall between these two with a generally positive learning experience. Figure 10 shows the differences in learning experience in decreasing order of language.

Figure 10. Means for the measure of Learning Experience by language.



Perception of Teacher Self-Disclosure Measure. In the case of perception of teacher self-disclosure, I was interested in means not only by language but also by instructor. Both boxplot analyses indicated that a deletion of cases was not necessary (see Figures 11 and 12).

The overall mean for all 59 participants was M= 3.8 (SD= 0.9; Range=1.8 to 5.9), which represented a score at mid-point on the perception of teacher self-disclosure measure. By language, Italian (M=4.3; SD=0.9; n=9) and German (M=4.0; SD=1.0; n=31) received the highest means, indicating that these classes were perceived as having instructors who were above mid-point on the scale in self-disclosure. Classes of the two Asian languages, Chinese (M=3.3; SD=0.8; n=7) and Japanese (M=3.5, SD=0.6; n=7), were perceived as lowest in teacher self-disclosure. A one-way ANOVA was conducted but no statistically significant differences were found. Figure 13, however, displays the

means by language in decreasing order.

Figure 11. Boxplots showing no extreme outliers and dispersion by language for the measure of Perception of Teacher Self-Disclosure.

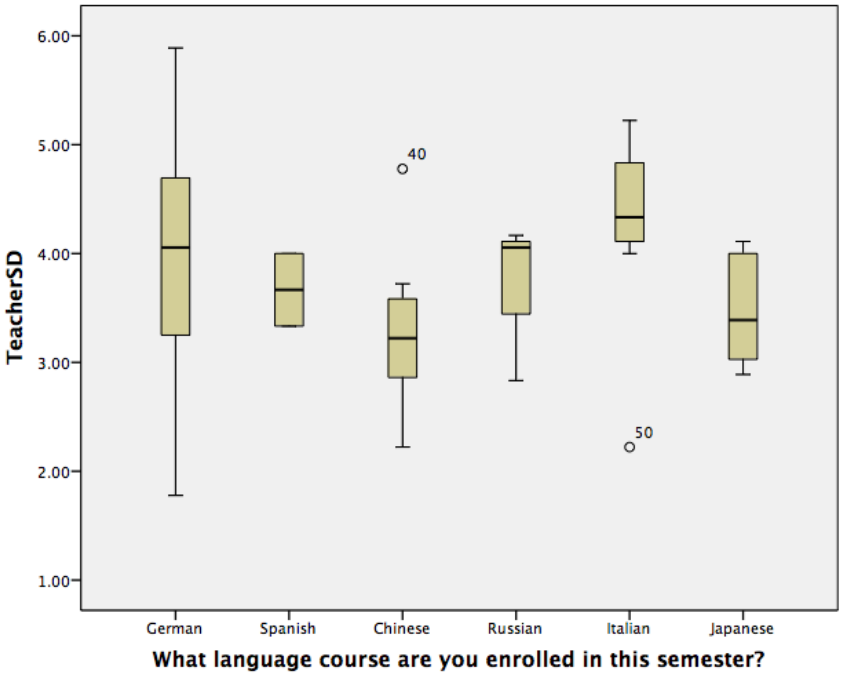


Figure 12. Boxplots showing no extreme outliers and dispersion by instructor for the measure of Perception of Teacher Self-Disclosure.

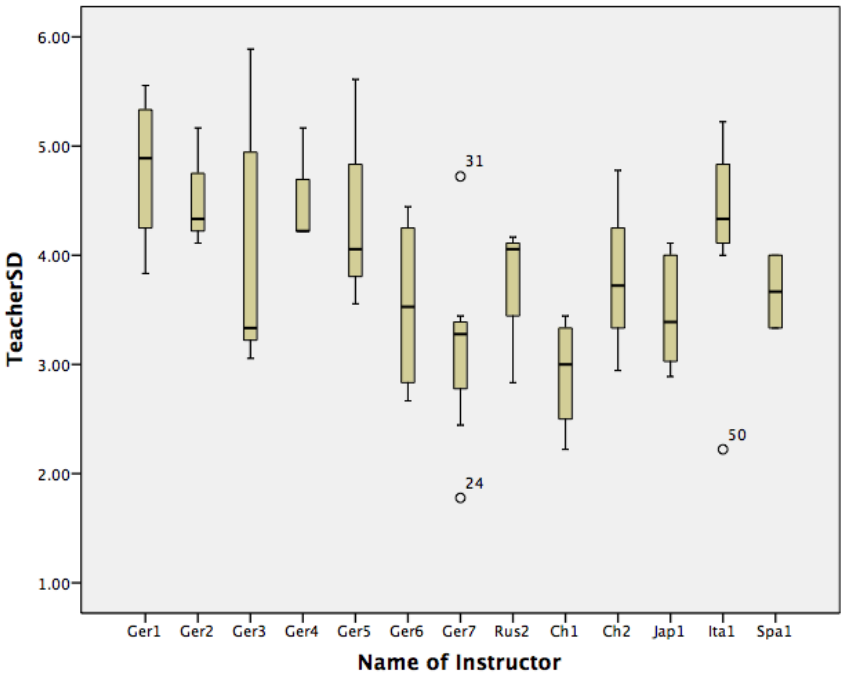
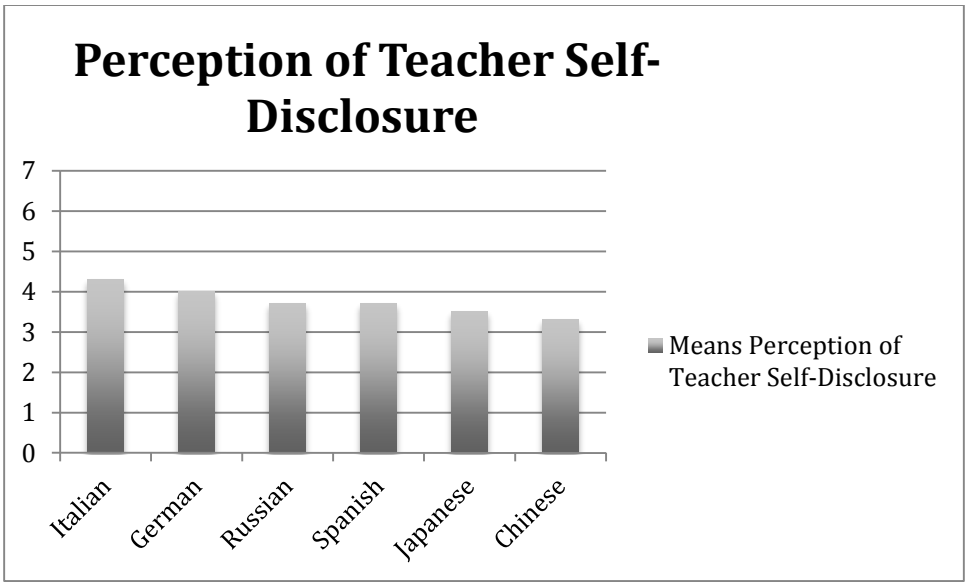
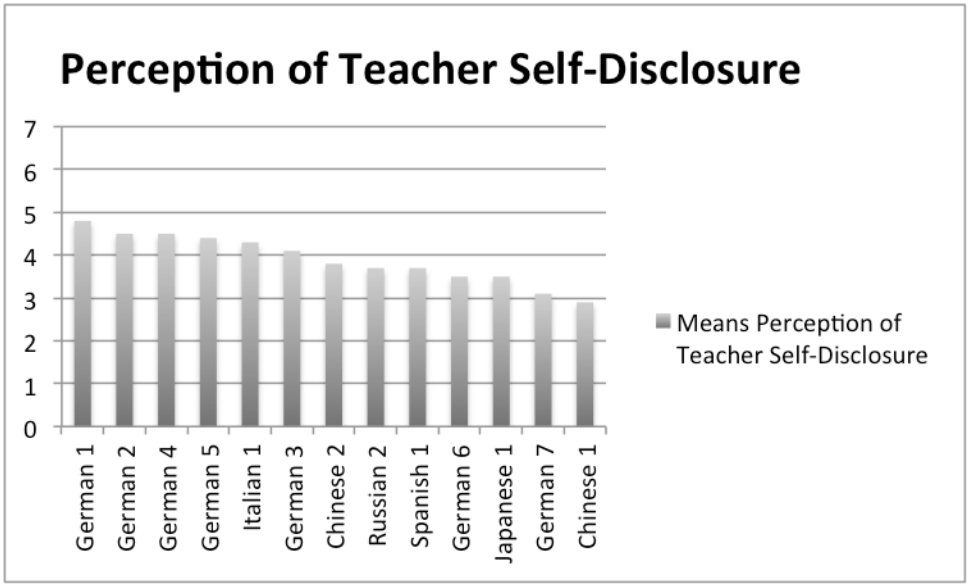


Figure 13. Means for the measure of Perception of Teacher Self-disclosure by language.



Analyzing perception of teacher self-disclosure by instructor created a similar pattern. The overall mean remained, but German instructor 1 (M=4.8; SD=0.7; n=4) was perceived as the highest of all teachers on the self-disclosure measure. Further, German instructor 2 (M=4.5; SD=0.6; n=3), German instructor 4 (M=4.5; SD=0.6; n=3), and German instructor 5 (M=4.4; SD=1.1; n=3) as well as the instructor of Italian (M=4.3; SD=0.9; n=9) all were perceived as above mid-point of the scale. By contrast, Chinese instructor 1 (M=2.9; SD=0.6; n=4) was perceived as least self-disclosive. German instructor 7 (M=3.1; SD=0.8; n=9) was also perceived below mid-point (see Figure 14).

Figure 14. Means for the measure of Perception of Teacher Self-disclosure by instructor.



A one-way ANOVA was conducted and showed significant differences across instructors, $F(12, 46) = 2.4$, $p=0.05$. Post-hoc analyses, using Tukey HSD, revealed that

students enrolled in the class of German instructor 1 perceived more teacher self-disclosure (M= 6.1; SD=0.6) than those students enrolled in class of German instructor 7 (M=3.1; SD=0.8), with p=0.05. Further, Levene's test of homogeneity of variances revealed that the assumption was met.

In sum, these results suggested that the perception of teacher self-disclosure differed across instructors, rather than across languages. This supported the need to investigate teacher self-disclosure further by instructor rather than grouped by language. I found it important to relate qualitative analyses back to these findings.

Results for RQ 2. Next, I present the results for Research Question 2 in which additional teacher variables were considered. In specific, professional status, and teaching experience as well as speaker status were of interest. For speaker status instructors were placed in one of two categories: a) Native speaker of the language they teach, or b) non-native speaker. Professional status was divided into four categories. As described in Chapter 3, those who were beginning graduate student assistant instructors (GAI) and had two years or less experience teaching a foreign language were placed in category (1) "Novice." Category (2) "Intermediate" applied to those GAI with up to five years experience, and those with more than five years of experience were placed in the "Advanced" category (3). Instructors who were holding a Ph.D. and who were employed as professors or lecturers were placed in category (4) "Expert.

For these analyzes, I used the paired participants sample (N=59). Therefore, 55.9% students experienced instruction by a native speaker and 44.1% students by a non-

native speaker. To run the analyses and due to differing group sizes, I combined "Novice" and "Intermediate" into Group 1 "Inexperienced", and "Advanced" and "Expert" into Group 2 "Experienced". According to this grouping, 62.7% (n=37) were taught by an experienced instructor and 37.3% (n=22) by an inexperienced instructor.

Using independent sample t-test to test for mean differences for speaker status, no significant differences for all measures were detected. Table 4 shows means and standard deviations for both groups on all measures. Thus, speaker status did not seem to have an impact the measures.

Table 4. Means and standard deviations for all measures by instructor speaker status.

Measure	Speaker Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perception of Teacher Self-Disclosure	Native	33	3.9	0.9
	Non Native	26	3.7	1.0
Intended Effort	Native	33	4.9	1.3
	Non Native	26	5.1	1.0
Learning Experience	Native	33	5.5	1.0
	Non Native	26	5.9	0.9
Situational Interest	Native	33	3.8	0.5
	Non Native	26	3.9	0.5
Individual Interest T1	Native	33	5.5	0.9
	Non Native	26	5.3	0.9
Individual Interest T2	Native	33	5.4	1.0
	Non Native	26	5.5	0.9

Similarly, independent t-tests testing for differences by professional status also did not show statistically significant differences (see Table 5).

Table 5. Means and standard deviations for all measures by professional status.

Measure	Professional Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perception of Teacher Self-Disclosure	Experienced	37	3.9	1.0
	Inexperienced	22	3.8	0.8
Intended Effort	Experienced	37	4.9	1.2
	Inexperienced	22	5.0	1.1
Learning Experience	Experienced	37	5.6	1.0
	Inexperienced	22	5.8	1.0
Situational Interest	Experienced	37	3.8	1.0
	Inexperienced	22	3.9	1.0
Individual Interest T1	Experienced	37	5.4	0.9
	Inexperienced	22	5.3	0.9
Individual Interest T2	Experienced	37	5.4	0.9
	Inexperienced	22	5.4	0.9

Results for RQ 3. In this section, I present results for Research Question 3 speaking to variables that further characterize the student participants. Using independent sample t-tests and one-way ANOVAs, the effects of demographic variables of gender, ethnicity, age, college level classification, previous experience, and required versus not required on all variables were calculated.

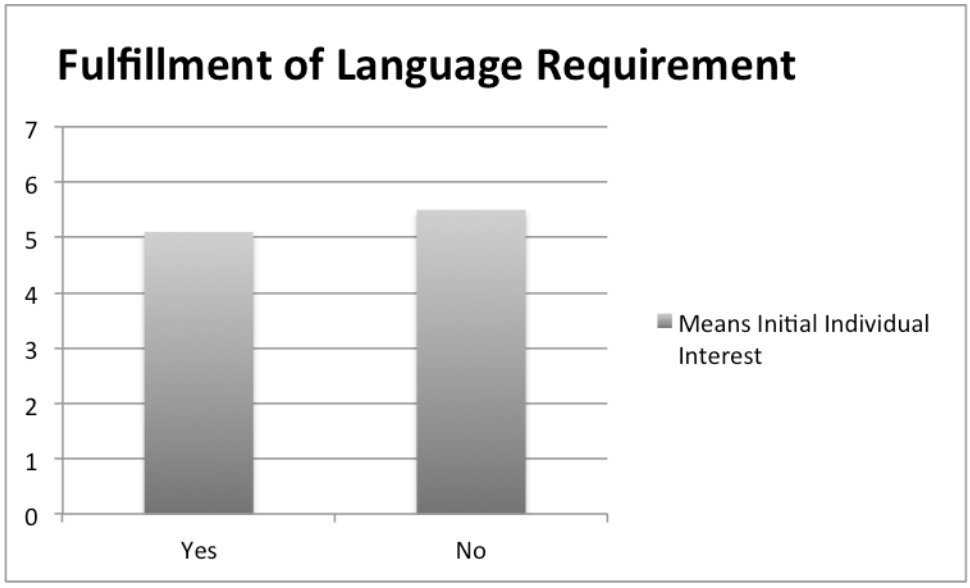
Time 1. Using the sample from Time 1 (N=153), analyses showed no statistical significances for gender, age group, ethnicity, college level classification, and previous

experience on the measure of initial individual interest. Yet, a few interesting observations can be made.

First, the mean for initial individual interest for male students was M=5.3 (SD=0.9; n=81) and therefore slightly higher than for female students (M=5.1; SD=1.0; n=72). Second, it was interesting that the participants who were over 30 years old, and thus, can be described as non-traditionally aged students, indicated the highest initial individual interest with M=6.0 (SD=0.5; n=4) whereas the mean for those in the age group 18 to 20 years was lower with M=5.2 (SD=1.0; n=110). Third, Hispanic students showed a higher initial individual interest with M=5.8 (SD=0.7; n=17) than Caucasian students with M=5.1 (SD=0.9; n =103). Fourth, students who identified as "Freshman" (M=5.5; SD=1.1, n=19) as well as "Other" (M=5.4; SD=0.8; n=9) showed higher initial individual interest than those identifying as "Sophomore" (M=5.1; SD=0.9, n=72), "Junior" (M=5.3; SD=1.0; n=30) or "Senior" (M=5.2; SD=0.9; n=23). Finally, students who had prior instruction in the language showed a slightly higher initial individual interest with M=5.4 (SD=1.0; n=50) versus M=5.1 (SD=0.9; n=103) than those who had no prior experience with the language.

Furthermore, according to an independent sample t-test, statistical significance of mean differences was found for the requirement/non-requirement variable (see Figure 15). When taking the course to fulfill a requirement (M=5.1;SD=1.0), initial individual interest was lower than when taking the course not to fulfill a requirement (M=5.5, SD=0.8); $t(148)=-2.3$, $p<0.05$. Levene's test for equality of variances further showed that the assumption of homogeneity of variance had not been violated.

Figure 15. Means for the measure of Initial Individual Interest by requirement.



Therefore, the result suggested that taking a language class to fulfill a requirement did have a negative effect on learners' initial individual interest, or alternatively that taking a course for other reasons than the fulfillment of a requirement may be associated with higher initial individual interest.

Time 2. Using the sample of all paired participants (N=59), possible mean differences for the variables on all scales were calculated. Before running analyses, boxplots were assessed to identify extreme outliers. In the following, the outcomes along with any interesting finding are presented.

Gender and Age Group. No statistically significant differences were found for either gender or age group with any of the measures. The inspection of the descriptive statistics did not reveal any patterns for age groups, but as for gender, it was evident that male participants had slightly higher mean scores on all measures (except for individual

interest at Time 2) than female participants (see Table 6). This might indicate that female participants rated instructors slightly more conservatively than male participants.

Table 6. Mean scores and standard deviations for all measures by gender.

Measure	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perception of Teacher Self-Disclosure	Female	31	3.8	0.9
	Male	28	3.9	1.0
Intended Effort	Female	31	4.8	1.4
	Male	28	5.1	0.8
Learning Experience	Female	31	5.6	1.1
	Male	28	5.8	0.9
Situational Interest	Female	31	3.8	0.6
	Male	28	4.0	0.5
Individual Interest (T2)	Female	31	5.4	1.1
	Male	28	5.4	0.7

Ethnicity. For individual interest, situational interest, perception of teacher self-disclosure, effort, and the learning experience, no significant differences were found. Also, no patterns were observed. Before analyzing effort and ethnicity, I deleted one extreme outlier from the data set to run a one-way ANOVA. Again, no statistically significant differences were found, but the highest scoring groups were found to be Hispanic (M=5.7; SD=0.6; n=7) and Black/African American (M=5.7; SD=NA; n=1) students whereas Caucasian (M= 4.9; SD=1.2; n=37) and Bi/Multiracial (M=4.7; SD= 1.0; n=3) students showed lower scores on intended effort. The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Means and standard deviations for the measure of Intended Effort by ethnicity.

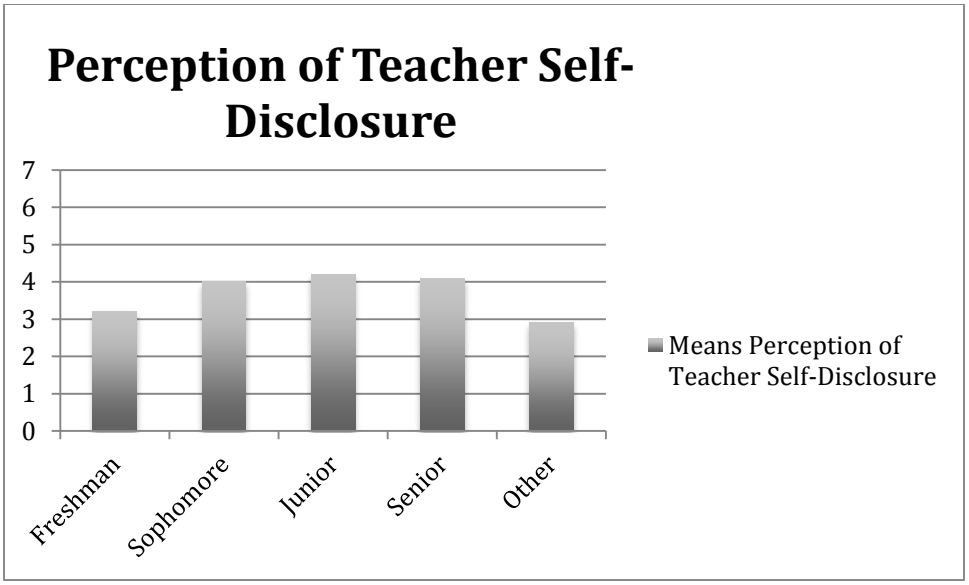
Intended Effort by Ethnicity	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Black/African American	1	5.7	/
White/Caucasian	37	4.9	1.2
Hispanic	7	5.7	0.6
Asian	10	5.2	0.6
Bi/Multiracial	3	4.7	1.0
Total	58	5.0	1.1

Classification. Analyzing the measures by classification revealed no significant differences for the measures of intended effort, learning experience, situational interest, and individual interest at Time 2. However, overall significant differences were found for the measure of perception of teacher self-disclosure and classification, $F(4, 54) = 3.1$, $p<0.05$.

Post-hoc analyses, using Tukey HSD revealed no significant differences between classification on the perception of teacher self-disclosure measure.

In sum, I observed overall group differences, however, they were not very strong. Evaluating the means (see Figure 16) showed that "juniors" (M=4.2; SD=1.0) and "seniors" (M=4.1; SD=1.1) perceived their instructors as above mind-point on the self-disclosure scale, whereas "freshman" (M=3.2; SD=0.8) and those who identified as "other" (M=2.9; SD=0.3) perceived them as below average in self-disclosure. Further qualitative analyses are important to understand where and why these differences exist.

Figure 16. Means for Perception of Teacher Self-Disclosure by classification.



Requirement Fulfillment. At Time 1, initial individual interest was shown to differ by the requirement variable; however, at Time 2, none of the measures showed statistically significant mean differences. Before running an independent t-test for effort with language requirement as independent variable, I had to delete one extreme outlier from the data set. This analysis also did not show a statistically significant difference.

Again, an examination of means showed that those who were taking the language class for a requirement showed lower scores across all measures than those who were not taking it for a requirement (see Tables 8 and 9). For example, intended effort was lower for those who were in a language class with the ultimate goal of fulfilling a college requirement (M= 4.9; SD=1.1; n=46) whereas those who were not enrolled for a requirement showed higher intended effort (M=5.4; SD=0.7; n=12).

Table 8. Means and standard deviations for Perception of Teacher Self-Disclosure, Learning Experience, Situational Interest and Individual Interest T2 by requirement.

	Requirement Fulfillment	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perception of Teacher Self-Disclosure	Yes.	46	3.8	0.9
	No.	13	4.0	1.1
Learning Experience	Yes.	46	5.6	.9
	No.	13	5.9	1.2
Situational Interest	Yes.	46	3.8	0.5
	No.	13	4.0	0.6
Individual Interest T2	Yes.	46	5.4	0.9
	No.	13	5.5	0.9

Table 9. Means and standard deviations for Intended Effort by requirement.

	Requirement Fulfillment	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Intended Effort	Yes.	46	4.9	1.1
	No.	12	5.4	0.7

Prior experience. The evaluation of boxplots showed no extreme outliers. No significant findings for the measures can be reported when comparing those who had or did not have prior experience with the language. Further, visual assessment of the means did not reveal any notable patterns about the score distribution indicating that prior

experience in the language did not impact any of the variables in either a positive or negative way.

Main Analyses: Phase I (Quantitative)

The next section attempts to answer the research questions of the main analyses for the quantitative as well as the qualitative phases.

First of all, potential relationships between the measures needed to be addressed and evaluated. Further, the two central constructs, namely, perception of teacher self-disclosure and situational interest, were examined more closely, and finally, possible relationships of the constructs as predictor variables were studied. The research questions are repeated below followed by articulation of results.

RQ 4. Is perceived teacher self-disclosure associated with students' individual as well as situational interest, intended effort, and their rating of the learning experience?

RQ 5. Is perceived teacher self-disclosure differently associated with the three levels of situational interest, namely triggered situational interest, maintained feeling, and maintained value situational interest?

RQ 6. Does perceived teacher self-disclosure, situational interest, or a combination of both variables predict intended effort and a positive learning experience when taking individual interest in consideration as a covariate?

Results for RQ 4. To explore the data further, I ran a correlation analysis among the measures. Before doing so, descriptive statistics were recorded (see Table 9) showing a moderately high mean for initial individual interest (Time 1) of M=5.4 (SD=0.9).

Perception of teacher self-disclosure was measured at slightly above mid-point with M=3.8 (SD=0.9), intended effort as moderately high at M=5.0 (SD=1.2), the learning experience was relatively high at M=5.7 (SD=1.0), and situational interest as above mid-point with M=3.9 (SD=0.5).

Table 10. Means and standard deviations for the measures at Time 2.

Measure	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perception of Teacher Self-Disclosure	59	3.8	0.9
Intended Effort	59	5.0	1.2
Learning Experience	59	5.7	1.0
Situational Interest	59	3.9	0.5
Individual Interest	59	5.4	0.9

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed to assess the relationships between variables. There correlations between the perception of teacher self-disclosure and individual interest (at Time 1 and Time 2), intended effort, the learning experience, or situational interest were not significant. However, there were several other positive correlations (Table 10).

First, individual interest at Time 1 was positively correlated with situational interest, r=0.61, with the learning experience, r=0.56, with intended effort, r=0.61, n=59, p=0.000, and with individual interest at Time 2, r=0.80. In addition, situational interest showed positive correlations with the learning experience, r=0.86, with intended effort,

r=0.71, and with individual interest at Time 2, r=0.74. Further, intended effort showed a positive correlation with the learning experience (r=.68) as well as with individual interest at Time 2 (r=0.69). Individual interest at Time 2 was also positively correlated with intended effort, r=0.67.

Overall, the strongest positive correlation was found between the learning experience and situational interest. Individual interest at Time 1 and Time 2 were also strongly correlated. The correlations between situational interest and intended effort and between intended effort and the learning experience were moderately strong. All remaining and aforementioned positive correlations were moderate and statistically significant.

Table 11. Correlation matrix for all measured variables.

		Individual Interest (T1)	Teacher Self-Disclosure	Situational Interest	Learning Experience	Intended Effort
Teacher Self-Disclosure	Pearson Correlation	-.088	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.508				
	N	59	59			
Situational Interest	Pearson Correlation	.611**	-.069	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.605			
	N	59	59	59		
Learning Experience	Pearson Correlation	.564**	-.086	.856**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.519	.000		
	N	59	59	59	59	
Intended Effort	Pearson Correlation	.608**	-.090	.713**	.684**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.499	.000	.000	
	N	59	59	59	59	59
Individual Interest (T2)	Pearson Correlation	.797**	-.055	.739**	.691**	.669**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.682	.000	.000	.000
	N	59	59	59	59	59
**. Correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

Results for RQ 5. As discussed previously, no significant correlations were found for the perception of teacher self-disclosure with the other variables. The measure for situational interest can be separated into three levels. To explore the constructs, a correlation analysis of the perception of teacher self-disclosure was conducted with the

three levels of situational interest, namely triggered situational interest, maintained feeling, and maintained value situational interest (see Table 12).

Table 12. Mean and standard deviations for perception of teacher self-disclosure and the three levels of situational interest.

Measure	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perception of Teacher Self-Disclosure	59	3.8	0.9
Triggered Situational Interest	59	4.2	0.6
Maintained Value Situational Interest	59	4.1	0.7
Maintained Feeling Situational Interest	59	4.2	0.6

Again, no correlations were found between the perception of teacher self-disclosure and each of the three levels of situational interest. A strong positive correlation was recorded for maintained value and maintained feeling situational interest, r=0.80, and between maintained feeling and triggered situational interest, r=0.80. Also, a moderate correlation was found between maintained value and triggered situational interest, r=0.61. Table 13 summarizes these findings.

Table 13. Correlation matrix for Perception of Teacher Self-disclosure and the three levels of Situational Interest.

		Teacher Self-Disclosure	Triggered Situational Interest	Maintained Value Situational Interest
Teacher Self-Disclosure	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	59		
Triggered Situational Interest	Pearson Correlation	.033	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.805		
	N	59	59	
Maintained Value Situational Interest	Pearson Correlation	-.122	.629**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.358	.000	
	N	59	59	59
Maintained Feeling Situational Interest	Pearson Correlation	-.066	.781**	.811**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.617	.000	.000
	N	59	59	59
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Results for RQ 6. My next step was to identify if one variable may predict outcomes on another measure. Using a regression analysis, I aimed to see if teacher self-disclosure would predict situational interest (see Table 14). Further, initial individual interest was entered as a covariate. The following table shows the model summary and illustrates that results were not significant, with $p>.05$, for the model that included perception of teacher self-disclosure, indicating that the variable did not predict situational interest.

Table 14. Regression model for situational interest and teacher self-disclosure, including initial individual interest as a covariate.

			Change Statistics				
Model [c]	R	R Square	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.611[a]	.373	.373	33.938	1	57	.000
2	.611[b]	.373	.000	.020	1	56	.887

a. Predictors: (Constant), Initial Individual Interest
b. Predictors: (Constant), Initial Individual Interest, Perception of Teacher Self-Disclosure
c. Dependent Variable: Situational Interest

Although perception of teacher self-disclosure did not predict situational interest, the model showed that the covariate of initial individual interest predicted situational interest, $\beta=.61$, $t(57)=5.8$, $p<.05$. Initial individual interest also explained a significant proportion, that is 37%, of the variance in situational interest scores, $R^2 = .37$, $F(1,57)=33.9$, $p<.001$. These findings are summarized in Table 15. Further, entering self-

disclosure first, eliminating initial individual interest as a covariate, did not change the results. Perception of teacher self-disclosure did not prove to be statistically significant as a predictor variable.

Table 15. Beta weights for models including Individual Interest and Perception of Teacher Self-disclosure predicting Situational Interest.

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.927	.336		5.731	.000
	Initial Individual Interest	.358	.061	.611	5.826	.000
2	(Constant)	1.965	.429		4.578	.000
	Initial Individual Interest	.357	.062	.610	5.740	.000
	Perception of Teacher SD	-.009	.061	-.015	-.142	.887

a. Dependent Variable: Situational Interest

Next, I assessed if situational interest and perception of teacher self-disclosure would predict intended effort, again including initial individual interest as a covariate. Once again, perception of teacher self-disclosure did not predict intended effort, and the model showed that the covariate initial individual interest predicted intended effort scores, $\beta=0.61$, $t(57)=5.8$, $p<.05$.

Furthermore, in combination with situational interest, intended effort was predicted, $\beta=0.28$, $t(56)=2.5$ for initial individual interest, and $\beta=0.55$, $t(56)=4.9$ for situational Interest. Therefore, the combination of initial individual interest and

situational interest explained a significant proportion, that is 56%, of the variance in intended effort scores, $R^2 = .56$, $F(1,56)=23.5$, $p<.001$. These findings are summarized in Tables 16 and 17.

Table 16. Regression model for Intended Effort, Situational Interest and Teacher Self-disclosure, including Initial Individual Interest as a covariate.

Model	R	R Square	Change Statistics				
			R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.608[a]	.370	.370	33.496	1	57	.000
2	.746[b]	.556	.186	23.474	1	56	.000
3	.746[c]	.557	.001	.099	1	55	.754

a. Predictors: (Constant), Individual Interest

b. Predictors: (Constant), Individual Interest, Situational Interest

c. Predictors: (Constant), Individual Interest, Situational Interest, Teacher Self-Disclosure

Table 17. Beta weights for models including Individual Interest, Situational Interest, and Perception of Teacher Self-disclosure predicting Intended Effort.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.729	.743		.981	.331
	Initial Individual Interest	.786	.136	.608	5.788	.000
2	(Constant)	-1.586	.790		-2.007	.050
	Initial Individual Interest	.356	.145	.276	2.451	.017
	Situational Interest	1.201	.248	.545	4.845	.000
3	(Constant)	-1.428	.941		-1.518	.135
	Initial Individual Interest	.353	.147	.273	2.408	.019
	Situational Interest	1.199	.250	.544	4.799	.000
	Perception of Teacher Self-Disclosure	-.036	.114	-.028	-.315	.754

a. Dependent Variable: Intended Effort

Finally, a regression analysis was conducted to see if situational interest and perception of teacher self-disclosure would predict the learning experience, again entering initial individual interest first as a covariate. The model showed that the covariate initial individual interest predicted intended effort scores, with $\beta=0.56$, $t(57)=5.2$, $p<0.05$. Although perception of teacher self-disclosure did not predict the learning experience, situational interest appears to be predicting it, $\beta=0.82$, $t(56)=9.3$, $p<0.05$ (see Table 18).

Table 18. Beta weights for models including Individual Interest, Situational Interest, and perception of Teacher Self-disclosure predicting the Learning Experience.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.348	.656		3.581	.001
	Initial Individual Interest	.618	.120	.564	5.156	.000
2	(Constant)	-.479	.616		-.777	.440
	Initial Individual Interest	.070	.096	.064	.727	.471
	Teacher Self-disclosure	-.026	.074	-.024	-.345	.732
	Situational Interest	1.524	.164	.816	9.320	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Learning Experience						

Due to high collinearity, situational interest was excluded by SPSS. Thus, only initial individual interest can be considered to predict the learning experience, with 32% of the variance in the scores, $R^2 = 0.032$. These findings are summarized in Table 19.

Table 19. Regression model for the learning experience and initial individual interest.

Model	R	R Square	Change Statistics				
			R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.564[a]	.318	.318	26.588	1	57	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Initial Individual Interest

Main Analyses: Phase 2 (Qualitative)

In Phase 2, a qualitative methodology guided data collection procedures. I observed selected instructors in class and recorded moments of teacher self-disclosure. Further, I interviewed instructors in two focus groups, as well as students in focus group and individual interviews, and then coded and analyzed the data to inform research on the construct of teacher self-disclosure.

In the following, the results of the analyzed data are presented to respond to the research questions. To do so, I describe the results for the observational data, summarize findings from both student and instructor interviews, and finally synthesize the results and identify common themes and relationships. The research questions were:

RQ 7 and 8. How do students and instructors characterize, describe, and evaluate teacher self-disclosure? What differences between students' and instructors' descriptions, if any, can be noticed?

RQ 9. How, if at all, do students and instructors describe potential relationships of teacher self-disclosure with individual and situational interest, intended effort, and the learning experience?

Results for RQ 7 and RQ 8. In the following, perception of teacher self-disclosure is described from the teachers' and the students' perspectives. Further observational data contributed to the formation of a description of the construct assessing it from both sides.

Observational data. At the beginning and towards the end of a long semester, I observed one instructor of Italian in two different classes, two instructors of Spanish, two instructors of Russian and four instructors of German. All participants were female instructors, except for one instructor of German. Further, four instructors were native speakers of the language they were teaching, and all others had spent some time in the country in which the language of their instruction was taught.

For one instructor of Russian (Magda), the professor of Italian (Licia), as well as for one instructor of German (Uschi) use of self-disclosive information was evident and frequently witnessed in all observations. Interestingly, all three were native speakers of the language they were teaching. For the other instructors, self-disclosure was either only used occasionally, not at all, or in a distanced form. The latter is what I refer to as *distanced disclosures* and stands in contrast to *personal disclosures.* In the observations for this study, non-native speakers made predominant use of such *distanced disclosures*. The two different types of disclosures are described below.

A clear example of an instructor who utilized *personal disclosure* was Uschi, an instructor of German. She began a self-disclosive statement by stating her first name and last name to indicate she was referring to herself and her experiences in life. In one incident, she also spelled out her full name and the names of her dogs in a template for a

writing task using a PowerPoint prompt. Students were perceptive of the example, and it appeared to trigger their interest to pay attention and to produce a similar scenario in their writing actively.

The professor of Italian, Licia, referred to her possessions and clothing when discussing Italian perceptions of fashion and clothing. She then compared American and Italian culture in terms of fashion and styling by using herself as an example of Italian culture and her students as a counterexample of an American style. In fact, she did this in both classes very similarly, suggesting that if she had done it spontaneously in the first class, there was potentially a "success" feeling that led her to use the same self-disclosive information again in the second class, this time more strategically. In both cases, students actively participated in the discussion, by either listening attentively or asking questions of clarification.

On the one hand, I coded observations for incidents of *personal self-disclosure*, in which teachers revealed beliefs, attitudes, feelings and information about themselves. The use of personal references, which primarily consisted of information that was unique to the speaker, occurred frequently in several classes. Further, this information was revealed using the personal pronoun "I" or possessive pronouns, such as "my" to state clearly their involvement and connection to what was being said. This was done both in English as well as in the target language. In most cases, instructors used English or a combination of English and the target language when they were using personal examples.

On the other hand, I differentiated this type of *personal self-disclosure* from the aforementioned type of *distanced self-disclosure.* It appeared that instructors used

distanced self-disclosure to remove themselves from the message by using the personal pronoun "they" or by referring to the group of speakers or the culture that speaks the language without establishing a direct connection between themselves and the group and/or the message.

Therefore, *distanced disclosure* does not include the speaker as a part of that culture. However, in most cases, these references included factual information that only someone who was familiar with the target culture and/or language, such as through extensive contact or experience with a certain culture and or language, would be able to submit. Therefore, information revealed might have been perceived as a moment of self-disclosure by an outsider (here the students) who is being introduced to a new language and culture.

Also, as an observer and outsider myself, I noted that such *distanced disclosures* more often overlapped with *personal disclosures* and were more difficult to code for observations of instructors who were native speakers and who grew up or spent a substantial time of their lives in the target culture than for non-native speakers who only spent limited time in the target culture. This complicated the interpretation, but informed implications and directions, and is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Overall, the observational data showed that some instructors were higher in self-disclosure than others. One instructor of Spanish (Fiona) did not reveal any information about herself in neither of the two observations I made of her class. Her classes were characterized by a firm focus on grammatical explanations and work with activities from the textbook. Similarly, two instructors of German (Sarah and Lidia) seemed to follow a

textbook and predetermined, and prescribed lesson plan strictly, which did not seem to leave much room for personalization.

By counting incidents of self-disclosure for each instructor in both observations, I was able to estimate self-disclosure frequencies for all instructors, which further allowed me to rank instructors by use of self-disclosure. Because I observed two classes of the same instructor for Italian, I divided total observation counts for this instructor by two to generate a representative average. Figures 17 and 18 show the total number of observations by instructor and type of self-disclosure whereas Figure 19 shows the combined totals of both types in order to rank instructors by frequency of self-disclosure.

Figure 17. Total number of observed "Personal Self-disclosure" by instructor.

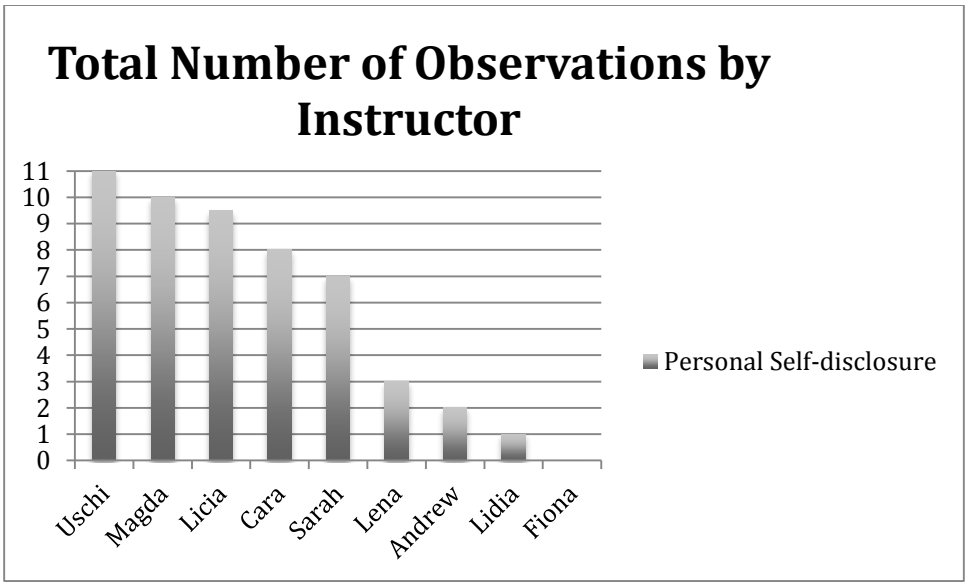


Figure 18. Total number of observed "Distanced Self-disclosure" by instructor.

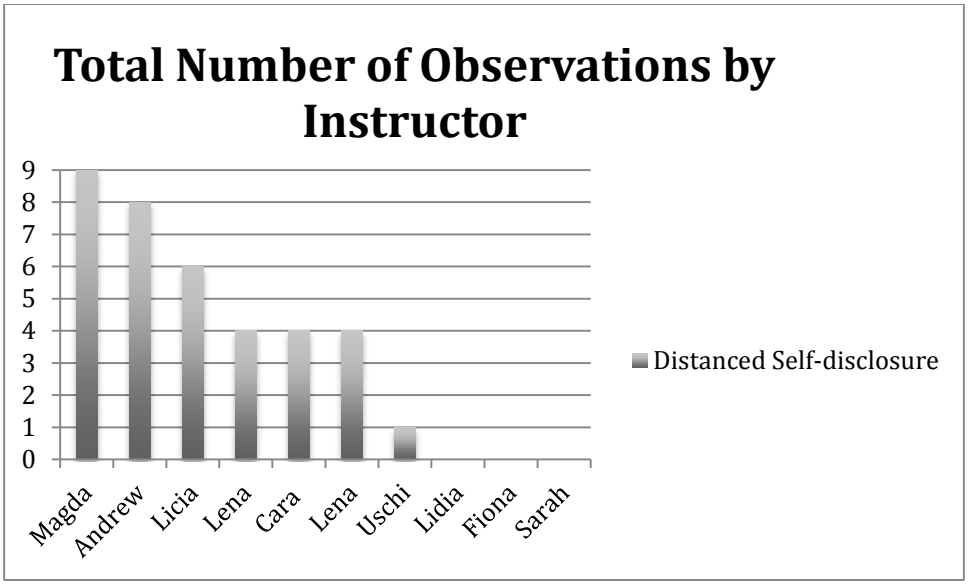
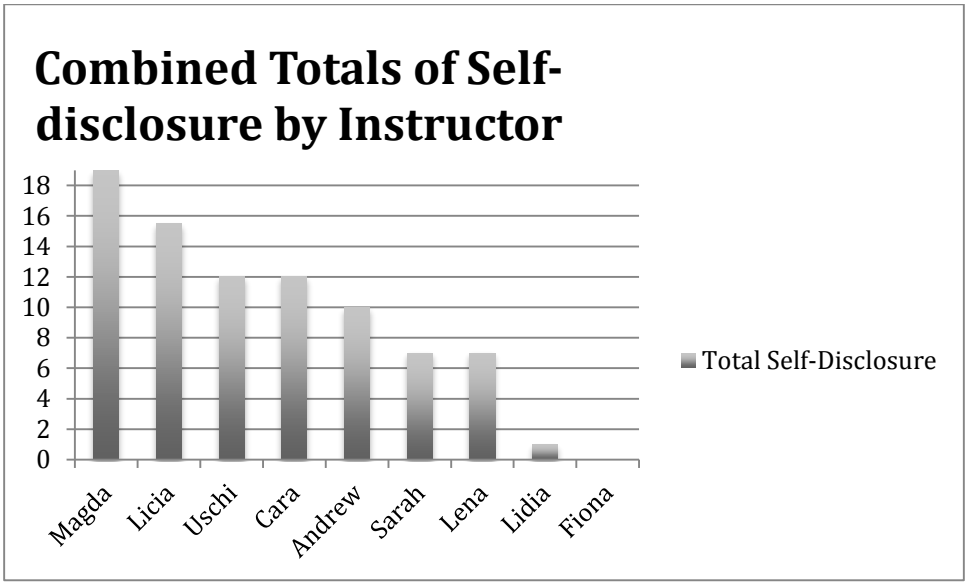


Figure 19. Combined totals of observed "Personal and Distanced Self-disclosure" by instructor.



Finally, only a few of the observed instructors seemed to be using self-disclosure strategically, and only one instructor incorporated personal information in the material used in class for instructional purposes. This implied that this instructor made a conscious choice before class as to whether personal information would be used or not. For the other instructors, it was impossible to say by observational data only whether personal information came up spontaneously or was planned. Interview results provide more insight on this issue.

Instructor Interview Data. Two instructors of German (Lidia and Uschi), two instructors of Russian (Magda and Lena) and the professor of Italian (Licia) made up Focus Group 1 (FG 1), whereas two instructors of German (Andrew and Sarah) and two instructors of Spanish (Cara and Fiona) took part in Focus Group 2 (FG 2). All participants described themselves as using self-disclosure and as revealing information about themselves in class either frequently or less frequently.

To obtain a better picture of differing perceptions, I tabulated the scores instructors received from their students in Survey 2 along with observational and interview data (Table 20). Generally, student perception scores taken from the perception of self-disclosure scale matched most of the observed totals from the observational data. In fact, instructors who reported using self-disclosure frequently, were backed by matching results from student report, scale scores, and observational data.

Table 20. Perception of Teacher Self-disclosure by data sources.

Instructor	SD Self-Report from interviews	Student-Report from interviews	SD Score N=83 (N=59)	Observation Counts (personal/distanced)
Magda	Yes, a lot now.	NA	4.5 (NA)	19 [O1(7/5); O2(3/4)]
Lena	Yes	Yes	3.8 (3.7)	7 [O1(2/1); O2(1/3)]
Licia	I don't know.	Yes	4.2 (4.3)	14 [Cl1:O1(6/4); O2(4/0)] 17 [Cl2:O1(7/8); O2(2/0)]
Fiona	With caution.	Not very much.	2.8 (NA)	0 [O1(0/0); O2(0/0)]
Cara (Spanish)	Yes	NA	3.7 (3.7) above mid-point	12 [O1(4/4); O2(4/0)]
Uschi	Yes, intentional and with caution.	Yes	4.6 (4.8) highest score	12 [O1(7/1); O2(4/0)]
Lidia	Yes	NA	4.3 (4.4) moderate high	1 [O1(0/0); O2(1/0)]
Sarah	Yes (a little)	Yes (before/after class time)	3.5 (3.5) moderate	7 [O1(3/0); O2(4/0)]
Andrew	Yes	Not very much.	3.1 (3.1) below mid-point	10 [O1(2/4); O2(0/4)]

Specifically, data for Licia, Magda, and Uschi were successfully matched, showing no discrepancies, and thus, appeared to be accurate. All three self-reported a frequent use of self-disclosure, and were perceived as moderately high in teacher self-disclosure by students (Licia M=4.2; Magda M=4.5; Uschi M=4.6) and via the observations (Uschi Total=12; Licia Total=15.5; Magda Total=19). One of Uschi's and one of Licia's students also reported use of self-disclosure in class providing examples during the interviews. Similarly, data for Fiona, who received the lowest score on the scale (M=2.8), and for whom no observations of self-disclosure were recorded, was also

successfully matched as she self-reported to be more cautious about what information she would share with students. One of her students verified in the student interview that she did not provide much personal information, but that she did relate much from her professional field, anthropology.

Matching data for instructors who received mid-point scores on the scale proved more difficult. For instance, Lidia reported to be very self-disclosive, which was supported by a moderately high score on the perception of teacher self-disclosure scale (M=4.3) but was not matched with observational data, as I recorded only one incident of self-disclosure. This led to the conclusion that low as well as high self-disclosure can be identified more easily than mid-level self-disclosure. It further supported the need to explore the construct and to create a better understanding of what self-disclosure entails and how it unfolds in certain educational contexts, such as here, a language learning context.

Another example, showing the complicated nature of identifying self-disclosure and rating its use, was German instructor Andrew. He was the only male instructor who participated in Phase 2, and his self-report of being self-disclosive did not match the score he received on the perception of teacher self-disclosure (M=3.1), which was below mid-point. Also, both of his students reported in the interview that he would not frequently self-disclose, which matched the score from the scale. However, my observations showed that he used *distanced self-disclosure*, and this may have caused a lower rating on the scale, as the scale targets *personal self-disclosure* and does not differentiate between the two types of disclosure.

In the following two sections, I consider perceptions of instructors versus perceptions of students in the use of teacher self-disclosure in more detail, relying on the interview data.

Instructors' perceptions of teacher self-disclosure. The analysis of interview data using constant comparative method resulted in themes that contribute to the understanding of teacher self-disclosure and its use in language learning contexts. The five main categories that emerged were labeled as follows: (a) characteristics, (b) types, (c) teacher factors, (d) effects, and (e) dangers. Each category was made up of either three, or four themes that I numbered consecutively and used when coding the two focus group interview transcripts (see Table 21). Thus, a total of 18 codes emerged from the instructor interview data.

Table 21. Codes from interview data: Instructors' view of teacher self-disclosure.

Teacher Self-disclosure (instructors' view)	
A) Characteristics	1) Authenticity: TSD should be authentic; based on truth and honesty
	2) Relevance: TSD should be relevant to the class content and supplement textbook material
	3) Intention: TSD can be planned (strategic use) or unplanned (spontaneous)
	4) Balance: Too much or too little TSD can be problematic
B) Types	5) Personal Disclosure: TSD can cover likes/dislikes, family, pets, hobbies, age
	6) Distanced Disclosure: TSD can cover information that is not hedged as personal per se, but might be interpreted as such
	7) Cultural information: TSD can include authentic first hand experience in or with target culture and language
	8) Learning experience: TSD can reveal struggles and success with learning a foreign language; study abroad experiences
C) Teacher Factors	9) Personal Choice: Use of TSD is a personal choice and tied to the instructor's personality or teacher persona
	10) Speaker Status: TSD is not tied to speaker status; native speakers and non-native speakers both utilize TSD; types of TSD might be influenced by speaker status
	11) Professional Status: TSD might be tied to professional status; more experienced instructors or non-graduate instructors may use self-disclosure more and differently than the novice or graduate assistant instructor
	12) Gender: Gender might influence the types and frequencies of TSD
D) Effects	13) Student Interest: TSD can trigger students' situational interest and stimulate engagement
	14) Student-Teacher Relationship: TSD can positively / negatively impact relationships between students and their instructor
	15) Value: TSD can influence the overall experience in the class (both positively or negatively); TSD can add value to curriculum prescribed content, such as grammar; TSD can add value as it allows students to relate to the information
E) Dangers	16) Boundaries: TSD can skew students' perceptions about boundaries, i.e. instructor versus friend
	17) Fostering Stereotypes: TSD can foster stereotypes
	18) Timing: TSD on the first class day (early on) can support the teacher in setting boundaries and expressing clear expectations

Characteristics. In the interviews, I saw four overarching characteristics of teacher self-disclosure (TSD) emerge: (1) authenticity, (2) relevance, (3) intention, and (4) balance. For example, Magda (FG 1) reported that the course evaluations showed that students liked her use of personal information in class as it provided them with authentic information about growing up and living in Russia (code 1). All interviewees in both focus groups supported the idea, that if TSD was used, it should be authentic and honest.

Uschi, Magda, Lidia, and Licia reported to have used self-disclosure strategically (code 3), such as by incorporating personal photographs or other personal information in a PowerPoint or activity. Most other instructors agreed that they believed this was an acceptable method, however, Fiona was not sure she would do this. An overall agreement was given on a need for TSD to be relevant to the course material that was being covered (code 3) as well as to watch a balance of the amount of self-disclosure used (code 4). In this context, Licia, Fiona, and Sarah mentioned that students liked to hear personal anecdotes in order to avoid actual work, such as doing activities from the book.

Types. Types of TSD were categorized as personal (5) and distanced (6) disclosures, as well as cultural information (7) and disclosures pertaining to the learning experience (8).

Irene supported the notion of using personal examples (code 5) in order to allow students to see beyond the general culture (code 7) and providing them with authentic information (code 1). Lidia, a non-native speaker of German, described the use and value of distanced disclosure (6) in "I can say 'The Germans do this or that' or 'We did this or

that,' and I catch myself sometimes with the things that I agree with I'd say 'we did this or that,' and I am like 'hold on' I am kind of… uhm… yeah culturally that kind of gives me a little bit of freedom" (Transcript FG 1). These examples support the observational data and differentiation of *personal* and *distanced disclosures*.

Finally, Cara described the type of TSD that revealed personal experiences of learning a foreign language (code 8) to support students in their learning experience as they were able to see their instructors as role models who have succeeded in something they are just beginning to do: learning a foreign language.

Although interview data supported observational data in that there was a difference between *personal* and *distanced disclosures,* it further appeared that cultural information was understood as its own type of disclosure that is separate from *personal* and *distanced disclosure.*

Teacher factors. For teacher factors, four themes emerged that emphasized how TSD was seen as a personal choice (9), influenced by speaker status (10), professional status (11), and gender (12).

Magda pointed out that her use of self-disclosure had increased when she was hired as an Assistant Professor and that she had been less self-disclosive when she was a graduate assistant instructor. She explained that she was "more reserved" and "was taking more care of [her] constructed self" (Transcript FG 1) as a teacher before her status changed (codes 9 and 11).

Another aspect that was discussed in both focus groups was the difference between native speakers and non-native speakers in terms of self-disclosure. FG 1 consisted of

four native and one "quasi" native speaker of the languages they taught. Lidia, who has lived and studied in Germany for an extended time period, but grew up in Latvia, labeled herself "quasi-German." FG 2 was made up of all non-native speakers of the languages they taught and emphasized the idea that both can use self-disclosure.

In both groups, participants brought up the idea of how both types of instructors can self-disclose different types of information. Whereas the native speaker might disclose more about personal experiences in the culture, the non-native speaker might share more personal experiences of learning the language and culture. In both cases these self-disclosures were described as authentic and opportunities for students to relate to the subject through the teacher.

In this context, Sarah explained

> I think, for me, it's that I bring in different qualities than a native speaker does. My experiences in Germany are going to be similar to what my students would experience if they would go abroad because we are coming from similar backgrounds, but at the same time I feel like I am missing a lot of what I could provide to them because I only studied abroad for six weeks and I have only been to Germany twice, for a total of 4 months. Which is - to me - not nearly enough. On my list of things to do - as quickly as possible. But yeah I feel like I can draw from other experiences though that native speakers can't. So it is a give and take. (Transcription FG 2)

FG 1, which consisted only of female instructors, further discussed the differences of TSD by gender. Uschi who had worked with several male teaching assistants claimed that male teachers disclose differently than female teachers and that their motives to self-disclose were characterized by the attempt to create a basis of friendship with their students. FG 2, which included one male instructor, did not discuss gender as an

influential factor in the interview. However, from my observations, Andrew stood out as an instructor whose disclosures were primarily the type of *distanced disclosures,* which did not support Uschi's claim, but rather pointed to the idea of TSD being a personal choice, tied to personality and the construction of a teacher self.

Effects. Effects of TSD were articulated in terms of how TSD might impact students' interest (13), the student-teacher relationship (14), and value (15).

Irene explained that it was important to give students the opportunity to see the value of information (code 15). Both focus groups agreed that creating meaning that was valuable to the students was achieved by using personal examples. In fact, FG 2 added the component of using personal examples to expand on what the curriculum prescribed in order to make class more interesting (code 13) and relatable for students especially when covering grammar (code 15).

Cara also emphasized that she expected her students to self-disclose to each other as well. For her, self-disclosure went both ways and should be used to trigger discussion, such as on linguistic differences of Spanish variations or cultural topics that were brought up in the textbook or by students (code 13).

In terms of the teacher-student relationship, there was mutual agreement among all instructors, that TSD, whether it is positive or negative, can impact the relationship between students and the instructor in either positive or negative ways (code 14). Predicting the outcome of TSD was described as impossible, and was further compared to other variables that interplay in instructional environments. Thus, instructors agreed, that TSD can have positive as well as negative effects on the relationship and that it was up to

the students to determine this.

Dangers. In terms of the effects of TSD, dangers were discussed in more detail. Here, the issues of boundaries (code 16), fostering stereotypes (code 17), and timing (18) were seen as crucial elements when discussing TSD and its dangers.

Andrew articulated how he interpreted some of the dangers that he saw connected with self-disclosed information (code 17). Although he generally supported the benefits of self-disclosure in sharing information that students otherwise would not encounter and that may be more relevant and authentic than a made-up example in the book, also felt the need to add on caution:

> They are still pretty young kids, who tend to do things very dualistically and a part of teaching is like breaking them of that. And, one of the dangers of the self-disclosure thing is that as the authority figure in the classroom you are at risk of, you know, here is my experience with X, and they take that as OK, this is what always happens when blablablabla… or yes, this is the right way and you have to do exactly what it seems like [Fiona does], that is being open about 'This is where I come from, this is the lens where I view all of this through, take all of this with a grain of salt because I am one person, and we are talking about 80 million speakers of this language, and members of different cultures from different places and all that sort of good stuff,' so it's constantly hammering and breaking them of the idea that it's either A or B, and that it's, well, sometimes there are letters between A and B and you have to sort of crunch things. (Transcript FG 2)

In Focus Group 2, dangers of self-disclosure were brought also up. In fact, Uschi made clear that she labels self-disclosure clearly as her own unique experience, by starting a self-disclosive remark with her first and last name in a sentence preceded by the personal pronoun "I." She explained that she did so to make students understand that there are multiple people with multiple views and that what she shares is her experience

only (code 17). Therefore, she used self-disclosure strategically considering and respecting her students' as well as her own perceptions of realities in a certain context.

Both focus groups further discussed the idea of "learning" or "teaching" how to self-disclose. In both groups, the consensus was that it was a personal choice and that it could not be forced. However, it was further brought up in both groups that an awareness of self-disclosure and the advantages and disadvantages for using it when interacting with college students would be worthwhile as part of a teacher preparation class or workshop. Reflection on self-disclosure and students' reactions to it might be used as a tool to understand better how interactions and dynamics in the classroom can develop and also how TSD can be used to set clear boundaries (code 16).

Uschi (FG 1) and Fiona (FG 2) shared examples of blurred boundaries (code 16) as a result of too much or too little self-disclosure. Uschi reported about a former student, who misinterpreted her openness and frequent sharing of personal information as a sign of friendship between her and Uschi. Uschi retrospectively stated:

> Well, of course there is the thing, if you disclose a lot about yourself, some students might think you are their friend, and you are not. And I've had this happen once and that was a really, it was a bad experience (…) [W]e were talking about just what you said, our family, our friends, what do you like to eat, what do you do in your free time and (…) she had a problem distinguishing then between me as being her instructor and me being her friend. And I thought this was clear. It was also seemingly clear to everybody else, but she wanted to be my friend, you know also outside of class and you know she was also first time gone from home, kind of like the mother figure syndrome (…) It was awful, and then I thought, did I do something wrong? This wasn't the first time that I taught like this and ugh... should I change something? And I decided no, I'm going to continue like that but I always make that clear in the very first lesson. I also have them call me the formal

> address, you know the „Sie“ and I tell them I am not your friend. (Transcript FG 1)

Fiona on the other hand reported about a class that she felt she could not keep under control

> I think it was just their perception of, kind of who I was. I mean, I realized, that towards the end of the semester we had a unit on how to say ‘It’s been x-amount of time since…’ and the exercise in the book was that they write questions for the professor. So they started asking me all those questions and literally there were gasps in the room when I said ‘Well, it’s been, you know 10 years since I did this and it’s been 20 years since I was in High School and it’s been…’ and they were kind of like grabbing each other - trying to get a hold of each other and I was just giggling in my head, because I knew it wasn’t until then that they realized that I wasn’t just two years older than them that I actually was a superior in multiple senses of the word, and so that shifted the dynamic a little bit. So, it was a combination of, I think just their perceptions of who I was and what my background was, maybe I hadn’t disclosed enough for them to, like, gather that ahead of time or maybe I had just related to them in too open a manner? I am not sure. (Transcript FG 2)

Both examples further brought up the importance of the first class day as a day for personal disclosures that would set the stage and frame the class (code 18). All instructors in the interviews agreed that the first day was important in terms of sharing personal information and expectations and to prevent problematic cases.

In sum, instructors characterized teacher self-disclosure as a complex idea that was constructed and affected by multiple factors essential to a learning environment in which frequent exchanges between students and instructors occurred.

Student interview data. Three interviews with eight students provided more data on what teacher self-disclosure looked like in a language learning context. Referring back to Table 2 in Chapter 3, a tabulation of basic information for students who

participated in the interviews, and Table 20 in this Chapter shows the scores students gave their instructors on the perception of teacher self-disclosure scale and compares their perception to the instructors and observation data. These data have already been discussed. Here, I discuss results of comparing obtained data with the student interviews.

Students' perceptions of teacher self-disclosure. Previously, I discussed some of the discrepancies in perceptions between instructors and students. In analyzing the student interviews, there were five categories and a total of 17 themes that emerged (see Table 21). Although the categories matched those for instructors' views of self-disclosure, there were some differences in the subthemes associated with the categories.

Table 22. Codes from interview data: students' view of teacher self-disclosure.

Teacher Self-disclosure (students' view)	
A) Characteristics	1) Honesty and Authenticity: TSD should be honest and authentic
	2) Relevance: TSD should be relevant to the class content
	3) Positivity: TSD should be positive
	4) Balance: Too much TSD can be problematic (oversharing)
	5) Language: TSD can occur in both the target language or English
B) Types	6) Personal Disclosure: TSD can cover likes/dislikes, family, pets, hobbies, age
	7) Personal Beliefs and Values: TSD can cover political or religious views, statements about current events or values
	8) Professional Disclosure: TSD can be based on information obtained in instructor's professional training
	9) Cultural information: TSD can include authentic first hand experience in or with target culture and language
	10) Learning experience: TSD can reveal struggles and success with learning a foreign language; study abroad experiences
C) Teacher Factors	11) Personality Trait: Use of TSD is tied to the instructors' personality but might be a trainable/teachable technique
	12) Speaker Status: TSD is not tied to speaker status; native speakers and non-native speakers both utilize TSD; types of TSD might be influenced by speaker status
	13) Professional Status: TSD used by a professor might have more merit than TSD coming from graduate instructors
D) Effects	14) Student Interest: TSD can trigger students' situational interest, grab attention and stimulate engagement
	15) Student-Teacher Relationship: TSD can positively / negatively impact relationships between students and their instructor
	16) Value: TSD can influence the overall experience in the class (both positively or negatively); TSD can add value to curriculum prescribed content, such as grammar; TSD can add value as it allows students to relate to the information
E) Dangers	17) Boundaries: TSD can skew students' perceptions about boundaries, i.e. instructor versus friend

Characteristics. The first category consisted of five themes, namely (1) honesty and authenticity, (2) relevance, (3) positivity, (4) balance, and (5) language. Whereas instructors saw honesty tied to authenticity, students described self-disclosure to be based in honesty and did not explicitly mention authenticity. Aaron even described his instructor as "100% honest" (code 1) when reporting about an anecdote that she shared with the class, explaining, "My instructor... she brings in a lot of personal anecdotes and her views of American culture and she is 100% honest. (...) Which makes it exciting (...) I feel more involved." (Transcript Student FG 1)

Yet, considering TSD to be authentic seemed to underlie students' views as shown in the following quote by Kate about her instructor, Licia:

> I think [TSD] is neat because whenever she speaks of things from her hometown, or how things were when she was growing up, I think I am inclined to believe her more, because I know she is actually Italian. She has been there, she knows what she is talking about… versus, probably somebody who wasn't from Italy and was talking to us about at least the culture aspects of it – I don't think, she would share that with us so much unless she was from Italy. (Transcript Individual Interview 1)

Further, students reported that positivity was important in TSD (Code 2). In all interviews, students primarily shared examples of positive disclosures and rated them as more favorable. For example, Kate recalled that she had had an instructor in high school who shared negative information with the class. Kate concluded, "I think you have to be aware about what you are sharing with them. I don't necessarily think you have to share a whole bunch of drama or get into the problems in your family" (Transcript Individual Interview 1).

Similarly, all groups reported that it was important for TSD to be relevant to class content. On the one hand, student FG 2 reported that their instructor, Sarah, only self-disclosed if it was relevant to class content (code 2). On the other hand, Brian in student FG 1 mentioned, "it may also be something that you don't learn something from in 30 minutes but that makes you want to learn for another four hours, and then I think it's worth it." Richard agreed that disclosure should be used as an extension to what one was learning in class, but also touched on the problem of balance (code 4)

> You are always curious about the professor. Who is he? Where do they come from? What are they like? So I think [self-disclosure] is a recipe to make it inherently interesting, as long as they don't overshare (...) There is a difference between… if something has a point or if they just keep talking. (Transcript Student FG 1)

Contrary to the instructor interview data, students did not directly discuss the opposite of oversharing, which would be not using self-disclosure at all. However, in student FG 1, the comparison was made between a large lecture class offering less opportunity to share personal information than a language class.

Finally, language (code 5), which was not mentioned in the instructor interviews, was brought up in two of the student interviews and described to play a minor role for TSD. For example, Kate explained that it was more important that there was a relationship rather than what language was used to create that relationship. Magnus implied that the language used depended on how deep the question was. Being in a beginning language class, he explained, did not provide the opportunity or vocabulary to discuss more serious matters on a deeper level. Along the same lines, Kate stated

> If we ask her a great question and she does not know how to explain it to us in Italian to where we would not understand what she is saying, because of a lot of new vocabulary or concepts that we don't know about, then she would break and usually talk about it in English, but if it is general questions that she feels like we know the vocabulary for, then she would talk to us in Italian. (Transcript Individual Interview)

Types. Types of TSD were very similar to the types that instructors had articulated. Code 6 was described as personal disclosures, which were based primarily on references to family, hobbies, or likes and dislikes. Anna and Helen (Student FG 2) described their instructor, Sarah, to do this only outside of the actual class time. They labeled her as "very professional" but added that Sarah would, however, disclose experiences that she made in Germany to provide cultural information (code 9) or an example of her study abroad experiences (code 10).

Hannah and Brian described their instructor Andrew in a similar way and, when asked how much and what he disclosed in class, added

> Hannah: Not too much to be unprofessional. But just enough to grab your attention sometimes.
>
> Brian: He does a good job of keeping [personal views] out. I mean he brought up his family and that is fine, but personal views and values, that don't relate to the class… they shouldn't do that. (Transcript Student FG 1)

Thus, Brian brought up what became Code 7, an additional theme that did not come up in the instructor interviews. Here, students described that teacher self-disclosure might also consist of conveying personal beliefs or views, such as views on religious or political topics. However, students did not agree on whether instructors should or should not disclose such personal views or values. For example, Richard and Aaron agreed that

they liked these types of disclosures as long as the instructor remained open to students' views as well. They further explained that such disclosures would provide invaluable moments of learning.

Next, instead of *distanced disclosures* that were described in instructor interviews, students mentioned disclosures of knowledge connected to instructors' professional backgrounds (code 8). Magnus mentioned,

> Our instructor does not go too much into personal stories. She is an anthropology PhD candidate, so she brings in a lot oft her anthropology background into the class, which is a lot of cultural relativism and cultural sensitivity. (Student FG 1)

Finally, Codes 9 and 10 were matched with instructors' views that disclosures could be based on submitting cultural information or on references to the instructors' own learning experiences. Hannah and Anna mentioned that Sarah used personal experiences as examples (codes 9 and 10) when she was referring to her time in Germany, usually hedging such disclosures saying "When I was there, this is what happened or this is what I did, what I experienced" (Student FG 2).

Teacher Factors. Like instructor interviews, talking with students about self-disclosure triggered discussion of other teacher-related factors. Students described three themes, (11) personality trait, (12) speaker status, and (13) professional status.

Code 11 was similar to instructors' code of TSD as a personal choice, but here, with an emphasis on TSD being more of a personality trait. Student FG 1 and 2 both characterized instructors who would self-disclose less as being more professional, yet, did not rate self-disclosure as a negative variable. They alluded to the fact that some

instructors are less open than others, and they saw this rooted in an instructor's personality. In this context, students in FG 1 added that it could be a technique like any other teaching method that instructors could be trained to use.

Code 12 matched instructors' views in that both students and instructors believed that both native and non-native speakers could utilize self-disclosure, although the nature of the disclosures might differ. Kate added that the disclosures made by a native speaker might be interpreted by students as more authentic and therefore more relevant:

> I think it's neat because it gives us a look into something we normally would not be able to look into. Like you google and you can read, but unless… getting to actually talk to her and her telling us, "Well, this is what really happened to me" that is really neat. (Transcript individual interview 1)

In terms of professional status, students in FG 1 described that personal anecdotes made by a professor had more merit than stories that came from younger or less experienced instructors. Further, Kate concluded, "I am not as afraid to go to office hours because I feel like I know her a bit more than just on an information level" (Transcript Individual Interview 1). This statement implied that professional status comes with a burden of being higher up and less personable, which might be alleviated by the use of TSD.

Contrary to instructor interviews, students did not differentiate or discuss how gender might impact the use or perception of TSD. Although most students had female instructors in their language classes, some reported self-disclosure incidents experienced by other instructors who were both men and women. Yet, no implications were made in

terms of gender making such occasion of self-disclosure different.

Effects. Students described the effects of TSD similarly to instructors, and so three matching codes emerged. Code 14, labeled *student interest*, referred to the level and impact of TSD on situational as well as overall interest. Generally, students compared the use of TSD to teaching methods that would trigger or stimulate student engagement, grab their attention, and create moments of interest in which learning could take place. Students reported to be more attentive when instructors referred to personal examples and also spoke for their classmates, whom they believed to be more stimulated as well. In this context, Anna and Helen mentioned,

> Anna: It's better when it is more open, conversationally, obviously (…) It kind of humanizes them. (…) I think when they insert personality… I think personality is more engaging than just reading a book or something. (…) Whenever the teacher tells us something about themselves. We just love it.

> Helen: Especially in lower level classes, they are above and beyond what you could ever imagine, what they know about that topic (…). Government for example, if they put something in it like 'Oh, I was with the President' or something like that, like little things you are like 'Oh my gosh, it's like really cool.' (…) and we love it. (…) it makes them more personable.
> (Transcript Student FG 2)

This quote not only speaks of the effect that TSD has in terms of grabbing attention, but also how it affects the teacher-student relationship (Code 15) that is created by the use of disclosures in class. Here, it became evident, that instructors who self-disclosed more were seen as more personable, and students felt like they could relate to these instructors. The effect was further described with an increased motivation to see the instructor outside of class, such as during office hours, and to be willing to invest

more time and effort in the learning process in order to foster the positive relationship. This played into further influencing the learning experience overall.

Richard summarized one of his experiences as follows "I had a literature class and I will never forget what I learned in this class. And I apply pieces of what I learned in this class because it became bigger than just that lit class I had to take" (Transcript Student FG 1). Thus, rather than learning factual knowledge, TSD was successfully used to add value not only to the class but beyond. This notion was brought up in all three student interviews and formed Code 16.

Dangers. Dangers of TSD were described in terms of boundaries, similarly to the points mentioned in instructor interviews. Students connected the emergence of danger primarily to the type of disclosure that was used in class. Therefore, TSD was not necessarily perceived as a danger, however if used too much, inappropriately, or not at all, was interpreted by students as that it could negatively impact the boundaries that should exist between students and instructors and that were necessary for a functioning relationship between the two in a learning environment.

Yet, there was disagreement among students about what was appropriate use of TSD, or what was too much or too little. Students agreed about clear role distribution and articulation of boundaries, when Magnus stated "Familiarity breeds contempt. (…) They have to have discipline in the course and have to have control" (Transcript Student FG 2).

Results to RQ 9. In the following, I present results that illuminate the interrelationships among teacher self-disclosure on the one hand, and the other variables, situational interest, intended effort, and the learning experience on the other hand. In the previous section, some relationships have already trickled through, and references to the results to RQ 7 and RQ8 are therefore inevitable. In order to organize the results, I again focus on instructors' perceptions first and then explore students' perceptions in reference to these.

Instructors' perceptions of relationships between teacher self-disclosure, students' situational interest, intended effort, and the learning experience. When I analyzed instructor interviews to understand better the construct of self-disclosure, my observations seemed to point to connections of TSD with the other variables. In fact, in the coding scheme that I developed (see Table 20), student interest became a theme that was frequently mentioned by instructors. The learning experience was mentioned especially in reference to the student-teacher relationship. Yet, effort did not find its way into the coding scheme, and was, in fact not discussed by instructors. In the following, I examine interview evidence for each variable and their interrelationships.

Student Interest. First, instructors in both focus groups mentioned that they believed that interest per se, or a level of initial interest was necessary for students to succeed in any educational situation in which the goal was to learn. They articulated that they felt self-disclosure was a useful tool in order to grab students' attention or to trigger interest in the class.

Andrew, who was characterized as using distanced self-disclosure and received a

mid-level perception of teacher self-disclosure score, provided an example of how initial interest, in this case, and distanced teacher self-disclosure could interact in a language learning context to trigger situational interest and engagement:

> I mean, there is certainly that role we can play in that sort of situational interest where you bring a more exciting activity into the classroom than just conjugate verbs all day, right? I mean, no one is… everyone is going to drop your class, if you do that, except for the, like, two linguistic nerds, but if you bring something that is more fun, something that they might enjoy doing, even in their free time, or that they are not as nearly opposed to doing, um, yeah, as far as that sort of broader… that personal interest, you can, as an instructor if there is something that they are already interested in that they don't, that they are not aware… I mean, let's say hypothetically someone was going into a German class who had no idea that Germans were known for beer, right, but they were really interested in beer, they brewed at home, etc. etc. and you sort of brought it to their attention that 'Hey, Germans do that whole beer thing,' you can sort of awaken that interest that is already there in them by showing them how they have connections to that subject area but you know, sort of setting up arranged marriages between Americans and Germans, it's harder to, sort of, promote that kind of interest where it doesn't already exists. (Transcript instructor FG 2)

Although the beer example is based in the sharing of factual knowledge about the culture, thus, *distanced self-disclosure*, it yet provides novel information to that hypothetical student whose interest might be triggered in the moment, creating an opportunity for this student to realize how s/he can relate to the subject. Further, Andrew pointed to using personalized information to shape the material used in class to cater to the students, and how doing so will further keep students from dropping a class.

Finally, the last sentence of Andrew's quote also exemplified the importance that initial individual interest has, and how it influences any subsequent developments within the student as well as for the student-teacher relationships. It is more difficult to initiate

an interest versus enhancing an interest that already exists. Yet, it is in the hands of the instructor to identify these oftentimes hidden interests that students may bring into the class, and teacher self-disclosure may be just one way of getting students to open up about such preexisting interests.

In FG 2, it was evident that the instructors of Spanish relied more on textbook material than the instructors of German, who created much of their own material and further used material from an open educational resource that was based on authentic material and real-life people. All instructors in FG 2 agreed that the material they used oftentimes is boring and that there are departmental guidelines that they have to follow, which is why they sought other methods, such as self-disclosure, to keep students interested or to connect with them. Fiona mentioned:

> Self-disclosure is also linked to student interest in terms of, like, I do much what [Andrew does] on the first day, kind of scare them, let them know. Because I know, I took Spanish here before it was two semesters in one semester and I know that people think it's a blow-off course, for instance, so I start right at the beginning, this is not an easy course, you cannot pass this easily, you have to work your butt off, these are the requirements, this is how it works, I do not have flexibility in this, this is a department-wide thing. Intimidate them so that they know right then they can get out of it if they need to. But then I kind of, I sort of use my own self-disclosure as a sort of a way to establish how they can relate to each other and me in the sense that, I kind of introduce language learning as, I tell them you are going to learn more, and you are going to learn it better if you find things that interest you and learn… you know, if you are interested in sports, watch ESPN and try to understand the announcers, if you are into movies, watch movies - in Spanish. Find what grabs your attention and so, that way we kind of start off learning about each other and why each person is learning Spanish. (Transcript FG 2)

Similarly, Uschi reported about how students' interest was grabbed and how they were engaged in discussions, after she self-disclosed an experience she had growing up in Germany.

> They are very engaged. I think so. I mean we have discussions all the time. Last week we were watching a movie with the students about a couple hitchhiking. And then one of them asked me, well, 'is this a common thing?' So, I told them about my own experience when I was 17 hitchhiking through Ireland, and they were totally shocked. And then we were talking about whether I would allow that for my own daughter because they know that I have one, and so we developed a discussion around it (…) I had not planned this but it was a good, really a good discussion. And we try to stay in the target language as much as possible, too, so you know, it's, I think it's good, and they are really engaged because there is some interest. (Transcript FG 1)

The learning experience. The learning experience was primarily characterized by the class atmosphere as well as the enjoyment students connect with the class, expressed for example by their willingness and excitement about class time and coming to class to learn. One aspect that plays a central role for these factors is, next to interest, the student-teacher relationship, which has previously been talked about in reference to instructors' views on TSD in Code 15 (see Table 20).

Further examination of the data showed that the teacher-student relationship and therefore the base of the learning experience seemed to be established on the first day of class. In both focus group interviews, instructors argued for the importance of what is being said on the first day. Uschi made clear that she would not use self-disclosure in a class that she was only teaching for a day or two as a sub. She described that in such a situation, the students are strangers, and they see her as a stranger, so that TSD was not appropriate in her view.

Yet, the first day of her own class, she explained the need to break the fact of being strangers. Lena further supported the importance of the first day as the initial time in which students get to experience who they would be interacting with to learn.

> Uschi: Yes. The first day I think is the start of the relationship.
>
> Lena: I just have one example of how important the first day is.(…) I had a student, who only came to my first class and he had to drop, because he, it didn't fit into his schedule or something - it was when I was teaching German - and he sent me an email saying "I'm sorry, I had to drop your class, but thank you for being so enthusiastic about teaching German - that was fun." So it's not about how you establish a relationship, it's about how the first impression of how you (…) present yourself that matters to students
>
> Uschi: And your expectations. The first thing I said on the first day is "I don't like slackers. If you are, you have to go someplace else" [laughter] (Transcript FG 1)

Focus Group 2 spoke to the importance of the first class day as well. Sarah explained that she disclosed quite a bit on the first day, paired with clear descriptions of her expectations from students. She said that despite changing dynamics each semester, she did this "to set out the tone for the semester," and to create "a pretty friendly atmosphere, (…) willing to relate with them" (Transcript FG 2).

Thus, instructors shared the view that teacher self-disclosure could be used to impact the relationship positively, establish boundaries, and subsequently influence and direct the students' experience in class. Lena provided an example of taking the student-teacher relationship to a level where self-disclosure is inevitable

> Yesterday, we had an end of the semester party at my place. I know it's a little bit early for an end of the semester party, but we know towards the end of the semester it will get a little bit more crazy. But I felt really comfortable having them at my house. I mean there are certain things that

> I would not discuss in class with my students but I think they enjoy seeing me as a person, some students said that. (Transcript FG 1)

Allowing her students into her house and them accepting the invitation shows that the relationship was positive and that self-disclosure could be helpful to strengthen the connection and interactions between students and instructor.

Intended effort. Instructor interviews did not provide much insight on how they evaluated TSD in terms of intended effort that students would put in their learning of the language. However, there was evidence that there might be a connection between students' interest in studying a language and intended effort. Irene evaluated that connection as follows: "Some of my worst students are speakers of Spanish who come because they think that Italian is so close and so it's going to be so easy. So they don't want Italian because particularly of Italian but to almost have a free ride" (Transcript FG 1), which implied that students might intend to exert less effort because they might have an advantage from a vocabulary standpoint.

Magda supported the connection between interest and effort with a contrary example for students of Russian saying, "(…) we usually get really motivated students. So they already know it's going to be really hard, so they better be interested. I see in the first couple of weeks that those without a strong interest, they just kind of disappear. Because it's hard" (Transcript FG 1).

In FG 2, Cara brought up that she found it difficult to balance self-disclosure in a way that was effective, and explained her struggle as follows:

> I think there have been times as an instructor where I have been far too harsh and not willing to listen, well, not necessarily not willing to listen but

> not willing to disclose much of myself to my students and build a relationship with them individually, because you have 25 students and that is a lot, and then still somehow achieve…ja, it's not necessarily demand a certain amount of respect but still maintain, like keep your students on task during class and make sure that they do their homework. Sorry, that is really something I am struggling with this semester. They just don't want to do the work outside of class and I have no idea how to fix that. (Transcript FG 2)

Therefore, TSD was seen as a tool to create a relationship rather than a variable in students' effort. However, it also appeared as if all variables were likely linked to one another and hard to be understood in solation. Thus, these results underline the complex task that instructors face in their daily attempts to establish an environment and a culture in which successful learning can take place. Next, results for students' perspectives are examined.

Students' perceptions of relationships between teacher self-disclosure, situational interest, intended effort, and the learning experience. Just like with the data from instructors, when examining student data for relationships among teacher self-disclosure, interest, and the learning experience, I found perspectives that elaborated on the constructs and their relationships.

Student interest. Instructors provided examples about how TSD related to students' interest. Students' data further supported such a relationship. All students agreed that TSD affected their interest in terms of grabbing their attention. They mentioned, that initially it did not matter whether disclosures were positive or negative, but it did matter in terms of staying interested.

Here, positive or novel disclosures were rated as most supportive. Aaron, for example, said, "the fun stuff makes it stick. Certain wedding related vocabulary I will never forget because our TA told us a story about a certain regional tradition for a wedding he went to in Germany (...)" (Transcript FG 1). The fact that he was able to recall the self-disclosure in connection to the material he learned showed that he must have been interested in the moment and listened and learned.

By contrast, Helena and Anna reported that their instructor would not disclose much during class, but before or after class. They were not able to connect self-disclosure to their situational interest. Yet, both brought up examples of other classes in which they experienced how self-disclosure could help them remain engaged. Kate reported that personal disclosures were engaging for her as well as the entire class. She related her engagement to her interest in learning more about the language through the eyes of the instructor and how it even transferred beyond the classroom:

> Well, I can definitely say, it has intrigued me hearing how, whenever she personally discloses, I can learn more about the language in a different way that I might have not thought about before. And that intrigues me and it makes me want to think about how this is different for them or how this works for them, and that kind of keeps the interest going past the moment because I noticed now, whenever I do things at home or in daily life, I am like "I wonder if they do this in Italy." So there has been a little bit of that. (Transcript Individual Interview 1)

In addition, students saw moments of self-disclosure as more useful than textbook material and therefore more interesting. However, interest could also spring from non-personal disclosures. The idea of novel information seemed to be overruling personal information. Furthermore, students were aware of their role in the learning process, such

as knowing what it was that would interest them or help them remember material. In this context, Richard explained,

> Self-disclosure is one component of a larger category, and the larger category is anything, just something fun, or unexpected or weird or something that grabs your attention, and that can be the professor self-disclosing but it can also be maybe an anecdote that has nothing to do with his or her personal life but that is just striking. That kind of stuff sticks in my head the way... the weird, just bland textbook stuff just disappears five minutes after I am done. But I think there are other strategies that help me ground something in my brain. (Transcript FG 1)

Finally, Richard made a final remark about student interest that illustrated the importance of other student-based factors. While students in his focus group agreed, the other two interviews as well as instructor interviews did not touch on this issue, which he described as follows:

> Interest is more depending on student than teacher. When I am prepared, I am much more interested in class. I find that I get much more out of class if I am prepared but whether I can prepare for class is not in her control. It's more to do with the ups and downs over the semester. (Transcript FG 1)

The learning experience. The connection of TSD to the learning experience was described by students similarly to how instructors described it, and was primarily characterized by the student-teacher relationship and tied to students' interest. Kate stated, "I can honestly say that I don't think the class would have been nearly as fun for me or as interesting if she hadn't done some of the personal disclosures. Because, that just made it so much more relatable" (Transcript Individual Interview).

Overall, it was peculiar that almost all students were able to recall without much thought a moment in class in which they remembered being highly engaged and in which

they truly enjoyed the class. All of these incidents were either based on personal or distanced disclosures. The only exception was Magnus, who explained his interest in class to be based on practicality, as he was going to school to become a doctor and the reason for taking the language class (Spanish) was to be able to speak with Spanish-speaking patients.

This in turn again exemplified the interplay of factors and the impossibility to look at one variable in a vacuum. It further supported Richard's remark about how interest was a student-based factor over which the instructor had not much control.

Intended effort. Students made direct and indirect connections to effort. Kate related her effort to learning vocabulary that she would need in order to engage in conversation with her instructor about the things she found interesting. This did not directly target teacher self-disclosure but the student's sharing personal information about herself, yet, it showed a relationship among intended effort and the ability of conversing with the instructor and wanting to have a mutual relationship.

FG 1 discussed effort very briefly as a side effect of interest. Brian stated that he did not see a direct effect on effort, but on the relationship with the instructor and his intent to go to office hours more frequently. "I feel more comfortable showing up in his office hour and ask the stupidest questions" (Transcript FG 1).

Helen and Anna (FG 2) discussed the need of meeting their instructors' expectations, but did not relate this to self-disclosure. Therefore, data on how students saw TSD in connection to effort seemed very limited.

Conclusion

Both quantitative and qualitative data showed the complexity that exists in a language learning context and that is brought about through multiple variables that can be tied to the instructor, the student, the curriculum etc. In fact, the constructs that were central in this study all proved to be important factors in the learning process for both, instructors and students. The most prevalent results were those that illustrated how the constructs interplayed and became essential in the student-teacher relationship.

Quantitative data did not show strong significances for the construct of teacher self-disclosure; however, individual differences among instructors were evident. In addition, the interest measures, especially individual interest, pointed out the importance of factors that were brought into a learning environment by the students. Further, interesting findings such as the impact of taking a class as an elective as directed by the curriculum, supported claims to further investigate and acknowledge the various aspects that make up teacher-student relationships and potentially can help to improve instruction. Aligning the scales with demographic information further pointed to interesting issues needing further discussion and investigation.

Significant associations were found in correlational analyses of the measures as well as when regressing variables to understand better their associations with one another. Here, it was especially interesting to find that both situational and individual interest played an important role for the learning experience of students as well as the effort they would exert.

The qualitative data validated some of the findings from the quantitative phase, such as the understanding that self-disclosure is a variable that is distinctly interpreted by each instructor and should be assessed on an individual level. In the coding schemes that were developed for both instructors and students, I also saw much agreement about the construct and its description. The categories that emerged were the same and only their themes (Codes) differed in minor ways. In sum, quantitative results were expanded by qualitative results and revealed new angles and potentials for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to explore the construct of teacher self-disclosure, its perception, and interactions with other variables, specifically situational interest, the learning experience, and intended effort. The investigation aimed to help explain how these variables were connected, and to shed light on potential pathways and opportunities that teacher self-disclosure may provide in educational contexts. The particular context in which I was interested was the language learning environment. Overall, the results of this study underlined the importance to understand the impact of communication strategies, the interlacement of instructor and student variables, as well as their inevitable and complex interactions. Thus, this study supported the significance of understanding the variables that students and teachers bring into the classroom as well as their interconnections to stimulate a functioning and fruitful environment in which learning can be fostered.

In the following sections, I discuss the findings in reference to the existing literature, point out limitations to the study, and provide implications for future research, theory, and practice. I do so, in discussing the connections among the construct of teacher self-disclosure and situational interest, the learning experience, and intended effort as found in the results of this study.

Connections between Teacher and Student Variables

In this section, I review the connections and interactions of the constructs of

teacher self-disclosure, initial individual interest, and situational interest in the context of a language learning environment, and with reference to the constructs of intended effort and the learning experience.

Perception of Teacher Self-Disclosure. The construct of teacher self-disclosure emerged from research in the field of communication studies (Jourard, 1964, 1971; Derlega & Berg, 1987), and has since been primarily studied in this area. Thus, examining it in a language learning context not only offered a novel venue in which to conceptualize the construct but served to introduce it to the field of language acquisition research. Simultaneously, a connection between teacher self-disclosure and students' interest has not yet been established, and therefore, the results of this study can be seen as a step towards establishing their connection.

In this study, the quantitative results did not prove to be as powerful as the qualitative results in terms of explicating teacher self-disclosure, but several findings should be highlighted. When self-disclosure was assessed by language, no significance was found; however, on an instructor level, teacher self-disclosure proved to be significantly different. The overall mean score of M= 3.8 (SD= 0.9) showed that self-disclosure was perceived as slightly above mid-point; however, the range from 1.8 to 5.9 showed how much students' perceptions of teacher self-disclosure in fact varied. These findings underscore that teacher self-disclosure may be seen as independent of language class, but tied to the person who is teaching a course. Therefore, teacher self-disclosure seems to be a variable that instructors either do or do not bring into the class. Further, it is important to point out that other teacher variables, such as professional status or

speaker status seemed independent from these finding as well. In addition, self-disclosure was not correlated with any of the other variables and regressions proved to be non-significant as well. Thus, teacher self-disclosure appeared not to be connected to situational interest, intended effort, or the learning experience.

Interestingly, however, in Phase 2 of this study, some of these results were not supported. First, observational data as well as some of the interview data showed that self-disclosure was in fact tied to the instructor rather than the language. Variances in observational scores for self-disclosure was documented, see Tables 17, 18, and 19. Furthermore, matching the outcomes of the different data sources (Table 20) revealed further that high and low self-disclosure was easily detectable in instructors. Instructors whose self-disclosure was around the mid-point however, either differed in their self-report from the students' perceptions or were undetected when I observed them in their teaching.

Student participants who took part in the interviews (Phase 2) commonly referred to the construct as a communication strategy and related the effects it had or could have on their interest, or their willingness to communicate with their instructor; for example, they reported to be encouraged to visit their instructors outside of class times. This supports earlier research that suggested a connection between teacher self-disclosure and behavioral intent as well as motivation (Christophel, 1990; Gray, Anderman, & O'Connell, 2011). Further, participants did not exhibit difficulty differentiating verbal disclosures from other forms of disclosures and were able to focus on the construct from this perspective. Finally, it was clear that students perceived self-disclosure to play a role

in their momentary interest and were able easily to recall disclosures made by their instructors in class. In addition, students as well as instructors described incidents of positive and negative self-disclosure and evaluated the effects on their learning. This adds to more recent research that called for a better understanding of self-disclosure, its effects and characteristics (McCroskey, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2006; Waldeck, Kearney, & Plax, 2008).

In fact, teacher self-disclosure had been commonly characterized by three primary factors: amount, valence and relevance (Cayanus, 2004; Cayanus & Martin, 2004). In this study, these three factors were more or less acknowledged and included in the coding schemes mentioned in Chapter 4 (see Tables 21 and 22). What has been described as valence was broken into multiple characteristics in this study referring to positivity on the students' side and intention on the instructors' side. In general, this study provided a more in-depth analysis of the construct and investigated it from both students' and instructors' perspectives. Thus, teacher self-disclosure can be seen as far more complex than originally assumed. For instance, students and instructors agreed that not only the amount but also the balance of disclosures played a role in its outcomes. In addition, honesty and authenticity were added as characteristics of the construct.

Earlier research focused on types of disclosure in terms of being verbal or non-verbal, positive or negative, or based on personal beliefs and values etc. (Downs, Javidi, & Nussbaum, 1988; Scott & Nussbaum, 1981; Sorensen, 1989). However, my study focused on verbal self-disclosure only the types of self-disclosures I found varied slightly for students' as well as instructors' perspectives. Most strikingly, instructors

differentiated *personal* and *distanced disclosures*, whereas students differentiated *professional* and *personal disclosures*. Further, because this study was placed in a language learning context, disclosures of cultural information as well as disclosures that described the instructors' own language learning experiences created two more types of disclosures. This speaks for the situativeness of self-disclosure. Additionally, teacher factors and their potential effects further described self-disclosure and added to its complexity. Students and instructors characterized self-disclosure as a means of establishing the student-teacher relationship with the ultimate goal of creating a functioning learning environment.

In sum, the findings on teacher self-disclosure lend emphasis to the importance of the role of the instructor not only to select material and teach the content of a course but also to be in part responsible for the interactions and relationships that develop or can develop between students and their instructor. Students acknowledged self-disclosure to be a teacher variable that played a role in how they experienced a class, which also had an impact on their investment and interest in their language study. Because no research has focused on teacher self-disclosure in a language learning environment, this study begins to fill a gap in the literature and can help to answer questions about how much impact self-disclosure can have in a learning environment and what role other variables, such as interest, play.

Interest variables. Although the importance of interest as a variable that can impact learning and that plays a crucial role in instructional environments has commonly been recognized in previous research (Fraser & Picket, 2010; Schiefele, 1991; Wang,

2012), this study added to the understanding of interest in several ways. I found that students' initial individual interest in learning a language was moderately high with an overall mean score of 5.2 (SD=1.0) on a 7-point scale and remained overall stable over the course of the semester (M=5.4; SD=0.9), suggesting that students who enter a language class to learn a language bring an essential prerequisite to the class that expresses their willingness, openness, and hopefulness to learn: interest. Yet, I also found that situational interest was rated lower at slightly above mid-point with a mean score of 3.8 (SD=0.5) indicated that circumstantial elements that take place in the moment of the learning experience, or affect it, and that are most likely tied to several factors including teacher variables and instructional methods, influence how students experience their learning environment. These findings support previous research on interest that differentiated individual and situational interest (Hidi, 2006; Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Mitchel, 1993). Yet, this particular study points to inconsistencies that exist between the students' initial interest and their interest in the moment. Therefore, researchers need to turn their attention to identifying factors that influence situational interest.

Findings in this study suggested that individual interest seems to play a more important role than situational interest. In fact, initial individual interest was found to predict the variance in situational interest, as well as in intended effort scores. This was further supported by the qualitative results in which students as well as instructors articulated that individual interest was a fundamental factor that helped students decide whether they would stay in a class or drop it. Further, situational interest appears to be

affected by multiple factors, in and outside of the control of the instructor.

In combination with the qualitative results about teacher self-disclosure, it seemed that utilizing relevant self-disclosures can influence interest in the moment. For example, results showed that students not only enjoyed moments of self-disclosure, as long as they were positive and relevant to the class, they also mentioned that teacher self-disclosure had a positive effect on their performance, in terms of paying attention, investing time and effort in their study, or their willingness to reach out to their instructors outside of class.

Intended effort and the learning experience. Similarly, intended effort and the learning experience were found to be important factors in a language learning environment. Both variables received moderately high mean scores overall, intended effort with M=5.0, SD=1.2; the learning experience with M=5.7, SD=1.0. Both were found to have moderate to strong correlations (Table 11) with one another as well as with initial individual and situational interest. In addition, the regression analyses showed that initial individual interest and situational interest could predict intended effort. Thus, the findings not only indicated that those with high initial individual interest were likely to be high in intended effort, situational interest, as well as to rate their learning experience more positively, but also that interest was connected to intended effort, and subsequently learning, thereby supporting claims that placed interest in relationship with learning variables, such as intended effort (Dörnyei, 1994; 2005; 2009; Papi, 2010).

Nevertheless, these findings point out that it is important to understand what influence interest variables can have on other variables, and that further research is

necessary to understand how situational interest can be fostered so as to have a positive effect on learning. Thus, implications for future research, theory, and practice are discussed next, followed by turning to limitations of this study.

Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Results

As mentioned previously, quantitative results indicated that students' perceptions of teacher self-disclosure did show significant differences across the teachers, pointing to the importance of the instructor as the main actor and creator of moments in which self-disclosure takes place. This finding was supported by qualitative data in many ways. Students and instructors found it necessary and important to articulate the connection between self-disclosure to personality. Further, different types of self-disclosure as well as the dangers such self-disclosure may bring, were discussed in the interviews. The use of a scale for perception of teacher self-disclosure seemed plausible at the study's start. However, a thorough evaluation and potential adaptation of the measure may be necessary to capture the complexity of self-disclosure. Questioning the measure and developing a more valid and reliable measure of teacher self-disclosure may be one aspect of this study that would have potentially brought more significant results.

In fact, qualitative results can be interpreted as providing the basis for a better understanding of the construct of self-disclosure and how to approach it in future research studies. Quantitative and qualitative results both showed that there was variance in use of self-disclosure and that students perceived their instructors' use of self-disclosure differently. Furthermore, the qualitative data advance current conceptions in that

instructors saw themselves in distinct ways and used self-disclosure in ways that were most appropriate to their history, level of comfort, and utility for achieving their instructional goals.

Even though the quantitative data did not confirm that teacher self-disclosure predicted situational interest, the learning experience, or intended effort, results connected both individual and situational interest to the learning experience and intended effort. These results were confirmed by the qualitative data with perception of teacher self-disclosure included as a complex but important contributor to student's interest.

Finally, the discrepancies between qualitative data and quantitative data may suggest the need to approach self-disclosure differently. Students and instructors reported to notice higher student interest levels when personal information was successfully used, thus, suggesting that more research on how self-disclosure works, in the discloser as well as the "recipient" of disclosure. The different contexts in which self-disclosure can occur is another variable that may influence self-disclosure and its perception. In sum, the design of this study with its reliance on both quantitative and qualitative approaches seemed particularly felicitous in yielding a more global understanding of the constructs and their interplay.

Implications for Future Research and Theory

This study underscores the importance of acknowledging the diverse teacher variables that exist and play a role in educational contexts. Teacher self-disclosure can be seen as one of these variables, and it can further be placed in connection with students'

situational interest. In fact, Rotgans and Schmidt (2011b) called for investigation of such teacher factors in relation to situational interest. The qualitative results of my study were particularly useful in elucidating the association of students' interest and teacher self-disclosure, and how teacher self-disclosure can positively impact students' overall interest development and engagement in the learning process.

The primary implications of my study are that teacher self-disclosure should be acknowledged as a teacher variable that can be utilized in teaching to support the student-teacher relationship, and further, to recognize initial individual interest as a powerful student variable. Further, as found primarily in the qualitative part of this study, both of these variables appear to be linked through situational interest as part of the overall interest development process that is continuously taking place in learning environments (Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Mitchell, 1993; Renninger, Hidi, & Krapp, 1991). For example, teacher self-disclosure could be used in moments in which students indicate low situational interest in order to trigger their engagement. In addition, connecting the learning experience to students' initial individual interest, such as by providing a moment in which relevant, novel and authentic disclosures are used, may create positive reactions in the students, and they may potentially become interested and value the course in a way that stimulates their interest.

More research from other learning contexts would be helpful in understanding factors in interest development and the variables instructors and students bring into the relationship and the learning environment. In terms of teacher self-disclosure, an in-depth look into the construct seems particularly warranted. For example, case studies as

of instructors who are rated low in self-disclosure as well as those who are rated high in self-disclosure might bring further insight into the issue and about how self-disclosure functions. As part of such in-depth analyses, observations should be conducted more frequently to capture its breadth and understand its interplay with other circumstantial factors.

Furthermore, from the qualitative data, there appeared to be a link between teacher self-disclosure and personality. Therefore, understanding how different personalities and traits may impact the student-teacher relationship and students' perception of self-disclosure, as well as identifying who is more or less likely to self-disclose may inform further whether self-disclosure can or should be taught, or whether it is a factor that originates in the personality of an instructor. Eventually, self-disclosure is merely one element that instructors bring into the class and that can be connected to students' interest. Other variables should be identified and recognized for their potential to interact with one another.

Results of this study implied that initial individual interest is an important variable in predicting students' situational interest. However, the gap between the mean scores of these variables points to the need to explore how to create a better learning experience in which situational interest is rated more favorably. Also, findings implied that situational interest may be affected by many other variables that are either in or outside of teachers' control. In fact, educators not only face the task of choosing the right material for a class, but also, and possibly more importantly, the decision of how to deliver the material. Thus, this study implies that self-disclosure might be especially useful in material design.

More research is necessary that would be able to demonstrate, such as by manipulation of course material, whether strategically placed disclosures in teaching material can positively impact students' situational interest or whether material is secondary in students' interest development.

In terms of future directions, I would like to investigate in depth how and why instructors choose to self-disclose information about themselves in the classroom. Part of such a project would include identifying and analyzing the different types of self-disclosure that exist, as well as lead to an investigation of how the use of self-disclosure unfolds and what it entails. Understanding the origin and motivation behind choosing what and how to self-disclose will eventually help educators and researchers appreciate how its effects can be evaluated and understood in an educational context. As mentioned previously, an ideal in-depth investigation would involve a case study with one instructor who is perceived as high and another who is perceived as low in self-disclosure.

In order to do such a study, however, a reliable measure needs to be in place to identify instructors. Therefore, future research should also focus on developing a measure that is sensitive enough to capture students' perceptions of different types of self-disclosure. In the interviews, students were able to differentiate between several types, such as personal and professional disclosures. Thus, it would seem important to develop a measure that included different dimensions of self-disclosure.

Moreover, developing a measure that assesses instructors' own perceptions of self-disclosure may be another way to identify instructors for a case study. Further, comparing students' and instructors' perceptions may provide an interesting angle to

understand more fully self-disclosure as a communication strategy. Investigating the potential that self-disclosure can have in establishing the student-teacher relationship can be approached from this angle as well.

Implications for Practice

This study not only aimed to explore the connections among the variables, but also to inform educators about using self-disclosure in their teaching practice to shape their relationships with their students and subsequently impact students' interest, overall experience, and learning efforts. In fact, educators who aim to understand better the construct of teacher self-disclosure as well as how to utilize self-disclosure to stimulate students' interest in the moment may find the results of this study to be encouraging. Also, they may find these results useful in understanding how self-disclosive information can be incorporated in their formal or informal communication inside or outside their classes. First, this study can stimulate self-reflective processes in educators. As a first step towards understanding and appreciating self-disclosure, thinking about one's own practice can be helpful. Considering one's own perceptions of how self-disclosure may be useful, as well as what types of self-disclosure he or she believes to exhibit, and what effects these disclosures had seem to have on one's students. Further, speculating about how one's students might see him or her in terms of self-disclosure as well as openly talking to students about self-disclosure can help identify areas in which one may or may not incorporate self-disclosure. In fact, this study showed that self-disclosure was characterized and evaluated in several ways, and educators should be aware and

knowledgeable of the advantages and disadvantages that self-disclosure can bring into a learning environment. Here, self-reflection would be a way of uncovering one's personal idea about self-disclosure. Reflective writing or discussions with other instructors may help to trigger the thinking process and objective evaluation of one's interactions, communications, and preferences in teaching.

In fact, the notion of creating awareness of self-disclosure is one of the strengths of this study. Most students and instructors of this study were not familiar with the term but were able to relate their practice and methodology to it throughout the interviews. For educators to have an awareness of what variables play into the establishment of a functioning learning environment is crucial. Further, understanding self-disclosure from both students' as well as instructors' views can help better illustrate how it can be successfully implemented in a class as well as identify moments in which it would be inappropriate to use.

Furthermore, this study underlined the importance of variables that are brought into the learning environment by the students. Specifically, initial individual interest proved to be a powerful factor to predict students' situational interest and intended effort. Further, it was found to be stable over the semester. This might be unique to language learning contexts because students in the U.S. oftentimes have a broad selection of languages from which to choose, and thus can choose what best suits their interest. In this decision, factors such as heritage connections, other personal connections or circumstantial factors, such as practicality of knowing a certain language, may strengthen the sense of initial individual interest. Such an entering variable is nonetheless important

in implicating that instructors should invest in getting to know their students' initial individual interests. Self-disclosure may be a useful tool to initiate the sharing of such information. In the focus groups, instructors commonly agreed that self-disclosing on the first class day or within the beginning days of a semester is helpful in assuring a functioning environment that is build on mutual respect and considerations of expectations. Thus, teacher self-disclosure that is strategically used early on can be especially useful to make a class interesting and valuable to students.

In this context, this study further implied that intentional and planned self-disclosure can add value to the class when it is integrated in the material. This is further suggested in cases where the textbook does not offer much value to the students and is seen as a boring resource rather than a learning tool. Although the language learning environment might be especially receptive for such strategic manipulation, instructors of other content areas might not have such flexibility in creating, rearranging, or amending material. Other useful ways are anecdotal references to one's life that are relevant to course material. Such anecdotes may occur spontaneously but can also be strategically placed. A class with students that have high initial individual interest may be advantaged in terms of learning, as they automatically intend to invest more effort in their learning. Yet, instructors should be aware of the power they have to impact students' interest development especially with the stories they share.

In sum, although interest is a student variable that can be influenced by context and the instructor, teacher self-disclosure is tied to the instructor's choice to use it or not. Although it may be used to create communication opportunities that enhance the student-

teacher relationship, there are potential dangers in overuse or misuse of self-disclosive information. Therefore, educators should learn about the positive as well as the negative effects that self-disclosure can bring along and should further remain open about placing it in their specific context.

Limitations

The results of this study showed potential implications for research and practice in the context of language acquisition and beyond. Nevertheless, it is necessary to consider some of the limitations of this study. First, because this study was framed in the environment of language learning, some of the characteristics of how language classes are structured and organized at institutions of higher education may influence the interpretation of the data or limit results may be applied in other contexts. For example, language classes are different than traditional college classes in that class sizes are usually kept small, yet can vary depending on language and demand. Thus, students and instructors might automatically be placed in a closer relationship than would be the case for a 300-student lecture hall course. As a result, students may less likely experience the professor to be lecturing for 50 or more minutes, have higher actual contact hours (here, four or five days a week) in which they interact with their instructor, and they may be more actively involved such as by frequent participation or group work. This may affect how one understands and interprets the measured variables, especially perception of teacher self-disclosure.

Second, concerning data collection and methods used in this study, the

quantitative phase could have been strengthened if more instructors and their students could have been recruited to participate. While it was important for me to collect data in different classes and with different instructors, I was originally hoping to recruit more instructors per language so that a cluster analysis could have been performed. Even though I contacted more language departments and all instructors of those departments who agreed, only for one language, German, was I able to recruit all instructors of beginning language level classes.

Further, not all languages at the institution where data collection took place had several sections of the same class, or class size varied, or the same instructor taught the different sections. Therefore, data from students in the classes of only 16 instructors were collected. Whereas 297 students provided their email addresses to participate in the study, only a total of 153 students completed Survey 1 and only 59 students were successfully paired after Survey 2 with their Survey 1 data. Although multiple reminders were sent to the students, in order to achieve a high response rate, the level of attrition could have potentially been lowered if only one survey had been administered or if students could have been asked to complete surveys in class during actual class time rather than on their own. The design of the study, as described in Chapter 3, however, did not allow for surveys to be taken in class or at only one time in the semester.

The problem of low completion rate further impacted the results of the measured variables. For example, for the measure of initial individual interest, the overall mean score was 5.2 and indicated that students entered a language class with moderately high individual interest. However, Chinese received a statistically significant higher mean

score of 6.1 than, for example, Spanish (M=4.7), but analyzing the score distributions showed that Chinese was slightly positively skewed and that the total participants per language varied.

In addition, in my study, the response rate of female instructors was higher than those of male instructors. With a majority of female instructors, in the quantitative phase no statistically significant differences were found. Further, only one male instructor took part in Phase 2. Observing and comparing an equal number of male and female instructors could potentially inform research and provide answers to questions of gender differences that still remained unanswered. For example, in instructor focus group 1, which was made up of only female instructors, some differences were mentioned and speculations were made about differences in sex and motives to disclose. Dindia and Allen (1992) claimed that sex differences may be rooted in the instructor's goals to self-disclose. Therefore, it would seem important to be cautious in making generalizations about self-disclosure and gender with the given sample in which men were underrepresented. In-depth comparisons of male and female instructors and their use of self-disclosure may help fill this gap in the literature.

Finally, I see the biggest limitation of this study in the measure used to assess perception of teacher self-disclosure. The results of Phase 2 showed that self-disclosure was far more complex and consisted of more factors than the scale was designed to capture. Thus, I recommend that a scale be developed that is more sensitive and could potentially capture self-disclosure with reference to the different types that have been described in this study. Further, characteristics and effects of self-disclosure should be

investigated in more in-depth analyses. Qualitative studies are suggested to inform and establish the construct of teacher self-disclosure in different contexts, before attempts should be made that examine self-disclosure quantitatively.

Conclusion

This study had several purposes. On the one hand, I investigated whether the perception of teacher self-disclosure could predict situational interest, the learning experience, and intended effort. On the other hand, I examined the construct of teacher self-disclosure itself to add insights on the topic to the existing literature and to help create a better understanding of what teacher self-disclosure entails. Further, I analyzed the construct of interest in a language learning context with the attempt to synthesize existing literature of different fields.

The results demonstrated interesting relations between teacher self-disclosure, individual interest, situational interest, the learning experience, and intended effort, and explain in part how the contextual variables interact and are associated with one another. In general, the results of this study supported the importance of investigating teacher-dependent variables such as teacher self-disclosure and pointed toward the complex interconnection of variables that subsequently impact the student-teacher relationship.

Although the quantitative results did not show that teacher-self disclosure accounted for much of the variance in situational interest, intended effort, or the learning experience, the qualitative results showed that students understood teacher self-disclosure to be an important and impactful communication strategy and teaching tool that was

helpful in creating a relationship that would promote a positive learning environment and stimulate engagement and learning. Also, the results showed how important students' initial interest was when entering a learning environment in which the teacher would have the ability to maximize student interest and engagement. Therefore, this study makes a contribution to understanding those variables that are essential in learning, such as interest and effort, as well as those that can have maximizing effects, such as teacher self-disclosure and situational interest, and offers new pathways to investigate teacher variables in more depth.

Appendix

Appendix A. Phase 1 – Time 1 Survey (background information and individual interest)

Phase 1 – Time 1 Survey

Please answer the following questions:

For identification and matching purposes please provide the following information:
Name of this course: _____
UT EID (for matching time 1 and time 2 surveys): _____
Gender: M____ F____
What is your class rank? Freshman____ Sophomore____ Junior____ Senior____
Does this course fulfill a requirement in your program of study? Yes____ No____
Have you had prior instruction or experience in LANGAUGE? Yes ____ No ____
Why are you taking this course? Please describe your reasons briefly.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Please indicate how true each statement is for you using the following scale:
"1 = not at all true of me" and "7 = very true of me".

	Not at all true						Very true
LANGUAGE will be practical for me to know.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
LANGUAGE will help me in my daily life outside of school.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is important to me to become a person who speaks LANGUAGE.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Knowing LANGUAGE will be a important part of who I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I will enjoy the LANGUAGE as a subject.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I like LANGAUGE.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I will enjoy using LANGUAGE .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
LANGUAGE is exciting to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix B. Phase 1 – Time 2 Survey (Measures: individual interest (A), self-disclosure perception (B), intended effort (C), learning experience (D) and situational interest (E))

Phase 1 – Time 2 Survey

Please answer the following questions:

For matching purposes please provide the following information:
Name of this course and time it meets: _____
UT EID (for matching time 1 and time 2 surveys): _____
Are you interested to be interviewed? Yes ____ No ____ Maybe ____

Individual interest measure.

Please indicate how true each statement is for you using the following scale:
"1 = not at all true of me" and "7 = very true of me".

	Not at all true						Very true
LANGUAGE is practical for me to know.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
LANGUAGE helps me in my daily life outside of school.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is important to me to be a person who speaks LANGUAGE.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Knowing LANGUAGE is an important part of who I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I enjoy the LANGUAGE as a subject.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I like LANGUAGE.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I enjoy using LANGUAGE.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
LANGUAGE is exciting to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Perception of Teacher Self-disclosure measure.

Please indicate how true each statement about your instructor is for you using the following scale: “1 = not at all” and “7 = Completely true”.

	Not at all true						Completely true
My instructor expresses his/her beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My instructor reveals personal information about his/her personal life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My instructor often talks about what he/she does on weekends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My instructor seldom talks about him/herself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My instructor uses his/her family or friends as classroom examples.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My instructor often gives his/her opinions about current events.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My instructor shares his/her dislikes and likes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My instructor presents his/her attitudes toward events occurring on campus.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My instructor discusses his/her feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My instructor often talks about him/herself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My instructor often gives personal examples in class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My instructor seldom discusses family or friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My instructor only discusses class related material.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My instructor rarely discusses his/her personal life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My instructor gives his/her opinion about events in the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My instructor is open with the class about his/her feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My instructor often talks about his/her family and friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My instructor seldom expresses his/her beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Individual Interest Measure.

Please indicate how much you agree with each statement using the following scale. “1 = strongly disagree” and “6 = strongly agree”.

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
I would like to spend lots of time studying LANGUAGE.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If a LANGUAGE course was offered in the future, I would like to take it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would like to study LANGUAGE even if I were not required.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would like to concentrate on studying LANGUAGE more than any other topic.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If my teacher would give the class an optional assignment, I would certainly volunteer to do it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am prepared to expend a lot of effort in learning LANGUAGE.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Learning Experience Measure.

Please indicate how much you agree with each statement using the following scale. “1 = very much” and “7 = not at all”.

	Not at all						Very much
Do you like the atmosphere of your LANGUAGE classes?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Do you find learning LANGUAGE really interesting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Do you think time passes fast while studying LANGUAGE?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Do you always look forward to your LANGUAGE classes?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Would you like to have more class time to learn LANGUAGE?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Do you really enjoy learning LANGUAGE?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Situational Interest Measure.

Please indicate how much you agree with each statement using the following scale. “1 = strongly disagree” and “7 = strongly agree”.

		Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
T	My LANGUAGE teacher is exciting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
T	When we do LANGUAGE tasks, my teacher does things that grab my attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
T	This year, my LANGUAGE class is often entertaining,	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
T	My LANGUAGE class is so exciting it’s easy to pay attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
MF	What we are learning in LANGUAGE class this semester is fascinating to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
MF	I am excited about what we are learning in LANGUAGE class this semester.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
MF	I like what we are learning in LANGUAGE class this semester.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
MF	I find the LANGUAGE tasks we do in class this semester interesting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
MV	What we are studying in LANGUAGE class is useful for me to know.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
MV	The things we are studying in LANGUAGE class this semester are important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
MV	What we are learning in LANGUAGE this semester can be applied to real life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
MV	We are learning valuable things in LANGUAGE class this semester.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix C. Phase 2 – Classroom Observation Sheet

Date: Language Class: Instructor:
Class size: Male/female ratio:

Topic and goals/objectives of class:

Activity	Discourse	Self-disclosure incidents	TL/E
Before official class			
1-5			
5-10			
10-15			
15-20			
20-25			
25-30			
30-35			
35-40			
40-45			
45-50			
After class			

English vs. target language ratio by instructor use of language:

Other Notes:

Appendix D. Phase 2 – Semi-structured interview questions

Interview questions for teachers
How would you define self-disclosure? What is it, who does it, when?
The literature I am interested in defines self-disclosure as "….", would you like to add something to this definition or change it?

! Aim is to establish a common understanding of what self-disclosure is to guide the rest of the interview !
Do you generally self-disclose information about yourself? Who do you self-disclose to, why and what type of information?
Do you self-disclose information about yourself when teaching? Why? Why not?
Do you self-disclose information about yourself before class starts or after class? Why? Why not?
Do you self-disclose information in the target language of the class? Why? Why not?
If you self-disclose does it happen strategically, for example you talk about "Family" and you use your family as an example? Or is it rather spontaneous?
Do you believe self-disclosing can have a (positive or negative) effect on your students?

Interview questions for students
What does the term self-disclosure mean/imply to you?
The literature I am interested in defines self-disclosure as "….", would you like to add something to this definition or change it?

! Aim is to establish a common understanding of what self-disclosure is to guide the rest of the interview !
Do you like to self-disclose information? Why? Why not?
Do you see a lot of self-disclosure in college, such as by other students or instructors?
What type of disclosures? How does that make you feel?
Do you have a class in which a professor tends to self-disclose a lot? If so, what does he/she disclose? Why do you think s/he does that?
Does it have an effect on you (example: attention grabbing, boring, meaningless)?
What about LANGUAGE class? Does your instructor self-disclose information?
What type of information?
Does s/he self-disclose in the target language?
Does it relate to class content?
How does it impact you, what do you think?

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Vita

Born and raised in the Rhine Valley, Anke Julia Sanders, was a student at Bonn University. She was a *Magister* student in the North America Program (NAP) and minored in Geography, and Political Science. She received a Fellowship to study abroad at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, MA, and after completion moved to Austin, TX where she completed her Master's in Germanic Studies/Applied Linguistics. Focusing on psychological phenomena, such as humor, in the classroom, she continued her graduate studies in Educational Psychology. She currently resides in Colorado.

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