EXPLORING THE ROLE AND EFFICACY OF SEMINARY LANGUAGE CURRICULA

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APPROVAL SHEET

EXPLORING THE ROLE AND EFFICACY OF

SEMINARY LANGUAGE CURRICULA

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Soli Deo gloria

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PREFACE

First of all, I would like to thank my God and Lord, Jesus Christ. Without his faithfulness, life would not be worth living. I would also like to thank my thesis chair, Dr. John David Trentham. He has been an invaluable and patient guide, carefully shepherding me through the process of writing this thesis from the beginning to the end. My other professors at Southern must be mentioned: Dr. Anthony Foster, Dr. Timothy Paul Jones, Dr. Michael Wilder, and Dr. Shane Parker. Their character and passion for God's Word and God's glory, as well as their hard-earned skills, carried over into their teaching and set a good example for me.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

When it comes to evangelical seminary curriculum design, the number of voices persuasively calling for one model or another abound.[1] It is no surprise, then, that the role of biblical language studies is expressed in a variety of ways across different seminary programs, even when those programs are housed by the same institution. In terms of the "role" of language studies in evangelical seminary curriculum, this study explores answers to such questions such as "Why is Greek required for one degree, but not another?" "How do seminaries explain the rationale for their curricula, the subject areas that will be required for x, y, and z degrees?" In terms of the "efficacy" of language studies, this study explores questions such as "Do the students who study Greek feel like it is something that is aligned with their goals or serves their goals for ministry?"

Theological Foundations

From a perspective of biblical theology, language study has a huge potential to positively impact church life. That impact may be a reflection of the diversity of gifts within the body of Christ: some might have gifts for language study and language work,

[1]See Robert Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 17ff.; Leroy Ford, *A Curriculum Design Manual for Theological Education* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1991); David I. Smith, "Recruiting Students' Imaginations: Prospects and Pitfalls of Practices," in *Teaching and Christian Practices*, ed. David I. Smith and James K. A. Smith (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 211-23; Michael Fuller and Kenneth Fleming, "Bridging a Gap: A Curriculum Uniting Competencies and Theological Disciplines," *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 2, no. 2 (2005): 163-78; Beverly Haddad, "Curriculum Design in Theology and Development: Human Agency and the Prophetic Role of the Church," *Hervormde Telolgiese Studies Theological Studies* 72, no. 4 (2016): 1-8; Shawn L. Oliver, "Curriculum Revision: Ongoing or Sporadic," *Theological Education* 43, no. 1 (2007): 7-12; Havilah Dharamraj, "We Reap What We Sow: Engaging in Curriculum and Context in Theological Education," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 38, no. 4 (2014): 350-60.

but others have different gifts which are likewise valuable, along the lines of 1 Corinthians 12:1-11.[2]

For example, in the book of Acts, the arrival of 'tongues' (γλῶσσα) of fire in 2:3 may not be a reference to the shape of flames but rather corresponds with the events which immediately follow (i.e., Acts 2:4, 11; 10:46; 19:6). The early church speaking in other 'tongues' (γλῶσσα) as empowered by the Holy Spirit obviously refers to natural languages which were understood by other people who were present: the listeners described by 2:6, 8 were able to understand the church members' utterances in their 'own language' (τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ).[3] From this point on, readers of the New Testament cannot rule out natural languages as being one possible interpretation of γλῶσσα, regardless of whatever other arguments may be made about the single, unexplained reference to 'the tongues…of angels' (γλῶσσα) in 1 Corinthians 13:1. Indeed, the usage of 'tongues' (γλῶσσα) in Revelation seems to likewise refer in a fairly consistent manner to natural human languages (5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15). That would correspond to the use of intelligible 'tongues' (γλῶσσα) on the day of Pentecost in an unequivocal manner, as well as to the mandate from Jesus to his followers to carry his Gospel worldwide. Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8 describe a mission which began to take form shortly afterwards, as 'tongues' (γλῶσσα) were utilized to bring about intelligible verbal communication of the gospel message. Tongues were thus a means to an end, perhaps the end of building up the church via effective evangelism and discipleship (Matt 28:18-20;

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[2]See Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, rev. ed., New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 651-2; William F. Orr and James Arthur Walther, *1 Corinthians: A New Translation*, Anchor Bible 32 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), 280; J. Paul Sampley, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, in vol. 10 of *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 794.

[3]Interestingly, in the New Testament, διάλεκτος occurs only in the book of Acts, and always refers to a natural human language (Acts 1:19; 2:6, 8; 21:40; 22:2; 26:14). See Sampley, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 944; also see Elim Hui, *Regulations Concerning Tongues and Prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14:26-40: Relevance beyond the Corinthian Church*, Library of New Testament Studies 406 (New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 42, 73.

Acts 1:8). It seems likely, or at least possible, that the usage of 'tongues' (γλῶσσα) in Mark 16:17 also corresponds analogously to Jesus's promise of empowerment for worldwide evangelism and discipleship as described by Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8.

It is under the canopy of these great promises that the local church operates in a given locale. Perhaps the most sustained, explicit treatment of 'tongues' (γλῶσσα) in church life appears in 1 Corinthians 12-14.[4] Clearly 1 Corinthians 12 provides a theology of spiritual gifts, including 'tongues' (γλῶσσα). This theology continues to be developed in chapters 13 and 14. In chapter 14, however, the emphasis is on order in worship: chapter 14 addresses acceptable praxis when it comes to the gift of tongues in church life, more so than chapters 12 and 13, respectively.

Presentation of the Research Problem

It is under the canopy of these great promises that the local evangelical seminary operates as well, and carries out its part in the church's mission.[5] Therefore the role and efficacy of seminary language studies may initially be framed or rooted in biblical theology. Yet the issue stands: despite the importance of Hebrew and Greek skills to the life of the church, very little in the way of an explicitly articulated theological and philosophical basis for the study of biblical languages in seminary curricula is available.[6]

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[4]Rom 12:3-8 and Eph 4:7-16 also provide theological renditions on the role of spiritual gifts in the mission of the church. In these passages, it might be argued that the role of spiritual gifts obviously corresponds with the overall mission of the church described in Matt 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8 (i.e., it is empowered by the Holy Spirit), although technically 'tongues' (γλῶσσα) are not addressed specifically by these texts. Joseph Fitzmyer and Markus Barth, for example, provide extensive scholarship on these passages in Rom 12:3-8 and Eph 4:7-16, respectively. See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 647; Markus Barth, *Ephesians: Introduction, Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6*, Anchor Bible 34A (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 478ff.

[5]The term, "evangelical" follows Marsden's definition in this project. Evangelicals believe in (1) the ultimate authority of Scripture following the Reformation's formulation of it; (2) the actual, historical nature of God's acts to make salvation possible, following the Biblical narrative; (3) salvation through faith in Christ alone; (4) an essential need for missionary work and evangelism worldwide; and (5) the value of personal spiritual transformation. George Marsden, "Introduction: The Evangelical Denomination," in *Evangelicalism and Modern America*, ed. George Marsden (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), ix-x.

[6]Along with Shaw's two-page treatment of the subject, two short articles are also exceptions to

Written studies concerning the efficacy of those language studies are also scant. The goals of both a given institution and its students—and the degree to which a given program does or does not meet them—were significant factors to consider when exploring this mostly uncharted terrain.[7] Finally, although some methodologies and theories have shown themselves to be helpful, theorists seem to concur that there is no one way to teach a foreign language: different contexts may call for differences in approach.[8] David Miller's recent critique of the use of the Grammar-Translation Method in evangelical North American seminaries, followed by his proposal of an alternative route forward, for example, is just one important comment on the efficacy and role of seminary language studies.[9] As the field of Second Language Acquisition and teaching is fecund, care could be taken to uncover what is already working well for professors who teach Hebrew and Greek courses and for the students who populate them.[10]

Definitions

The following definitions should help the reader understand how the following terms are used in this thesis.

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the relative dearth of explicit discussion of the subject. See Perry Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education: A Practical Handbook for Integrative Learning* (Carlisle, UK: Langham Global Library, 2014), 10-11; Allan M. Harman, "The Place of the Biblical Languages in the Theological Curriculum," *Reformed Theological Review* 50, no. 3 (1991): 91-7. John Davies's article is in part a response to Harman. John A. Davies, "Language and the Theological Curriculum," *Reformed Theological Review* 52, no. 1 (January-April 1993): 1.

[7]Regardless of whether biblical languages are addressed explicitly, in a general way theorists display a refreshing variety of models and challenging takes on the impact of a Scripture-based curriculum in different contexts. Craig Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith: Education and Christian Practices* (Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 1999), 42-3, 66, 162-4; see Dharamraj, "We Reap What We Sow," 355.

[8]See Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 105, 346-7, 358; Patsy M. Lightbown and Nina Spada, *How Languages Are Learned*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 212.

[9]David R. Miller, *Greek Pedagogy in Crisis: A Pedagogical Analysis and Assessment of New Testament Greek in Twenty-First Century Theological Education*. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2019), 3.

[10]This study was not an "audit" of any particular teacher's work, or seminary language teaching in general—that would be too heavy a task for a single study—but rather sought to explore what is already working for different professors and students.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). CLT is based on the premise that successful language learning involves not only a knowledge of the structures and forms of a language, but also the functions and purposes that a language serves in different communicative settings. This approach to teaching emphasizes the communication of meaning in interaction rather than practice with and manipulation of various grammatical forms in isolation.[11]

Compare that notion of CLT to "implicit" language instruction, which is defined by Spada and Tomita as instruction provided via meaning-based activities that might expose students to target grammatical features as they are used in conversation, but not as the topic of conversation per se.[12] "Implicit" instruction is not to be confused with "hidden or implicit curriculum."

Explicit curriculum. Explicit curriculum is defined here as "those publicly known, stated and planned educational events which are commonly understood by all those who are participating."[13] This concept is not to be confused with "explicit language instruction."

Form-focused instruction. Instruction that draws attention to the forms and structures of a target language within the context of communicative interaction. This may be done by giving metalinguistic information, simply highlighting the form in question, or by providing corrective feedback.[14]

One can compare that to the notion of "explicit" language instruction, defined by Spada and Tomita as education that involves overt metalinguistic explanations using

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[11]Lightbown and Spada, *How Languages Are Learned*, 215.

[12]Nina Spada and Yasuyo Tomita, "Interactions between Type of Instruction and Type of Language Feature: A Meta-Analysis," *Language Learning* 60, no. 2 (June 2010): 273.

[13]Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education*, 79.

[14]Lightbown and Spada, *How Languages Are Learned*, 218.

technical grammatical language.[15] "Explicit" instruction is not to be confused with "explicit curriculum."

Hidden or implicit curriculum. "The Potent sociological and psychological dimensions of education, which are usually caught rather than intentionally taught."[16] This concept is not to be confused with "implicit" language instruction.

Motivation. Motivation can be defined as what determines someone's reasons for doing something, the length of time he or she will persist in it, and the level of effort expended upon it.[17]

Null curriculum. "What is learned through what is not taught—in terms of both the intellectual processes that are promoted or neglected, and the subject areas that are present or absent."[18]

Stakeholders. Edgar H. Schein writes that stakeholders are the "constituencies" whose needs an organization must take into account in order to survive.[19] A university, for example, must take into account the needs of various stakeholders such as (1) housing and feeding for students; (2) opportunities for faculty to teach and research; (3) opportunities for financial investors to invest in a sound organization; (4) society's needs for skilled workers who can fill roles in its labor market.[20]

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[15]Spada and Tomita, "Interactions between Instruction and Language Feature," 273.

[16]Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education*, 79.

[17]Zoltán Dörnyei and Ema Ushioda, *Teaching and Researching Motivation*, 2nd ed., Applied Linguistics in Action Series, ed. Christopher N. Candlin and David R. Hall (New York: Routledge, 2013), 4.

[18]Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education*, 79.

[19]Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 5th ed. (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley, 2017), 152.

[20]Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 153.

Current Status of the Research Problem

Qualitative study can identify "what needs to be studied" in a given field, when those concerns are not already evident.[21] The primary intention of this research design was to explore what was currently a mostly uncharted area of study.[22] In chapter 2, a literature review showed that besides the various curricular roles that language studies may hold at a given institution—such as the theological and philosophical foundations of curricula, and their application—the extent to which evangelical seminaries and students that attend them were achieving their respective goals was mostly unexplored in current writing on the subject. What follows directly below is a brief overview of some of the major issues involved: (1) theological questions; (2) philosophical questions; (3) questions as to whether student and institutional goals for biblical language studies are being satisfied; (4) best practices in teaching and learning; and (5) how curricular design can be influenced by all of the issues just mentioned.

Theology

As stated above, it may be fair to say that as seminaries make changes in their language curriculum, or choose to keep things the same, that dialogue could be analyzed at first from a framework of philosophical and theological commitments. Again, as noted above, a basic theological question in regard to biblical languages concerns the notion of spiritual gifts and the gift of tongues specifically.[23] Not every person has the same gifts: in regard to 1 Corinthians 12:4-30, Gordon Fee claims that the focus of the passage is the need for different gifts in a church which is unified by the Holy Spirit.[24] It might be fair

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[21]Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 11th ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2016), 251.

[22]Ibid., 253.

[23]The Greek term 'tongue' (γλῶσσα) is used in the NT only in Mark 16:17; Acts 2:3-4; 10:46; 19:46; 1 Cor 12:10, 28, 30; 13:1, 8; 14:2, 4-6, 9, 13-14, 18, 19, 22-23, 26-27, 39; and Rev 5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; and 17:15. The gift of 'tongues' (γλῶσσα) is only mentioned in 1 Corinthians.

[24]Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 33, 649, 653.

to say that someone who is a teacher in the church does not necessarily need a gift of 'tongues' to fulfill that role (1 Cor 12:28-31). A good pastor need not necessarily be a linguist or a language scholar. On the other hand, such a pastor would undoubtedly still benefit from the translation work of others. Such theological applications or considerations might be important to seminary curriculum design when the role of language study is developed.

Care was taken in chapter 2, in regard to spiritual gifts, to take up analysis of the 'body of Christ' metaphor—members working together under one Lord—as it appears in Ephesians 4:11-16 and Romans 12:3-7, even though a gift of tongues is not mentioned in those passages specifically.[25] Also as noted above, members of the body have different gifts, but each is as important as all others. Fitzmyer argues that in Romans 12, each gift is meant to benefit or build the church community.[26] Even when spiritual gifts may not be mentioned directly, the 'body of Christ' metaphor is used by Paul in Colossians 1:18, 24; 2:19 and Ephesians 2:19-22; 5:23 as well.

The effect of such verses upon the role of language study in seminary curriculum—which can go far towards making Hebrew and Greek Scripture intelligible to the church—is direct when one considers the notion of glossolalia, one possible interpretation of what it means to speak in a 'tongue' (γλῶσσα). Johannes Behm concedes that while natural human languages—such as Hebrew and Greek—could be the idea Paul had in mind while writing 1 Corinthians, he himself understands the Bible to be speaking of glossolalia in 1 Corinthians 12-14.[27] Orr and Walther follow suit.[28] Somewhat more

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[25]Barth, *Ephesians*, 478ff.

[26]Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 647.

[27]Johannes Behm, "γλῶσσα," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:722.

[28]Orr and Walther, *1 Corinthians*, 305-6.

interesting still is Sampley's argument that the account of Pentecost in Acts 2 was an instance of glossolalia, even though as the story goes, people could understand the message of the Gospel in their respective mother tongues (Acts 2:5-12).[29] What is perhaps more telling is that Hiu, in his extensive research on tongues and prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14, does not address the use of 'tongues' (γλῶσσα) in Revelation at all, which much like the Pentecost account, refers clearly to human languages and ethnic groups, and the consummation of the church's mission—a mission which involves global evangelism (Rev 7:9).[30] Again, the takeaway in terms of biblical language curricula is that theologically—whatever one thinks of glossolalia—seminary language studies can be weighty in terms of their value to the life and the theology of the church.[31]

Philosophy

In terms of philosophy, Knight explains that philosophical claims provide the basis for educational practice in a given context.[32] In that sense, there is some overlap between theology and philosophy in a Christian educational endeavor. For some authors, epistemology relevant to Christian education involves a relational process of

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[29]Sampley, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 944.

[30]Elim Hui does not bring up the subject at all in his book. Elim Hui, *Regulations concerning Tongues and Prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14:26-40: Relevance beyond the Corinthian Church*, Library of New Testament Studies 406 (New York: T & T Clark, 2010).

[31]James Riley Estep Jr. identifies seven basic concerns that pertain to any educational endeavor, seven concerns which take theological overtones or substance when an education is intentionally developed to be "Christian" in nature. James Riley Estep Jr., "Toward a Theologically Informed Approach to Education," in *A Theology for Christian Education*, ed. James R. Estep Jr., Michael J. Anthony, and Gregg R. Allison (Nashville: B & H, 2008), 264. In fact, Estep argues that Christian education is essentially an "applied theological discipline." Ibid., 294. For this study in particular, an important theological issue that was investigated was how theology can be applied in the formulation of language study curriculum. Language study is not required of a disciple of Christ, but if it is taken on out of devotion to Christ, it can produce fruit in keeping with the church's witness in the world: love of other Christians as well as those who are not, for example. See ibid., 275. Developing his ideas, Estep demonstrates how theology can influence six other areas of a Christian education, all of which were taken up in more detail in chap. 2.

[32]George R. Knight, *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective*, 4th ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2006), 34.

transformation.[33] Looking beyond reason, Parker Palmer seeks to use "both eyes": intellectual reason, as well as the heart, which sees love and community beyond rational limitations.[34]

Robert Pazmiño claims that a Christian worldview is developed via the discipline of philosophy.[35] Naugle, for example, attempts to present a theological and philosophical reflection upon the concept of "worldview," and hopes to encourage future reflection upon it.[36] Yet for James K. A. Smith, Christian education is not simply a matter of gathering facts about a "Christian" worldview or values, but investigating what Christians do, how they interact with the social processes that make up their contexts.[37] Worship, rather than fact gathering, is the foundation of Christian worldview, according to Smith as he attempts to approach education from a perspective of worship.[38] Chapter 2 will take up these ideas more thoroughly.

Curriculum: Theory and Practice

From the outset, it might seem likely that biblical language study, as close as it can be to the theological source texts of Christian spirituality, would have an important place in the curriculum of any evangelical seminary.[39] As stated above, in a general way,

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[33]See Esther Lighthouse Meek, *Loving to Know: Introducing Covenant Epistemology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), xiv; James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*, Cultural Liturgies 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 17-18, 25; Parker J. Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, 10th ann. ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 97.

[34]Parker J. Palmer, *To Know as We are Known: A Spirituality of Education* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), xi.

[35]Robert W. Pazmiño, *Foundational Issues in Christian Education: An Introduction in Evangelical Perspective*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 86.

[36]David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of the Concept* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), xv.

[37]Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 28, 65-66.

[38]Ibid., 11.

[39]Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith*, 42, 53, 57-58.

seminary curriculum is widely attended to by scholars in written work.[40] Yet when it comes to explicit scholarly discussion of the role biblical language studies could take in different curricula, for the most part there is ponderous silence.

Again, philosophy and theology have foundational relevance to curriculum: they work to define what will be explicit, hidden, and null curricula.[41] Logical questions emerged. How did explicit philosophical and theological commitments shape biblical language study at specific evangelical seminaries, and how were these commitments carried out in terms of degree requirements and by individual professors in seminary classrooms? As opposed to what was explicitly articulated about biblical language study, what is the hidden, or "implicit" curriculum of a given theological institution?[42] Dharamraj, for example, critiques the way that hidden curriculum in an exegesis course could suggest that information processing, or data crunching—translating a particular text accurately, or in harmony with other interpretations—is the entire goal.[43] Such questions, and others along similar lines fall under the purview this research.

Best Practices in Teaching and Learning

Rising alongside these other routes of inquiry was the question as to best practices in teaching and learning and the extent to which seminaries and students were effectively reaching their goals. First, best practices will be discussed.

Different authors emphasize that there is no one "wonder method" or "wonder approach" that answers all questions and resolves all issues in second language

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[40]Ford, *A Curriculum Design Manual for Theological Education*; Smith, "Recruiting Students' Imaginations," 211-23; Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education*; Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education*; Dharamraj, "We Reap What We Sow"; Fuller and Fleming, "Bridging a Gap," 163-78; Haddad, "Curriculum Design in Theology and Development," 1-8.

[41]See Knight, *Philosophy and Education*, 34-35; Palmer, *Courage to Teach*, 76-77.

[42]See Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known*, 19-20, 29.

[43]Dharamraj, "We Reap What We Sow," 356.

teaching.[44] The fact that ancient Hebrew and biblical Greek are no longer spoken, and few students likely have a goal of developing rich conversational skills in those languages may present challenges that a teacher has to work against to some degree.[45] Communicative Language Teaching (sometimes referred to as "meaning-based" instruction) for example, is a widely recognized approach that is designed to facilitate functional language skills, and is therefore well suited to learning living languages, but would hypothetically require some adaptation when the target language is no longer spoken, and its functions are somewhat limited by that fact.[46]

Lightbown and Spada, for example, do not recommend reliance upon communicative methods exclusively, but rather a combination of CLT methods and a "focus on form," or an explicitly framed and controlled focus on grammatical forms.[47] These approaches could hypothetically inform both students' study habits and professors' approaches. Yet an audit of someone's teaching is not the goal here. When it comes to best practices, the goal of this research is simply to let professors and students express what is working well for them and what is not, in their respective contexts.[48]

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[44]Richards and Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, 346-7; Lightbown and Spada, *How Languages Are Learned*, 103, 212, 120-1.

[45]Ibid., 6-7.

[46]See Sandra Fotos, "Traditional and Grammar Translation Methods for Second Language Teaching," in *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning*, ed. Eli Hinkel (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005), 665-6 . See also Young-Guo Cho, "L2 Learning Motivation and Its Relationship to Proficiency: A Causal Analysis of University Students' EIL Discourses," *English Teaching* 68, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 41-42, 61-62; Lightbown and Spada, *How Languages Are Learned*, 192.

[47]Lightbown and Spada, *How Languages Are Learned*, 195. Fotos shares a reasonable concern that second language curriculum should be shaped by what one is ultimately trying to do with the language. Fotos, "Traditional and Grammar Translation Methods," 665-8.

[48]Indeed, different authors have written texts to help teachers ascertain the worth of one approach or textbook over another via the results of current research. See Lightbown and Spada, *How Languages Are Learned*, 1. Teachers could familiarize themselves with such resources if desired, but again, the goal here is to explore, not to audit the ways teachers are teaching or students are studying.

Motivation

Were seminary language courses meeting institutional goals, as well as the goals of students? Abrar-Ul-Hassan states that the efficacy of a course depends, at least in part, on the perceived needs and goals of a language student and whether or not those goals and needs are met.[49] His claim was crucial for this present research: it was taken into consideration as one began to talk about the efficacy of a given curriculum. The aim here was to analyze how students felt that Greek or Hebrew study was helping them reach their personal goals—their motivations for learning the material—or not.[50] There was also a matter of ascertaining whether or not institutional goals for language study corresponded with the goals of students. The former was investigated in part via interviews with students, and the latter was explored in part via interviews with professors. The extent to which institutional goals matched up with students' goals was also taken into consideration via inspection of course catalogs and other program-specific publications such as syllabi as they were available.

With little consensus on anything else, most researchers agreed that motivation determines an individual's reasons for doing something, the length of time he or she will persist in it, and the level of effort expended upon it.[51] This consensus was a crucial consideration when designing a research study to evaluate motivation in Hebrew and Greek students.

The history of theoretical approaches to second language motivation is both

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[49]Shahid Abrar-Ul-Hassan, "A Study of the Motivational Patterns of Learners of English for Academic and Professional Purposes," *TESOL Journal* 5, no. 1 (March 2014): 47-48.

[50]See Cho, "L2 Learning Motivation," 38.

[51]Dörnyei and Ushioda do not provide a list of bibliographic citations for their assessment of this area of inquiry: they simply state that a summary of the available research yields such a consensus. They preface that statement with a short discussion of the fact that "no existing motivation theory to date has managed—or even attempted—to offer a comprehensive and integrative account of all the main types of possible motives, and it may well be the case that devising an integrative 'super theory' of motivation will always remain an unrealistic desire." Zoltán Dörnyei and Ema Ushioda, *Teaching and Researching Motivation*, 2nd ed., Applied Linguistics in Action Series, ed. Christopher N. Candlin and David R. Hall (New York: Routledge, 2013), 4.

short and full of life.[52] Dörnyei and Ushioda divide the history of motivation studies relevant to second language teaching and learning along the following lines: Social-Psychological (1959-1990); Cognitive-Situated (1990s); and Process-Oriented (2000-Present); and they claim that currently the rise of the Socio-Dynamic Period is now upon us.[53]

However, in regard to second language motivation theory, Tsang notes that even the basic concepts of instrumentality and integrativeness—which were foundational to the study of second language motivation—are still being investigated in current research, even though other theoretical approaches have arisen.[54] Dörnyei and Otto devised an attempt to consolidate previous thinking into a theoretical model, to investigate how to frame not only the diversity of factors that contribute to motivational influences on behavior, and how and why people choose to pursue a particular activity such as language learning, but also the motivation required to follow through with that activity over time.[55] Later, Dörnyei and Ushioda reject Dörnyei and Otto's Process-Oriented model as being too linear and focused on cause and effect.[56] Yet the latter does provide a temporal overview which may be valuable to analysis of student motivation, a means of discussing how on one hand, some Greek students may grow frustrated, while others are encouraged during the process of working towards their respective goals.

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[52]The complexity of a case study dealing with motivation in Colombia left Mario Guerrero claiming that the situation was so intricate that no one existing definition of second language motivation was sufficient. Mario Guerrero, "Motivation in Second Language Learning: A Historical Overview and its Relevance in a Public High School in Pasto, Columbia," *HOW: A Columbian Journal for Teachers of English* 22, no. 1 (April 2015): 104.

[53]Dörnyei and Ushioda, *Teaching and Researching Motivation*, 40, 60, 67-68.

[54]Sin Yi Tsang, "Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language in the Context of an American University: A Qualitative and Process-Oriented Study on De/Motivation at the Learning Situation Level," *Foreign Language Annals* 45, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 130-2.

[55]Zoltán Dörnyei and Istvan Otto, "Motivation in Action: A Process Model of L2 Motivation," *Working Papers in Applied Linguistics* 4 (1998): 43.

[56]Dörnyei and Ushioda, *Teaching and Researching Motivation*, 70-71, 75.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the role(s) and relative efficacy of biblical language studies in graduate seminary curricula for language professors and MDiv students in their last year of studies or who have graduated in the last year at six evangelical institutions, for a total of thirty participants.[57] The role(s) of biblical language studies was generally defined in terms of how curricula explicitly and implicitly express notions of the importance of biblical language study. The efficacy of biblical language studies was generally defined in terms of the degree to which students perceived the value of language study in regard to their respective careers or ministries, and the degree to which professors felt a given curriculum was effective in achieving its stated goals.

A Framework for MDiv Language Curricula

An original framework for conceptualizing seminary language curricula emerged during the review of Precedent Literature, as chapter 2 will address in more detail. The original framework has five nodes (i.e., philosophy; theology; curricula; motivation; and best practices), which are connected by arrows in figure 1. The purpose of the arrows is to illustrate points of interaction between the nodes, respectively: the adjective "dynamic" was chosen to reference such interaction across the framework. Each node has a theoretical basis and implications for praxis. Language curricula do not simply spring up from the ground like trees or rosebushes, of course. MDiv language curricula are the products of human decisions. As will be discussed in chapter 2, the point of this framework was—as much as the precedent literature allows—to account for factors that influence curricular design.

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[57]Creswell also states that 20 to 30 participants will "saturate" a theme or category for grounded theory. "Saturation" is the point at which a sample no longer provides fresh insights. John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2014), 189. Elsewhere, Creswell and Poth state that 20 to 60 interviews are sufficient to saturate an inquiry. John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2018), 87.

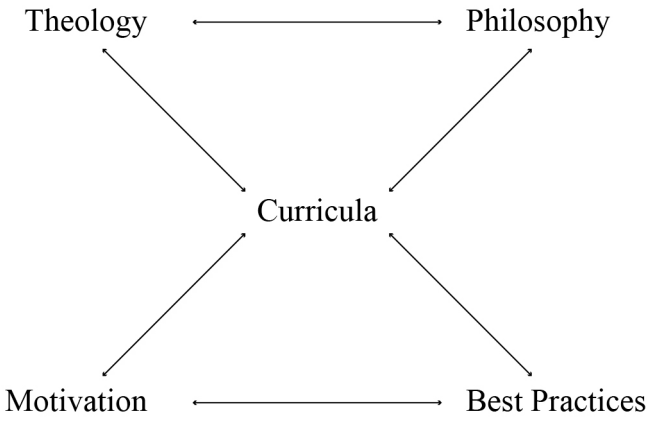

Figure 1. Dynamic elements of seminary language curricula[58]

Research Questions

1. What categories emerge from the literature which can provide a dynamic framework for MDiv language curricula at selected evangelical seminaries?

2. How are varying curricular priorities and outcomes expressed at selected evangelical seminaries, with regard to biblical language studies and language proficiency?

    a. How do the selected seminaries explain their theological and philosophical-educational bases for the role(s) of biblical language study in their respective curricula?

    b. How do the selected seminaries articulate their plans for how their curricular priorities will be addressed in the classroom, or in terms of pedagogy?

3. How do professors and students at selected institutions express their priorities and values regarding biblical language study?

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[58]These nodes are based in existing research. Nel Noddings surveys how, from Socrates forward, philosophers have addressed particular educational questions. Nel Noddings, *Philosophy of Education*, 4th ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2016), xiv. George Knight's clear thoughts on the ways theology intertwines with philosophy when Christian education is undertaken were another substantial piece of the foundation upon which this framework rests. Knight, *Philosophy and Education:* 34. Similarly, "best practices" and motivation are two large concerns in contemporary second language teaching and learning research. As noted above, Dörnyei and Ushioda review the short but lively history of research into second language motivation. Dörnyei and Ushioda, *Teaching and Researching Motivation*, 40, 60, 67-68. Casual observation shows that identifying developing best practices through research is simply the goal or the main business of the field of second language teaching and learning as it stands. See Richards and Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, ix. Curricula in seminary language studies is the point at which the other nodes of the framework converge, or rather the focal point which is not well documented in the current literature: there is a gap in the precedent literature when it comes to second language motivation and seminary language curricula, and so forth.

a. How do specific teachers explain and understand the place of biblical language study within the curriculum of their respective schools?

b. How do selected students understand or articulate the efficacy of biblical language study in terms of their personal goals for ministry, or motivation for studying—their personal formation—at seminary in a more general way?

c. How do the selected language professors and students demonstrate best practices for teaching and learning in specific seminary contexts?

Research Assumptions

It was assumed that participants were responding accurately to the interview items. It was assumed that all interview transcripts are accurate and complete. All participants will remain anonymous: anonymity allows participants to speak candidly.

Necessary Research Competencies

Facility with audio recording software and equipment was necessary.[59] The ability to record telephone interviews via Skype and Almoto Call Recorder—the latter is a program designed to record Skype audio—was required. The ability to use ATLAS.ti software to code interview transcripts was also necessary as the study developed and interview transcripts were being produced.[60] Appropriate interviewing skills were also necessary, along the lines of Creswell and Poth's recommendations.[61] Finally, skilled analysis of transcribed interview data via coding as described in Leedy and Ormrod's text was a necessary competency.[62]

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[59]Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research*, 269.

[60]Ibid., 300.

[61]Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 163-66.

[62]Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research*, 292-97.

CHAPTER 2

PRECEDENT LITERATURE REVIEW

> Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and the speaker is a foreigner to me. So it is with you. Since you are eager for the gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church. (1 Cor 4:10-12 NIV)

Introduction

What is the role of biblical language studies in a given seminary curriculum? According to the rationale of this project, interaction between theology and philosophy occurs when it comes to determining the null, explicit, and implicit curricula regarding biblical languages in evangelical seminaries.[1] As this chapter will show, a concern of certain scholars for "holistic" approaches in educational philosophy—movement against focusing exclusively on the cognitive aspects of learning and teaching—could ideally be reflected in attempts to construct holistic seminary language curricula. Yet there is little written work which overtly, specifically, and intentionally discusses the relationship of philosophy and theology to biblical language curricula.

Related questions emerge regarding the execution of a curriculum. To what extent is a given program efficacious, in light of whether or not professors feel their students are achieving program goals and outcomes? In terms of motivation—another aspect of efficacy—do language students achieve their goals in selected seminary

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[1]George R. Knight, *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective*, 4th ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2006), 34-35; Perry Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education: A Practical Handbook for Integrative Learning* (Carlisle, UK: Langham Global Library, 2014), 79.

programs? What methods or approaches do professors find to be helpful or harmful in terms of leading their students to success? Likewise, what study practices do students find to be helpful or harmful?

Again, rationales for the roles of language curricula in American evangelical seminaries as well as perceptions of their relative efficacy are largely undocumented. A review of the available literature will provide one basis upon which a qualitative study can illuminate such undefined territory.

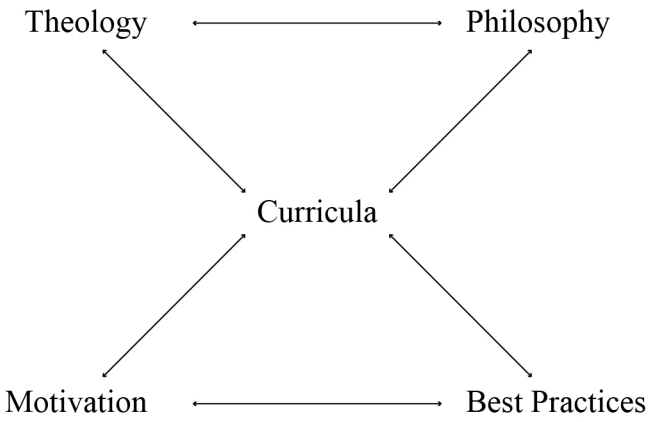

Figure 2. Dynamic elements of seminary language curricula: another look

The original framework illustrated by figure 2 is an attempt to account for major factors that influence the design and delivery of seminary language curricula. Philosophy and theology are not visible in and of themselves, of course. Yet they interact to shape an educator's visible classroom practices, or curricular praxis. Likewise, implications of theory for curricular praxis are also of central importance to this study. The study also explored how theories of second language motivation—as well as motivation understood more generally—influence specific teaching and learning behaviors. A teacher's praxis in the classroom may affect a student's motivation, while a student's motivation—or demotivation—might reciprocate, and affect a given teacher's

practices. Those dynamics will be discussed in more detail in this chapter. In addition, although this project is not focused upon teaching methodology, best practices likewise can affect curricula—and vice versa. This interaction occurs as a teacher employs his or her knowledge of what has been effective in terms of teaching methodologies and approaches, and perhaps adjusting curricular practices to meet the needs of a given class. Yet again, best practices in teaching may also call for attention to student motivation. The point is that the proposed framework was an attempt to illustrate how deep currents of theory or ideas can simultaneously affect the actual praxis that occurs in a given seminary's MDiv language curriculum from multiple angles.

The study's research questions shaped the following literature review, as well as the methodological design which follows. The methodology described in detail in chapter 3 will focus on answering the research questions and sub-questions. Research Questions 2 and 3 and their sub-questions investigated each node of the above framework individually. Yet by answering those questions, the data collection as a whole helped to clarify answers to Research Question 1. Research Question 1 concerns how the nodes of the original framework above interact—or do not—to shape language curricula at different institutions.

Theology

Knowledge and use of biblical languages can support fresh, nuanced, flexible interpretations of the meanings of Scripture. While not every pastor need necessarily be a language scholar, Scriptural texts hold the written and inspired theological bases for church life, including activities such as discipleship, teaching, preaching, prayer, church administration, and Bible translation.[2] In that way, seminary language study has an

[2]While there is a lively debate concerning a gift of "tongues" or the phenomenon of glossolalia, beyond acknowledging that fact, this present study does not venture further in that direction. See, for example, Hans Conzelmann and Walther Zimmerli, "χάρισμα," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedricht, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974),

invaluable place in the life of the 'body of Christ'.

Seminary Language Study: Applications

James Riley Estep draws out a skeleton sketch of education that is theologically sound.[3] He enumerates seven basic and general concerns for any educational endeavor.[4] With some adaptation here, they may pertain specifically to language study in seminary curricula.

First, the "purposes and objectives" of language study may bring glory to God, as students gain skills which feed teaching, exegesis, and preaching.[5] A deeper understanding of biblical texts can develop as students learn to dip beneath existing translations. Language study is in no way a replacement for the discipleship that occurs while focused upon God in prayer, but it can augment that devotion.[6] Second, as a language professor takes on the role of "teacher," he or she can ultimately found the ministry of teaching biblical languages upon his or her own character formation.[7]

Third, language study challenges students intellectually, and allows them to grow in their understanding of Scripture.[8] It generates processes which might feed their contributions to both scholarly and ecclesial communities.[9]

Fourth, the relationship of language teacher to student is ideally one of mutual

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404-5; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 764; see also Rom 12:3.

[3]James Riley Estep Jr., "Toward a Theologically Informed Approach to Education," in *A Theology for Christian Education*, ed. James R. Estep Jr., Michael J. Anthony, and Gregg R. Allison (Nashville: B & H, 2008), 264.

[4]Ibid.

[5]See Estep, "Toward a Theologically Informed Approach to Education," 265.

[6]Ibid., 268.

[7]Ibid., 270-1.

[8]See ibid., 274-5.

[9]Ibid., 274-5.

respect, perhaps even when the stress of mid-term Greek exams plays upon one's sense of human frailty.[10] Though language study may be the focus of classwork, students and professors ideally keep the bigger picture in view—that one's essential identity is in Christ, and the fact that the fruits of language study are but one facet in the ministry of the church at large—before, during, and after class time.[11]

Fifth, the most valuable outcome of biblical language curriculum is the recognition that the more the church can know about Scripture, the better. Biblical language studies are an obvious way to probe Scripture at increasing depths, something Estep believes is necessary, in order to continually inform growth in faith.[12]

Sixth, in terms of "learning environment and methods," it is true that informal study of Greek or Hebrew can be profitable. Informally using a Greek-English lexicon to find potential definitions or usage of Greek terms, without too much concern for the technical analyses found there, is not wasted time. Yet formal seminary studies typically offer more effective and thorough education in biblical languages.[13]

Seventh, in terms of "evaluation" one might ask if a student's language studies—undertaken as a disciple of Christ—ultimately nurture the church.[14] Do they bring glory to God, and support solid theology?[15]

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[10]Estep, "Toward a Theologically Informed Approach to Education," 276.

[11]Ibid., 277-8.

[12]Ibid., 280.

[13]See ibid., 286.

[14]Ibid., 290.

[15]Ibid., 291.

Conclusion

Seminary language studies have great potential to build up the church, but how do different seminaries and students frame those language studies theologically? There is little in print at this time which would account for areas of differences or consensus. As a result, the methodology of this study—a qualitative study—was designed to explore such uncharted territory.[16]

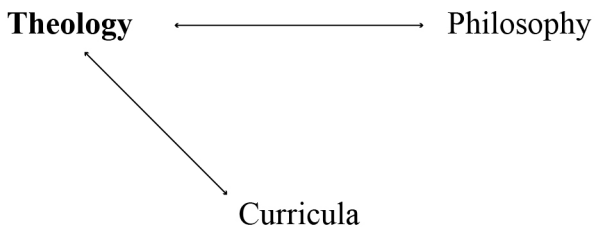

Figure 3. Theology is essential to Christian curricula

Nevertheless, it is clear that without a theological foundation, there would be no such thing as Christian curriculum. As figure 3 above illustrates, theology interacts with philosophy when Christian views of epistemology shape curricula, for example.[17] Based in this literature review of theology as it relates to seminary language studies, Research Questions 3a and 3b were used in interviews with faculty and students to investigate the dynamic influence of theology upon seminary language curricula. Along with those interviews, a review of official institutional publications such as seminary websites and course catalogs—guided by Research Questions 2a and 2b—also explored the ways that theology shapes that curricula, while interacting with philosophical notions.[18]

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[16]Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 11th ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2016), 251, 253-4.

[17]See Knight, *Philosophy and Education*, 34-35.

[18]Ibid.

Philosophy

When discussing education, epistemology quickly raises its head. Esther Lighthouse Meek presents her "covenantal epistemology" as a matter of an "interpersonal relationship" with God, a "transcendent other."[19] Parker Palmer states that love is the deepest source of knowledge, as it is transformative in the lives of those who prayerfully choose it, and again as it informs relationships with others.[20] Meek argues that a "defective default" in one's epistemology—one which prizes accumulation of information and facts over knowledge as a process of transformation—must be challenged for the sake of teachers, students, and learning itself.[21] She calls forth the words of Paul, who stated that knowing Christ was far better than hollow religion (Phil 3:8-11).[22] Mere facts do not alter the heart, or bring about transformation. Yet when different seminaries addressed epistemology, considering the knowledge development of their students, are the emotional and spiritual lives of Greek and Hebrew students taken into account? Is inward transformation relevant—explicitly or implicitly?

Parker Palmer discredits what he calls "objectivism," a modern epistemology based upon a total denial of the influence of anything which is "subjective."[23] All knowing is a matter of relationship, he states, and the extreme of objectivism chokes the process of learning when fear severs relational connections.[24]

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[19]Esther Lighthouse Meek, *Loving to Know: Introducing Covenant Epistemology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 133, 136-7.

[20]See Parker J. Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known: A Spirituality of Education* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1983), 10, 16.

[21]Meek, *Loving to Know*, 132, 134; see also Parker J. Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, 10th ann. ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 68-69, 92; see also Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Educating for Responsible Action* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 14.

[22]Meek claims that her model for epistemology is also reflected by Scripture, via the notion that the "fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov 9:10). Meek, *Loving to Know*, 133.

[23]Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*, 52; Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known*, 27, 33.

[24]Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*, 40, 55.

Nicholas Wolterstorff adds another slight nuance to the conversation. He contrasts knowledge for the sake of knowledge (pure theory), to knowledge which yields practical import or applications (praxis-oriented theory).[25] Both are desirable, as long as they are not self-serving.[26] It appears the telos of Wolterstorff's model is to serve a higher purpose—perhaps the purposes of God in community, if that is not taking too much license. Arguably that telos coheres with Meek and Palmer's emphases on transformation as a goal of learning.[27]

In turn, Parker Palmer's guiding light in his book *The Courage to Teach* is the proposition that "to teach is to create a space in which the community of truth is practiced."[28] Subjects, not objects are relationally engaged in the Community of Truth, as opposed to the repression of objectivism.[29] What Palmer has in mind could be that although one can have a relationship with God, who is "transcendent," all human knowledge is still incomplete.[30] He does not accept an extreme form of relativism, however, in which truth is entirely a socially constructed fabrication, any more than he accepts a heartless allegiance to objectivism.[31] Should a seminary or a language professor associate a particular epistemology with language study that will facilitate or nurture the relational aspects of students and their communities?

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[25]Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Reason within the Bounds of Religion*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 125, 129.

[26]Ibid., 127, 134-35.

[27]See Meek, *Loving to Know*, 132-33; Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*, 68-69, 92.

[28]Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*, 92, 97. Schwehn terms Parker's relationally-based epistemology "communitarian." Mark R. Schwehn, *Exiles from Eden: Religion and the Academic Vocation in America* (New York: Oxford University Press), 44, 49. Meek's emphasis on relationships could clearly coincide or overlap with that idea. *Loving to Know*, 133, 136-7.

[29]Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*, 104.

[30]See ibid., 107.

[31]Ibid., 107, 113.

Holistic Knowing

In fact, Palmer is searching for a "holistic way of knowing" that will translate in specific ways to education, to both teacher and students.[32] He desires a robust, subjective knowing, which develops during the process of coming to know truth, and in which teacher and student both undergo transformation. Such epistemology can be the philosophical background for language study in a seminary curriculum. Professors might conceptualize that holistic knowing differently of course, and thus find different means of establishing pedagogical practices to support their convictions. Yet for disciples of Christ, he feels love itself is a foundational source of knowledge which can overtake all other springs of knowing.[33]

For Palmer, intellect, emotions, and spirituality must balance one another, or else teaching can become less than holistic and distorted.[34] Wholeness is more important than methodology, and methodologies are most useful when they help to reveal a teacher's self in integrity, rather than hide it.[35] Christian teaching is not superficial or disconnected from recognition of the *imago dei*, but acknowledges self and student as divinely created human beings who reflect the image of God (Gen 1:26-27).[36]

Theology and Epistemology

Thus some interplay takes place between epistemology and theology in this vision of holistic knowing and transformation, as evangelical seminaries have a goal to

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[32]Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known*, xiii.

[33]Ibid., 8.

[34]Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*, 5.

[35]Ibid., 25.

[36]It seems Smith is correct when he states worship must be the basis for Christian education, or the processing of Christian ideas. See James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*, Cultural Liturgies 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 27, 219-20. Jesus's assessment of the most important commands is holistic (see Mark 12:29-31). They are not limited to one's mind, or even one's mind first, as opposed to one's heart, soul, and strength.

form disciples.[37] Learning and worship intertwine as twin processes of discipleship and formation.[38] While following the work of Meek, Smith, and Palmer, the picture of epistemology is fundamentally a matter of Christian discipleship which one might find described in the Bible.[39] Thus the work to define the place of Christian philosophy and theology is ongoing, something that the Christian scholar must take upon him or herself to develop.[40] Christian philosophy and Christian theology are not finished products—that is, infallible—so a Christian scholar must allow them to encourage and generate healthy, sound introspection.[41] In terms of seminary language studies, a primary telos could be a matter of producing sound or holistic theology, whether or not a seminary expresses that goal explicitly or implicitly.

Worldview

In short, Smith believes that worship shapes "worldview."[42] Perhaps as a ripple on the same pond, Pazmiño claims that other than biblical and theological foundations, philosophy is also a "foundation" of Christian teaching and learning.[43] Along those lines,

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[37]See Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 220-22.

[38]Ibid., 11.

[39]Matt 16:24-25; Meek, *Loving to Know*, 131; Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 11.

[40]Wolterstorff, *Reason within the Bounds*, 108.

[41]Ibid., 108; see also Knight, *Philosophy and Education*, 158.

[42]Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 11, 33-34; Ronald T. Habermas believes that in Matthew 20:25-28, Jesus contrasted two worldviews—Christian and non-believer—in regard to Christian leadership and communal relationships. Ronald T. Habermas, *Teaching for Reconciliation: Foundations and Practices of Christian Educational Ministry*, rev. ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001), 44-45. Naugle claims that subjectively, a worldview founded on Scripture, would treat the human heart as the center of human consciousness; thus, a "spiritual orientation" and a spiritual construal of what is real is an anchor as one journeys through life. David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of the Concept* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 290.

[43]Robert W. Pazmiño, *Foundational Issues in Christian Education: An Introduction in Evangelical Perspective*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 85.

worship must shape Christian educational philosophy as well as worldview.[44] While apparently moving in the same direction, Smith argues that Christians must make their philosophical foundations overtly stated and in harmony with a Christian worldview.[45] Spiritual reality—faith by means of grace—is an anchor for all education Christians undertake in a given context (Eph 2:8-9; Acts 1:8). Indeed, Naugle claims that the cultural context in the United States is "cognitively dissonant and morally cacophonous, bordering on chaos."[46] An evangelical Christian worldview is ideally shaped by Scripture within a given context. Thus the value of language studies for evangelical seminarians may be immense, as they ideally allow such students to investigate the founding documents of their faith and how their faith affects their worldview at increasingly greater depths.

Ethics and Morality

Habermas argues that since the goal of all Christian education should be to build students into maturity in Christ, all other goals must be defined by that primary commitment.[47] Surely Christian ethics, biblically informed notions of right and wrong, are within the range of that holistic goal. What one believes to be of highest moral weight affects one's behaviors and lifestyle, and yet one's lifestyle and environment influences what one believes.[48] Palmer critiques a pragmatic, "whatever works" attitude towards the collecting of factual knowledge as if it were somehow distinct and separate from

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[44]See Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 27, 219-20.

[45]Ibid., 85.

[46]Naugle, *Worldview*, xvi.

[47]Habermas, *Teaching for Reconciliation*, 140-1.

[48]Steven Garber, *The Fabric of Faithfulness: Weaving Together Belief and Behavior*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 195.

morality.[49] Knowledge is both discovered and applied: when sufficient knowledge is exposed, it can be used to develop both a hair dryer and an atom bomb.[50]

Should language students explicitly be taught to critically evaluate their specific philosophical assumptions regarding ethics and worldview, with an eye to engaging Scripture in its contemporary contexts? Is that endeavor better left for theology courses? Increased overlap between the two might most fruitfully occur in advanced language courses, when greater linguistic proficiency makes textual exegesis more accessible.[51] The point here is to simply recognize that linguistic knowledge does not appear in an ethical and moral vacuum, especially when an explicit, primary goal of learning Hebrew or Greek is to facilitate engagement with and exegesis of biblical texts. Language professors are not only teaching language studies. They are explicitly or implicitly teaching an attitude towards Scripture.

With a nod towards holistic epistemology as noted above, Arthur Holmes has been involved in an effort aimed at explicitly integrating the business of ethics into the curriculum as a whole.[52] Schwehn claims that Max Weber moved the focus of the academy from character formation to knowledge manufacture.[53] Yet a basic premise of Schwehn's book is that knowledge has ethical results, or yields moral outcomes, and that

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[49]Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known*, 6-7.

[50]Ibid., 7.

[51]See Harry Lee Poe, *Christianity in the Academy: Teaching at the Intersection of Faith and Learning* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 22-24.

[52]Arthur F. Holmes, *Shaping Character: Moral Education and the Christian College* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), vii-viii, 3-6; Schwhen claims that while many professors acknowledge that their job description involves teaching, contributing to the ethical development of their students, and research (i.e., developing or uncovering new knowledge), their expectation is to be evaluated primarily in terms of their research. Schwehn, *Exiles from Eden*, 4.

[53]Schwehn uses the German terms: "from *Bildung* to *Wissenschaft*." Schwhen, *Exiles from Eden*, 122.

it is "morally directive."[54] Academics as a vocation, or as a "calling"—unlike academics as career divested of holistic morality—places a higher value on community brought about by the practice of spiritual virtues such as but not limited to, hospitality.[55]

As can be seen in this discussion, theology and philosophy interacted fairly closely when the topic of Christian education arose. Christian curriculum is an offspring of educational philosophy and theology, when theology and educational philosophy combine to determine null, implicit, and explicit curriculum.[56]

Yet after reviewing these texts, certain questions began to emerge. How do seminary language programs put emphasis on spiritual, emotional, and intellectual processes, if they do articulate them in some explicit way?[57] How do philosophy and theology work together at a given seminary, to foundationally determine null, implicit, and explicit curricula when it comes to the study of biblical languages? Do language studies work to transform students and build community? These interactions are represented in figure 4.

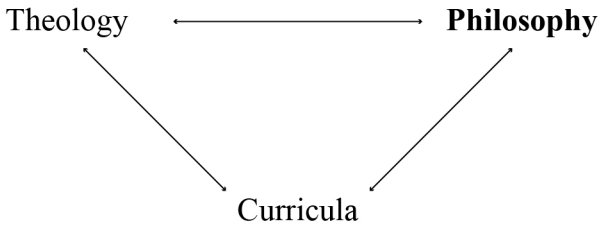

Figure 4. Interaction between philosophy, theology, and curricula

[54]Schwehn, *Exiles from Eden*, 94.

[55]Ibid., 84-85.

[56]Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 25; Knight, *Philosophy and Education*, 34; Habermas, *Teaching for Reconciliation*, 140; James Riley Estep Jr., "Navigating with a Compass: Theological Perspectives on Curriculum," in *Mapping out Curriculum in Your Church: Cartography for Christian Pilgrims*, ed. James Riley Estep Jr., Roger White, and Karen Estep (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2012), 46-47; Pazmiño, *Foundational Issues in Christian Education*, 97.

[57]Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*, 5.

Such interaction is represented in the top half of the language curricula framework. The hope was that the original framework was sufficiently broad enough to account for differences in curricular praxis, while still acknowledging central theoretical issues in the design of language study curricula.

Since seminary language curricula is designed by seminary faculty, in part the methodology of this study involved interviewing selected faculty members. It was also the hope that a review of seminary course catalogs and perhaps official websites might help to "triangulate" the interview data, or look at it from different angles.[58] As such, in regard to Research Question 1, the category of philosophy took its place in the original framework for language curriculum which emerged from this literature review. It not only aided the development of interview protocols, but also provided a basis upon which official seminary publications such as course catalogs, websites, and perhaps syllabi were analyzed, to the extent they presented philosophical data. In doing so, it was the hope that Research Questions 2 and 3a were also addressed. The confluence of philosophy, theology, and curricula will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

Curriculum

The central node of the framework, curricula, will now be discussed.

Holistic Interplay between Philosophy, Theology, and Praxis

As noted above, the holistic nature of Christian education tends to unify elements of philosophy and theology.[59] Christian curriculum separates itself from secular

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[58]Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research*, 260.

[59]See Estep, "Toward a Theologically Informed Approach to Education," 264; Knight, *Philosophy and Education*, 34-35. As an interesting comment on this topic, Harry Poe laments a lack of contribution from Christian academics to current "philosophical and ideological" conversations concerning reality taking place in the academy. Poe, *Christianity in the Academy*, 13. "All subjects are religious subjects," he states. He sees no separation of "secular and the sacred." No one should compartmentalize

concerns, which do not take theology into account.[60] Again, educators may even conceptualize Christian education as "applied theology."[61] As such, one expects biblical language curricula at evangelical seminaries to draw from theology and philosophy, as a part of a holistic vision for curriculum.

Holistic, context-aware approaches to education reflect philosophical and theological concerns that can shape seminary education.[62] Maria Harris states that a substantial consensus exists concerning the idea that curriculum is more than just "*didache*"—a term she uses to refer to "school" activities such as teaching and teaching materials.[63] Besides "*didache*," Harris identifies three more activities present in a holistic church curriculum: (1) kerygma, or the proclamation of Scripture; (2) "*leiturgia*," or

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religion, he feels: postmodernists yearn for unity of life and acknowledge benefits of spirituality, despite the fact moderns denied it altogether. Ibid., 20-21.

[60]Peter Hodgson notes how education has become secularized, removed in part from its once unifying religious basis: influential and contemporary theories of education may not have a religious center. Peter C. Hodgson, *God's Wisdom: Toward a Theology of Education* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 2-3. Yet Hodgson envisions the end goal of education to be increased wisdom, or an awareness and response to, "being, truth, goodness." Hodgson believes such increased wisdom is the footprint of religion that can be present in any educational process. Ibid, 126. Going further afield, James Michael Lee presents what appears to be somewhat of an artificial division between theological commitments, such as evangelicalism or black theology, and their educational legacies. James Michael Lee, "Publisher's Introduction," in Theologies of Religious Education, ed. Randolph Crump Miller (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1995), 3. As casual observation shows, in practice Christians collaborate much more than Lee's razor-tight categories allow—even if he is presenting them in a controlled, theoretically hypothetical manner for the sake of discussion. A protestant evangelical scholar, for example, might happily engage Catholic leader John Henry Newman while developing his own thoughts on education. See also James W. Sire, *Habits of the Mind: Intellectual Life as a Christian Calling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 29.

[61]Estep, "Toward a Theologically Informed Approach to Education," 294.

[62]Ford does not limit theological curriculum to intellectual goals, as spiritual formation also includes affective goals. Leroy Ford, *A Curriculum Design Manual for Theological Education* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1991), xv, xxvii. See also D. A. Carson, who offers what he feels to be a nuanced and effective understanding of the relationship between Christ and culture, based upon non-negotiable elements of biblical theology. D. A. Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 60-61, 82, 98, 145, 200-1.

[63]Maria Harris, *Fashion Me a People: Curriculum in the Church* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1989), 17, 59, 62-63. Harris cites Acts 2:42, 44-47 as the basis for her model. She sees her book as a theoretical presentation, a comprehensive model for reimagining church curriculum. She identifies her audience as, in part, church leaders or "curriculum planners." Yet she clarifies that her book is relevant to the entire congregation—as a result, it may be relevant to seminary students and professors as well. See ibid., 16-19.

corporate gathering to pray and worship God, while edifying one another, and (3) "*diakonia*," serving the needs of others.[64] Dykstra follows Harris closely when he states that curriculum, rightly understood, is not a matter of objects such as teaching resources or materials: it is rather, a practice carried out by members of a community.[65] With that observation in mind, church curriculum—including the ministry of seminary education—results as an outcome of a communal practice of devotion.[66]

Similarly, Robert Banks decries an academic model that is encumbered by the heritage of the Enlightenment, and pleads for a more holistic experience for seminarians.[67] Along similar lines, Perry Shaw rejects an overemphasis on cognitive abilities in seminaries, the western legacy of the Enlightenment and ancient Greek philosophers.[68] He calls for a more holistic model of education that takes affective and behavioral factors into account: he believes that intentionally combined cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements would produce the ideal disposition in Christian students.[69]

If Banks and Shaw are correct, do their analyses apply to both language studies

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[64]Harris, *Fashion Me a People*, 16-17, 65.

[65]Craig Dykstra, foreword to *Fashion Me a People*, 8.

[66]Ibid., 10.

[67]Robert Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 20, 26, 70, 250. George Marsden diagnoses a currently "hollow" and "fragmented" state of current academic studies. If an attempt is made to connect what is taught with an overall philosophical integration, or the "larger issues of life," the contemporary academy declines to provide guidance to students and professors. George Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 3. Yet Richard Franklin states that in general, every generation of university students needs cognitive, social, and spiritual development. Richard Franklin, "Who Will Our Students Be in a Postmodern, Postdenominational, and Materialistic Age?," in *The Future of Baptist Higher Education*, ed. Donald D. Schmeltekopf and Dianna M. Vitanza (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 102.

[68]Perry Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education: A Practical Handbook for Integrative Learning* (Carlisle, UK: Langham Global Library, 2014), 4, 69; see also Craig Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith*: *Education and Christian Practices* (Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 1999), 142, 156.

[69]Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education*, 69, 76.

and other courses in a curriculum—such as systematic theology or biblical theology—with equal force? Education must engage students in critical reflection upon their goals (telos) and practices, Garber argues.[70] There must be some coherence, consistency and integrity involved, or else one's life becomes fragmented and disconnected. Like a broken clay pitcher, it cannot function as it was originally intended to do.

Dykstra chimes in and states that a language student should learn not only how to interpret Scripture, but also how to engage that discipline within the practices of the church at large.[71] Education should prepare a student to practice exegesis in the midst of his or her secular contexts, where non-Christian practices occur as well.[72] Making one more call for holistic curriculum, Garber claims that education is a matter of joining behavior with belief, and wonders how schools can teach a worldview that students will live out after graduation.[73] How do students develop values that will guide them through the weighty decisions of life?[74] Is the intellect the only avenue through which one's life decisions are mediated? It seems not. Dykstra argues that at times education—or knowing—develops while acting.[75]

Ideally, Hebrew and Greek courses can help students understand the Bible from both linguistic and theological angles, which may help them live out their faith personally and corporately, as they offer their gifts and talents in their communities.[76]

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[70]Garber, *The Fabric of Faithfulness*, 58.

[71]Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith*, 73-74.

[72]Ibid., 73-74.

[73]Garber, *The Fabric of Faithfulness*, 35, 57.

[74]Ibid., 41.

[75]Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith*, 144; see also Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 33-34.

[76]As study of biblical languages can sharpen a church community's understanding of its mission, it may also inform the church's dialogue with secular players in a given context. See Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church? Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 26.

Dockery passionately argues that if higher education is to be called "Christian," educators must deliberately incorporate or interweave faith into the learning process.[77] Without God as the focus, the "education" of the church is not Christian.[78] The activities and practices of the church must either focus around God, or otherwise be empty (1 Cor 13:1-3).

Theology, in other words, should very clearly influence curriculum as much as philosophy does, by providing a foundation upon which curriculum is developed, and a goal towards which education is to move.[79] Affirming that sentiment, Anthony and Benson claim that at its most basic or general level, a ministry will involve theology, philosophy, and matters of practice.[80]

For Anthony and Benson, "practice" could obviously include seminary curricula design. "Practice," Anthony and Benson state—at least deliberately informed practice—begins when questions of theology and philosophy have been addressed by educators.[81] Casual observation shows that seminary language studies at evangelical institutions are not only language courses, dealing with linguistic knowledge. If pursued long enough, they almost always lead towards enhanced exegesis, which can feed the church spiritually.

Such courses may therefore ultimately have direct relevance for the life of the

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[77]David S. Dockery, *Renewing Minds: Serving Church and Society through Christian Higher Education* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2008), 8.

[78]Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith*, 161.

[79]See Knight, *Philosophy and Education*, 34-35.

[80]Michael J. Anthony and Warren S. Benson, *Exploring the History and Philosophy of Christian Education: Principles for the 21st Century* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2003), 413.

[81]See Anthony and Benson, *Exploring the History*, 415. In terms of a general yet core principle of Christian theology, God calls his people to love "with all your mind." There is nothing in Scripture that advocates for compartmentalized faith which excludes the mind or any other part of life (see Matt 22:37). As such, James Sire's definition of a "Christian intellectual" could reflect one aspect of healthy, genuine faith: "An *intellectual* is one who loves ideas, is dedicated to clarifying them, developing them, criticizing them . . . arranging them, sitting silent while new ideas pop up and old ones seem to rearrange themselves . . . bringing them into contact with their counterparts . . . but also suiting them for service in workaday life." Sire, *Habits of the Mind*, 27-28.

church. The foregoing rationale seems so obvious that one must wonder if it is the reason so few scholars dialogue in print over the role of biblical languages in seminary curricula. Yet in practice, language requirements differ widely across seminary programs in a general way, and sometimes even at the same institution. Apparently, there is no universal rationale for the role of language studies in seminary curricula.

Application in Church Life

In a bridge between theology and curriculum, some authors feel church practice—not the seminary—is Christian education's anchor.[82] Fuller and Fleming, using the metaphor of a "bridge" in the title of their work, present a curriculum that intends to wed academic theological discipline with life in active ministry.[83] Their "competency framework" seeks to provide students with formative experiences that translate to ministry outside the classroom.[84]

Clearly, when certain scholars explore Christian education, they explicitly have the life of a local congregation in mind, not necessarily the work that Christian academics undertake in institutions of higher education.[85] So it is not surprising that those authors do

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[82]See Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith*, 147. David Smith investigates how Christian education imbeds Christian lives within the wider Christian community, setting itself apart from simple reliance upon a learning theory or teaching methodology. David I. Smith, "Recruiting Students' Imaginations: Prospects and Pitfalls of Practices," in *Teaching and Christian Practices*, ed. David I. Smith and James K. A. Smith (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 223.

[83]Michael Fuller and Kenneth Fleming, "Bridging a Gap: A Curriculum Uniting Competencies and Theological Disciplines," *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 2, no. 2 (2005): 163.

[84]The essential goal of their "competency framework" is that formative experiences will compliment subject based courses such as "New Testament Doctrine," or "Apostolic Writings." Ibid., 167-8, 169, 174.

[85]Gary A. Parrett and S. Steve Kang, *Teaching the Faith, Forming the Faithful: A Biblical Vision for Education in the Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 11; Karen B. Tye, *Basics of Christian Education* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000), 3-7. Faculty at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, for example, met over two years with clergy from different churches. Gary Peluso-Verdend and Jack Seymour, "Hearing the Congregation's Voice in Evaluating/Revising the MDIV Curriculum: The Church Relations Council," *Theological Education* 40 (2005): 51. Their purpose was to design a MDiv program that was informed by an intentional partnership with the church. Ibid. The stated goal of the seminary was to prepare "spiritual leaders for the church." Ibid. As a result, the seminary

not mention the study of biblical languages in such works. Casual observation shows that advanced training in linguistic analysis of ancient texts and the study of their historical and social contexts is something that seminaries—not the local church per se—handle on a regular basis. Yet local congregations may commonly expect seminary trained leaders to utilize Hebrew and Greek studies as they minister.[86]

So it makes sense when Tye argues that "Christian education" should not be separate from the rest of the life of a church body.[87] Dykstra similarly develops an embodied picture of Christian education, one wrapped up or inseparable from community practices.[88] Carolyne Call agrees with Dykstra: "authentic" Christian pedagogy or curriculum involves practices, not just ideas.[89] Ultimately, separating "Christian" education and Christian discipleship is impossible: biblical language study essentially falls under the central practice of Bible study (Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:7-8; Ph 3:7-14).[90] One might argue that seminary training—at times including the study of biblical languages—is an engorged version of Bible study, reflecting the central role of that study in church life.

Smith, Ford, and Dykstra all agree the church's curriculum spreads beyond a building or classroom, into every area of church members' lives.[91] Christian education

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acknowledged that theology is fundamental to that mission. Yet Peluso-Verdend and Seymour do not mention language studies at all.

[86]John Piper calls for an increased effort on the behalf of pastors to bring biblical language skills directly to their churches, rather than rely upon seminary professors to do that work for them. John Piper, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals: A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2002), 81-88.

[87]Tye, *Basics of Christian Education*, 51.

[88]See Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith*, 66, 162-4.

[89]Carolyne Call, "The Rough Train to Authentic Pedagogy: Incorporating Hospitality, Fellowship, and Testimony in the Classroom," in Smith and Smith, *Teaching and Christian Practices*, 63.

[90]See DeYoung, *What Is the Mission of the Church?*, 20-23; also see Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith*, 42, 53.

[91]Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith*, 58, 71; Ford, *A Curriculum Design Manual*, xxiv, xxvii; David I. Smith, "Recruiting Students' Imaginations," 223. Instead of focusing on any particular

concerns itself not with content mastery but submission to God's spirit, as God educates both individuals and community via spiritual practices, or the "curriculum of church life."[92] Biblical language studies certainly help weave biblical theology into church community life—via practices such as teaching and preaching, study of Greek and Hebrew might aid personal and communal discipleship—but Dykstra does not mention them specifically.[93] Tye does not mention biblical language study as an explicit part of the local church's curriculum.[94] On the other hand, she does not categorically rule out the possibility of biblical languages ever being an explicit part of a local church's curriculum.[95]

Biblical Languages, Stakeholders, and Curriculum Revision

David Hester explains that curriculum revision is an ongoing process, periodically demanded by changes of teaching faculty, administrators, and student demographics.[96] Banks' thoughts on the subject rest upon the notion that seminary curriculum is a negotiated phenomenon.[97] Perhaps as a result of similar thinking, Shawn

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subject—including biblical languages—Brian Harris presents four stages of ministerial education. Brian Harris, "Defining and Shaping an Adequate Theological Curriculum for Ministerial Training," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 36, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 157-8. He emphasizes church involvement prior to formal studies, and argues a seminary should follow and encourage students in church work after graduation as well. Ibid., 60. Yet while citing the work of Stanley Grenz, he rejects the "old evangelical paradigm" in which theology depends solely upon engagement with the Bible. Ibid., 163-4. See Stanley J. Grenz and John R. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001). By implication, study of biblical languages might also lose value.

[92]Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith*, 78.

[93]See Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith*, 58-60, 76.

[94]See Tye, *Basics of Christian Education*, 55.

[95]See ibid., 65.

[96]David C. Hester, "The Common Vocation of Curriculum Building," *Theological Education* 43, no. 1 (2007): 39-40; see also Jack L. Seymour, "Best Practices in Master of Divinity Curriculum Revision: A Research Report," *Theological Education* 43, no. 1 (2007): 36.

[97]Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education*, 17ff. The "fourfold structure" of theological studies according to Banks, involves (1) "biblical studies"; (2) "church history"; (3) "systematics"; and (4) "practical theology." Banks feels that structure has unnaturally split theological curriculum apart. Ibid., 20. He conceptualizes ideal theological education as an organic, holistic process. Reform of theological

Oliver recommends ongoing curriculum revision as opposed to sporadic revision.[98] Language studies, of course, are also subject to those changes, and should be: curriculum is an ongoing conversation between philosophy, theology, human needs, and concerns.

As such, the notion of "stakeholders" is apropos. Beyond faculty input, a given seminary might need to engage key stakeholders, such as a board of trustees, a church supervisory body, as well as seminary administrators, in order to gain official endorsement and necessary resources to make curricular revisions—which might include language requirements, of course.[99]

The broad strokes of Seymour's discussion offer a significant contribution to this conversation. His qualitative study of curriculum revision at seminaries which were accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) found that some schools made a point of making their curriculum subservient to and informed principally by theology, as opposed to an "administrative" exercise.[100] Such decisions reaffirm an evangelical assumption that theology must be foundational in "Christian" curriculum, if the curriculum is to be "Christian" in practice.[101] There is certainly room within that framework to address biblical language studies.[102] Yet the specific details of a given

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education could better address a biblically-influenced, "missional" model that is contextually oriented. Ibid., 262. A return to theology properly understood, is necessary: theology is not an academic discipline or knowledge of certain doctrines, as much as it is wisdom utilized to live faithfully in everyday life, an applied wisdom. Ibid., 19. In other words, such theology is not opposed to academic studies, but theological education is not limited to them either. Yet Banks provides no guidance on the role of seminary language studies in their respective curricula.

[98]Shawn L. Oliver, "Curriculum Revision: Ongoing or Sporadic," *Theological Education* 43, no. 1 (2007): 12.

[99]See Seymour, "Best Practices," 27, 33; See also Fuller and Fleming, "Bridging a Gap," 163-64. Along with Seymour, Lee Wanak believes curricular change should be a group effort. Lee Wanak, "Theological Curriculum Change for the Local 21st Century Context," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 26, no. 3 (2002): 239. Wanak defines "stakeholders" as individuals who should be involved when plans for curricular change are undertaken by an institution. Ibid., 238-9.

[100]Seymour, "Best Practices," 32.

[101]Marsden, "Introduction: The Evangelical Denomination," ix-x.

[102]Seymour does state that in terms of preparation for entering a seminary program, some schools allow incoming students to participate in "summer institutes in language or theology." Seymour,

curricular design concerning languages must be considered by each seminary in its own context.

Again, seminary faculty may see their work as being realized primarily through the life of churches, via increasing the vitality of those congregations, the members of those congregations, and their outreach.[103] If curriculum concerning biblical languages is revised or changed, how would the change take place? Who would be involved? Who are the stakeholders? Who ultimately makes a decision about curriculum final? Those questions were appropriate in terms of curriculum design and revision efforts, as will be shown below in chapter 4, in the analysis of interview data.

Null, Implicit, and Explicit Curricula

Null curricula and language studies. As noted above, philosophy and theology work to define explicit, hidden, and null curricula.[104] Null curriculum was defined as, "What is learned through what is not taught—in terms of both the intellectual processes that are promoted or neglected, and the subject areas that are present or absent."[105]

Without necessarily denying a role to biblical language studies in seminary curriculum altogether, Fuller and Fleming simply do not mention them at all.[106] Haddad and others follow a similar route.[107] These authors' lack of published, explicit attention to

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"Best Practices," 29. Yet he does not explain the nature or relevance of such institutes further.

[103]Peluso-Verdend and Seymour, "Hearing the Congregation's Voice," 51.

[104]See Knight, *Philosophy and Education*, 34-35; Palmer, *Courage to Teach*, 76-77.

[105]Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education*, 79.

[106]Fuller and Fleming, "Bridging a Gap," 163-78. See also David I. Smith, "Recruiting Students' Imaginations," 211, 222-23; Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith*, 57-58, 71; Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education*, 262.

[107]Beverly Haddad, "Curriculum Design in Theology and Development: Human Agency and the Prophetic Role of the Church," *Hervormde Telolgiese Studies Theological Studies* 72, no. 4 (2016): 1-8; David I. Smith, "Recruiting Students' Imaginations," 211, 222-3; Dykstra, *Growing in the Life of Faith*, 57-58, 71; Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education*, 262; Garber, *The Fabric of Faithfulness*.

the role of biblical language studies in a given seminary curriculum does not in and of itself mean the seminaries they represent have no language requirements at all, or a truly null curriculum in regard to language study. The reality is more nuanced than that. As noted above, different academic programs even at the same seminary may have disparate language requirements. Biblical languages could be null curricula—simply not mentioned—in one academic program, and yet explicitly required by the same seminary for another. Yet the rationales behind those arrangements are often conspicuously absent in published work, when one begins to look for them. There is no reason to suspect a given seminary simply lacks rationales for respective language curricula, but it is not always easy to find those rationales in print.

Implicit curricula and language studies. Shaw defined "implicit curriculum" as, "the potent sociological and psychological dimensions of education, which are usually caught rather than intentionally taught."[108] He claims reasonably that during their time at seminary, students take note of both academic subject matter, as well as the character their professors demonstrate in interactions with school administrators.[109] Students may in that way observe a discrepancy between espoused values and what is actually practiced.[110]

In somewhat of a foreboding manner, Shaw states that it is essential for teachers and administrators to intentionally identify null and implicit curricula.[111] If administrators do not make their rationales for null and implicit curricular elements overtly clear to every stakeholder and student, the efficacy of a given curricula can be

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[108]Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education*, 79.

[109]Ibid.

[110]Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 5th ed. (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley, 2017), 25-27.

[111]Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education*, 79.

weakened.[112] Clarity on all sides may be worth the work of intentionally defining the contours of a curricular enterprise.

By now it is clear that dynamic factors play into the ultimate form of a seminary curriculum, and reasons for null, implicit, and explicit curricular structure may vary. Havilah Dharamraj, as noted in chapter 1, cautions against the implicit message that translation work amounts to data crunching, and that pristine accuracy or unity with other translations is the end goal of language studies.[113] She focuses her curriculum development to align with the *Cape Town Commitment*, a mission statement which promotes socially contextualized applications of biblical studies.[114]

Beverly Haddad, also located in South Africa, approaches the topic from a slightly different angle.[115] Her article follows the historical development of a Theology and Development program at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.[116] The University expects graduates to be active agents for social change after graduation, and the students plan accordingly.[117] The *Kairos Document*—which was developed in 1985 in South Africa, during an extremely tumultuous epoch—is extremely influential at the university.[118] The document states that all theology needs to begin with consideration of the poor and oppressed, and the institution's goal for theology is concrete, social liberation.[119] Dharamrai's and Haddad's respective works raised valid questions. In what

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[112]Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education*, 80.

[113]Havilah Dharamraj, "We Reap What We Sow: Engaging in Curriculum and Context in Theological Education," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 38, no. 4 (2014): 356.

[114]Ibid., 352, 360.

[115]Haddad, "Curriculum Design in Theology and Development," 1.

[116]Ibid.

[117]Ibid., 7-8.

[118]Ibid., 2-3.

[119]Ibid., 3, 8.

contexts is study of biblical languages necessary or important? When does it warrant an explicit commitment from a seminary?[120]

Explicit curricula and language studies. Shaw provides a definition of explicit curriculum as follows. "Those publicly known, stated and planned educational events which are commonly understood by all those who are participating."[121]

Again, explicit rationales for the role of language studies in seminary curricula are very rare in published dialogue, but there are some exceptions. For example, Allan Harman believes the primary role of seminary language studies is to found a pastor's exegesis and feed that pastor's spirituality, which he calls a "reformation ideal of godliness and scholarship."[122] He feels students should leave seminary with a sustainable ability to exegete Greek and Hebrew texts without total dependence upon the work of others.[123] Translations and commentaries, regardless of their quality, cannot replace each generation's engagement of Scripture for the sake of fresh application of it in the church, he states.[124] Hypothetically, if study of biblical languages simply ceased on all fronts at this time, it is plausible that after a generation or two, the world might have many Greek and Hebrew source texts—as well as texts in Aramaic, Syriac, and other languages—with far fewer people who could read them. That scenario is a somewhat untenable extreme, but hypothetically, it underscores the importance of ongoing language study among the myriad activities in which the church spends its time. Among those activities, focus on

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[120]Haddad does not mention Hebrew or Greek study in her article, although arguably greater access to biblical languages could enhance exegesis in support of social justice.

[121]Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education*, 79.

[122]Allan M. Harman, "The Place of the Biblical Languages in the Theological Curriculum," *Reformed Theological Review* 50, no. 3 (1991): 96-97.

[123]Ibid., 96.

[124]Ibid., 94.

biblical texts themselves is perhaps more central to the life of the church than the annual men's retreat or the ladies' quilting club, to the extent language study magnifies the teaching and preaching of Scripture. Scripture—or rather, interpretation of Scripture—provides the theological basis for other ministries: interpretation of Scripture helps members envision exactly what should happen on men's retreats and in the ladies' quilting club.[125]

John Davies mostly agrees with Harman, and yet argues that more of an emphasis on general linguistic training is required.[126] If students are to actually engage Scripture to the extent that seminaries desire—that is, with "independent exegetical judgment"—general linguistics itself should have more of a role in seminary education, he contends.[127] Davies' injunction is not a call for the removal of Greek from the theological curriculum, but rather a call for seminaries to teach it differently, via an interdisciplinary method including sociology; geography; Greek; and general linguistics.[128]

As a veritable exception in terms of application, Leroy Ford presents both a curricular design approach, as well as a sample course syllabus for a Greek language course.[129] His "learning outcomes" orientation corresponds with "Competency-Based Language Teaching."[130] In essence, functional objectives or goals are defined by a

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[125]See DeYoung and Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?*, 15ff.

[126]John A. Davies, "Language and the Theological Curriculum," *Reformed Theological Review*, 52, no. 1 (January-April 1993): 1-2.

[127]Ibid., 1-2.

[128]Ibid., 9-10.

[129]Lorin Cranford, an associate professor of New Testament at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, developed the sample course design Ford includes as an illustration of his approach. Ford, *A Curriculum Design Manual*, 301-7.

[130]Ford, *A Curriculum Design Manual*, xv-xvi; Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 150-1.

curriculum designer, and then afterwards he or she develops the means of arriving at satisfaction of those targets, by choosing an appropriate methodology and designing a well-organized syllabus for a class.[131] Thus, the underlying philosophical convictions associated with this particular curricular design seem somewhat pragmatic in nature.[132] It is one approach of which a language professor may avail him or herself, but it is not the only one.

Finally, David Hester also mentions biblical language curricula, but not in a positive light.[133] He states that language studies, "…dominate the curriculum and, as long as they are required, they probably will."[134] He laments that the "costs" of required language courses involve a lack of curricular space for new courses, which focus on meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse sociocultural context in the United States.[135] One might argue that fresh translations of Scripture—the blueprint of the church—could aid the contextual bite of one's theology, but apparently Hester would not completely agree.

In the end, no one school is the same.[136] What these few examples of explicit rationales for language study show is that there is no reason to assume all schools teach biblical languages the same way for the same reasons. These explicit rationales—at least those which assume an important role for language studies in seminary curriculum—all

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[131]Richards and Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, 150.

[132]See Ford, *A Curriculum Design Manual*, xxvii.

[133]Hester, "The Common Vocation," 46.

[134]Ibid.

[135]Ibid., 39, 46.

[136]As noted, Perry Shaw reports that at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary, most students speak Arabic as a first language. In that context, English language study is required, alongside an introduction to basic materials—such as Hebrew and Greek resources online—during a student's first year of studies. Afterwards, the seminary offers advanced courses in biblical languages as electives. Thus in Shaw's context, language study must "scratch an itch" in a somewhat pragmatic way. Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education*, 5-6.

focus on feeding the church spiritually, via ministers trained by seminaries to engage Scripture in its original languages. Yet clearly the reasons for choosing one curricular design over another produce very different program requirements in course catalogs.

Concluding Questions regarding Curriculum

There is one more fact that no one should overlook: not one of these institutions has committed to removing Greek and Hebrew studies from their curriculum altogether.[137] In part, this study attempted to uncover why that is so.

The fact that language studies are not often explicitly addressed in print does not mean scholars or seminaries consider them to be unimportant. Their importance may simply be assumed, or implicit. Is that the case? What explanation would professors offer for the importance of biblical language studies in seminary curricula?

Should all pastors or seminarians be responsible for language scholarship? To what extent would a given program designer or professor agree or disagree?

How do different professors and students conceptualize the importance of language studies for the life of the church? How are those values expressed in course catalogs, syllabi, and other educational products? These questions and others are pertinent.

As graphically represented in this study's original framework for language studies, curricular theory and practice is central. The preceding review of literature relevant to the topic of curriculum is a basis upon which interview protocol items were developed. In order to answer Research Questions 3a and 3b, both selected students and

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[137]Casual observation shows that seminaries regularly commit to an explicit curricular role for biblical language studies. They do so, in Shaw's case, regardless of the fact that various students felt biblical languages were the most useless foci of seminary studies. Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education*, 10-11. At times, Davies has heard complaints that language study is too difficult, or languages are not always used by students after graduation. Yet he does not feel those complaints are sufficiently weighty to justify removing biblical languages from the curriculum altogether. Davies, "Language and the Theological Curriculum," 2-3.

faculty were interviewed regarding curricula at their respective institutions. Since seminary faculty are, at least in part, responsible for curricular design, selected professors were interviewed as to their process of curricular revision, for example. Although students participate in curricular activities, they obviously are not designers of their seminary's curricula. Yet students offered insights on language curricula from their own point of view, as they had experienced it. As such, the interviews of students and faculty at different institutions were examined alongside one another, to enrich the depth of available data.[138] Although the remaining nodes of motivation and best practices have not been dealt with in detail yet, some reflection on the nature of the framework as a whole would be beneficial. Taking the heated cauldron of null, implicit, and explicit curricula into consideration, the central location of curricula in figure 5 represents a confluence of theology, philosophy, motivation, and best practices. Curricula are thus complex phenomena. They emerge at their respective seminaries, each in a specific context. This framework is thus a means of presenting and analyzing factors involved in the role and efficacy of seminary language curricula at different institutions.

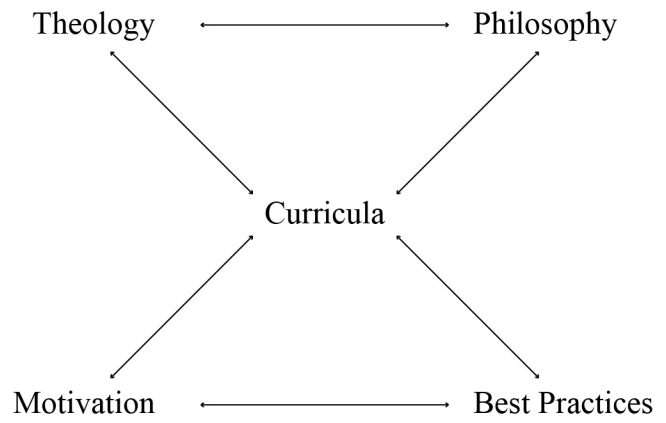

Figure 5. Curriculum is the framework's central node

[138]Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research*, 253.

Motivation

Important questions which remain for curriculum designers are whether or not students' personal goals correspond with institutional and course-specific goals and objectives, and whether or not professors' goals and objectives for their classes mesh or correspond with institutional goals and objectives.[139] Motivation, as studied in regard to second language acquisition research, is a very complex and unsettled undertaking. In one study, Ema Ushioda found sixty-three different motivations for language acquisition.[140] Elsewhere, Zoltán Dörnyei and Istvan Otto state that the plethora of theoretical approaches to motivation is strong evidence for the idea that motivation is a complex phenomenon.[141]

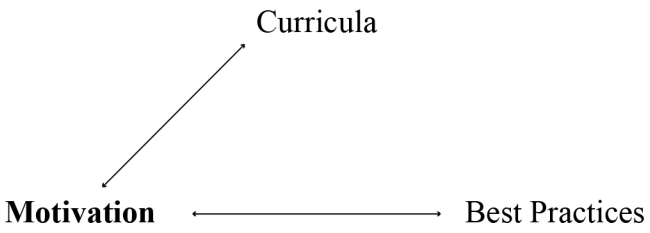

Figure 6. The dynamic node of motivation

Yet despite such complexity, there is some consensus that motivation is an essential factor to consider when it comes to one's success or failure learning a second language.[142] Figure 6 above attempts to capture the dynamic interaction of motivation

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[139]See Ford, *A Curriculum Design Manual*, 39-42, 174. See also Susan A. Ambrose et al., *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 71.

[140]Ema Ushioda, "L2 Motivation as a Qualitative Construct," *Teanga* 14 (1994): 81.

[141]Zoltán Dörnyei and Istvan Otto, "Motivation in Action: A Process Model of L2 Motivation," *Working Papers in Applied Linguistics* 4 (1998): 65.

[142]Gaby Semann and Kasumi Yamazaki, "The Relationship between Global Competence and Language Learning Motivation: An Empirical Study in Critical Language Classrooms," *Foreign Language Annals* 48, no. 3 (2015): 511.

and other elements of MDiv language curricula. Without motivated students, even the most sophisticated teaching and curriculum—as well as other best practices such as a supportive environment—will fail to bring about desired outcomes and attainment of relevant and predetermined goals.[143] On one hand, Lightbown and Spada note that motivation alone does not determine how well a language learning attempt will unfold, but on the other hand, an individual who has a reason to learn will typically outperform one who does not.[144]

Thus a lack of motivation can affect curriculum if a student has disengaged from it. The opposite is also possible. As this section of literature review will show below, if a student is engaged or excited about a language curriculum, if he or she sees a strong connection between the course of study and his or her long range plans, for example, those factors might lead to an increased effort to learn.[145]

Historical Overview

As noted in chapter 1, some scholars divide the historical development of second language motivation theories into four categories.[146] It would now be appropriate to briefly survey the historical arc of second language motivation research in a general way, to situate the more specific discussion which will follow.

The history of motivation theory in second language learning begins with the

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[143]Semann and Yamazaki, "The Relationship between Global Competence and Language Learning Motivation," 512.

[144]Patsy M. Lightbown and Nina Spada, *How Languages Are Learned*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 203.

[145]Ambrose et al., *How Learning Works*, 72.

[146]Mario Guerrero, "Motivation in Second Language Learning: A Historical Overview and its Relevance in a Public High School in Pasto, Columbia," *HOW: A Columbian Journal for Teachers of English* 22, no. 1 (April 2015): 95; Zoltán Dörnyei and Ema Ushioda, *Teaching and Researching Motivation*, 2nd ed., Applied Linguistics in Action Series, ed. Christopher N. Candlin and David R. Hall (New York: Routledge, 2013), 40, 60, 67-68.

Social Psychological era (1959-1990).[147] Robert Gardner is the principal theorist of that era.[148] He introduced the concept of motivation in second language acquisition as a goal a learner develops and pursues.[149] Motivation was understood by Gardner to be the result of a speaker's contact with a second language culture and community.[150] Attitudes toward the target language community were central to the development of motivation.[151] Two central concepts emerged. "Integrative Orientation" refers to an individual's desire to learn a second language in order to be a part of a community that speaks it.[152] "Instrumental Orientation" refers to an individual's desire to learn a second language because of its practicality, not necessarily to improve one's relationships with members of a community that speak it.[153]

Despite advances, some scholars still use Gardner's concepts of Integrative and Instrumental Orientations in research.[154] Yet Ushioda—after labeling sixty-three different motivations for second language acquisition and dividing these into eight categories—claims "Instrumental" and "Integrative" constructs are too simple.[155]

Since biblical Hebrew and Greek are extinct languages, the communities who

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[147]Guerrero, "Motivation in Second Language Learning," 96.

[148]Ushioda and Dörnyei credit Gardner with "laying down the foundations for L2 motivation research" in his early work. Ushioda and Dörnyei, *Teaching and Researching Motivation*, xi. See also Sin Yi Tsang, "Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language in the Context of an American University: A Qualitative and Process-Oriented Study on De/Motivation at the Learning Situation Level," *Foreign Language Annals* 45, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 130-2.

[149]Guerrero, "Motivation in Second Language Learning," 96.

[150]Guerrero, "Motivation in Second Language Learning," 96.

[151]Ibid., 97.

[152]A. M. Masgoret and R. C. Gardner, "Attitudes, Motivation, and Second Language Learning: A Meta-Analysis of Studies Conducted by Gardner and Associates," *Language Learning* 53 (2003): 174-5.

[153]Ibid., 174-5.

[154]Ibid., 168.

[155]Ushioda, "L2 Motivation as a Qualitative Construct," 81.

still use the languages do so in a limited array of functions. Religious communities may use ancient Hebrew or ancient Greek for religious purposes. Non-native speaking academics may also use biblical languages in a very restricted range of functions, such as establishing a basis for academic arguments and preaching. Students might demonstrate an instrumental motivation if they plan to use their language skills only in a professional capacity. Yet as casual observation shows, religious communities may consider understanding biblical texts to be of great importance. As a result, students of Greek and Hebrew might have theological reasons for learning which amount to a slight integrative orientation.

The next stage of motivation research, The Cognitive-Situated Period which began in the 1990's, did not discard attempts to account for Gardner's social and psychological factors in motivation, but added to them.[156] Cognitive educational psychology provided the basis for this period.[157] The new, more specific focus of this stage took factors such as classroom environment, syllabi, and the needs of students into consideration.[158]

The Process-Oriented Period, which began around the turn of the century, investigated changes in motivation.[159] Theorists in this category focus their efforts more specifically on the learner, allowing for greater analysis or more detailed and fluid descriptions of the factors involved in language learning.[160] As discussed in chapter 1, for example, this theoretical model attractively provides a way to analyze a diachronic point

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[156]Guerrero, "Motivation in Second Language Learning," 99.

[157]Dörnyei and Ushioda, *Teaching and Researching Motivation*, 39.

[158]Guerrero, "Motivation in Second Language Learning," 99.

[159]Dörnyei and Ushioda, *Teaching and Researching Motivation*, 40.

[160]Guerrero, "Motivation in Second Language Learning," 99-100.

of view on student motivation, or how a learner's motivation can fluctuate over time.[161]

The Socio-Dynamic Period is the most current development in second language motivation theory.[162] It is non-linear, unlike previous approaches.[163] Socio-Dynamic theorists recognize that learners consistently change and external social factors also come into play when considering motivation.[164] This idea might be useful when considering the motivation of a Hebrew or Greek student who is slogging through required language courses simply because they are a part of his or her seminary's biblical language requirements.[165]

Despite such tumultuous theoretical activity, Cho feels current theories of motivation are still not be sufficient for the complexity every student presents.[166] Yet while tracing the historical arc of second language motivation theory—including the relative interconnectedness of some concepts, as well as their contrasts—clearly each division of historical development has provided conceptual lenses through which questions could be posed of Hebrew and Greek students.

A general note about motivation is appropriate at this time. This short note will be followed by discussion of specific ways research and theory can be applied.

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[161]Dörnyei covers much of the same ground as Dörnyei and Otto, who view motivation as dynamic and in flux over time, rather than being a static mental or emotional phenomenon. See Zoltán Dörnyei, "Motivation in Action: Towards a Process-Oriented Conceptualization of Student Motivation," *British Journal of Education Psychology* 70 (2000): 519; Dörnyei and Otto, "Motivation in Action: A Process Model of L2 Motivation," 43.

[162]Guerrero, "Motivation in Second Language Learning," 100.

[163]Ibid., 101.

[164]Guerrero, "Motivation in Second Language Learning," 100.

[165]Ibid.

[166]Young-Guo Cho, "L2 Learning Motivation and Its Relationship to Proficiency: A Causal Analysis of University Students' EIL Discourses," *English Teaching* 68, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 62-63; see also Guerrero, "Motivation in Second Language Learning," 104; Shahid Abrar-Ul-Hassan, "A Study of the Motivational Patterns of Learners of English for Academic and Professional Purposes," *TESOL Journal* 5, no. 1 (March 2014): 33.

Motivation: General Concerns

Ambrose describes and weighs student motivation in a general way, not necessarily in regard to second language acquisition.[167] Two core factors provide a foundation for motivation.[168] A goal's subjective "value," or importance to a student is the first.[169] The second is "expectancy," or the extent to which a student believes he or she will successfully reach a specific goal.[170]

More specifically, "performance goals" align with a desire to present oneself as competent and intelligent, to build up one's status and attract attention or acclaim.[171] "Learning goals," on the other hand, reflect an honest desire to learn and master knowledge or skills.[172] Performance goals may motivate students who enroll in Greek or Hebrew courses simply to fulfill a program requirement. A motivation to truly learn those languages, in order to develop and apply knowledge, would demonstrate a "learning goal" however.

Yet a combination of learning and performance goals might easily overlap. If a student is genuinely interested in learning Greek or Hebrew but has limited time to study for a weekly quiz because of a heavy workload in other classes, he or she may wish to simply score well enough on the quiz to keep a good grade point average.

Consider a different scenario. Perhaps at the beginning of first-semester Greek, a student is concerned primarily with fulfilling graduation requirements. As the semester develops however, Greek syntax and vocabulary become so interesting that his or her

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[167]Ambrose et al., *How Learning Works*, 69.

[168]Ambrose et al., *How Learning Works*, 69.

[169]Ibid., 69, 74.

[170]Ambrose et al., *How Learning Works*, 69.

[171]Ibid., 71.

[172]Ibid., 72.

motivation transforms into a desire to truly master the logic of the language. Research shows that such "learning goals" tend to produce stronger motivation to learn, and greater effort to do so.[173] Some overlap occurs between Ambrose's work, and the recent work of R. C. Gardner and A. M. Masgoret. Integrative orientation and instrumental orientation might loosely correspond with "learning goals" and "performance goals."[174] Generally speaking, different combinations of goals, attitudes, and desires produce differing behaviors.

Relevant Research Studies

In Gardner's socio-educational framework, five attitudes or motivation factors relate to language learning progress: "integrativeness; attitudes towards the learning situation; motivation; integrative orientation; and instrumental orientation."[175] For Gardner and Masgoret, it appears that "motivation"—defined by the two researchers as goals and the behavior that follows them—is the single most important factor in terms of language learning success.[176]

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[173]Ambrose et al., *How Learning Works*, 72.

[174]See Masgoret and Gardner, "Attitudes, Motivation, and Second Language Learning," 174-5.

[175]Overlap occurs, but Gardner's socio-educational model is distinct from the social-psychological model associated with his earlier work. Masgoret and Gardner provide several definitions. "Integrativeness" is the extent to which an individual is able or desires to identify with a community that speaks a different language. "Attitudes toward the learning situation" refers to a student's response to the specific context in which second language learning occurs, including the teacher and the language course itself. "Motivation" refers to goals and the behavior that follows them. "Integrative motivation" combines a student's "integrativeness," "attitudes toward the learning situation," and "motivation." "Integrative orientation" and "instrumental orientation" have already been defined above. Masgoret and Gardner, "Attitudes, Motivation, and Second Language Learning," 168, 172-4.

[176]Ibid., 169, 173. When speaking of motivation, Semann and Yamazaki also weigh the notion of "global competence," an individual's level of engagement with people from other cultures. Such "global competence" is not limited to linguistic competence in a second language. As a slight variation on Gardner and Masgoret, Semann, and Yamazaki's notion of second language motivation consists of integrativeness; instrumental orientation, attitudes and beliefs; and support from one's parents. Support from one's parents, or "parental encouragement" refers to the extent a parent encourages a child's progress towards greater global competence, as well as his or her motivation to learn a second language. "Attitudes and beliefs" refers to the importance individual ascribes to learning a second language. The researchers found a positive correlation between global competence and second language motivation. Semann and Yamazaki, "Global Competence and Language Learning Motivation," 512-5. Since seminary students of ancient Hebrew and

Theoretically, "motivation" contributes more to student success than "integrativeness," or "attitudes towards the learning situation," even though those two factors support "motivation."[177] The researchers found that motivation also contributes more to success in language learning than either "Integrative" or "instrumental" orientations, respectively.[178]

Gardner and Masgoret address two more research questions. Greek and Hebrew students have no access to a community of native speakers. Yet Gardner and Masgoret's study revealed that even (1) access to a community of native speakers, or (2) the age of a language learner do not correlate strongly with language learning success and their five factors.[179] The significance for biblical language professors and seminaries is stark: motivation appears to outweigh any other consideration when it comes to language learning success.

In slight contrast, a finding of Young-Guo Cho's study was that student confidence in one's ability to learn a second language correlated with higher language proficiency than motivation did, although motivation was still a mediating factor in terms of ultimate target language proficiency.[180] Cho's finding confirms Ambrose's finding that

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Greek cannot interact with native speakers, whatever cultural knowledge they can access—with the exception of archaeology, perhaps—is likely text-based.

[177]Masgoret and Gardner, "Attitudes, Motivation, and Second Language Learning," 169-70, 174.

[178]In this study, motivation is independent of orientation: a student may wish to be a part of a language community, but that does not necessarily mean he or she is motivated to pursue proficiency in that language. Masgoret and Gardner, "Attitudes, Motivation, and Second Language Learning," 169-70, 174-5, 205.

[179]Ibid., 169, 200.

[180]Communicative competence was a goal of his Korean participants, not simply an instrumental orientation or any other motivating factor. Yet the goals of his Korean participants went beyond learning English as a mere school subject: they desired greater ability to communicate with others. Cho, "L2 Learning Motivation and Its Relationship to Proficiency," 50-51, 56-58, 63. As a result, some overlap with "integrative orientation"—as Gardner and Masgoret frame it—may occur. Masgoret and Gardner, "Attitudes, Motivation, and Second Language Learning," 174-5.

"expectancy," influences the amount of effort he or she will expend to reach it.[181] If Ambrose is correct, a third factor—i.e., the degree to which an environment is supportive—would also influence motivation for language learning.[182]

In short, if a goal is considered to be valuable, the likelihood of achieving the goal is strong, and an environment is considered to be supportive, motivation will tend to run high.[183] A related concept in terms of motivation to learn a second language arises: the concept of demotivation.

Demotivation

Tsang defines "motivation" as any mindset which inspires increased work and commitment to learning the language.[184] Tsang defines "demotivation" as any mindset that impedes learning, such as a desire to quit working towards learning the target language.[185] What happens when language students get a few bad quiz grades? Do some students begin to feel overwhelmed and lose motivation if success in their language studies seems out of reach? Do professors intervene or encourage students who seem to be losing ground or becoming frustrated in their attempts to learn Hebrew or Greek during the course of the semester? Tsang gathered data and developed four categories

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[181]Ambrose et al., *How Learning Works*, 76.

[182]If a female student perceives a teacher to be hostile towards women, the classroom environment could be termed "unsupportive." Likewise, if a teacher is nurturing and fellow students help one another to reach course goals, Ambrose et al., categorize the environment as "supportive." Ibid., 79ff.

[183]Ambrose et al., *How Learning Works*, 79-80.

[184]Tsang, "Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language," 132. Tsang's article resonates with Dörnyei and Otto's "Process-Model" in that they both involve a temporal framework, and treat motivation as a dynamic process involving multiple factors. See Dörnyei and Otto, "Motivation in Action: A Process Model," 45; Tsang, "Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language," 149-52. Yet Tsang claims that cultural differences and contexts prevent easy comparison of her results to previous studies, as ". . . de/motivators in a L2 classroom can vary depending on the target language and the country in which the study is conducted." Tsang, "Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language," 156.

[185]Tsang, "Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language," 132; Dörnyei and Ushioda, *Teaching and Researching*, 138-9.

which affect demotivation and motivation.[186] Again, results suggest the extent to which students felt their teacher was concerned for their well-being, and the degree to which students felt they had progressed in their studies were the most influential motivators of the four Tsang identified.[187] A perceived lack of such concern and progress could produce demotivation.[188]

Importantly, research has indicated that a student's level of motivation is not constant, but fluctuates over time—from a time as short as during a classroom period, to months or years—while learning a language. Yet little research has addressed how the fluctuation happens.[189]

Ultimately, knowledge of motivational factors could shape curriculum design in obvious ways, Shahid Abrar-Ul-Hassan states.[190] As presented in chapter 1 of this study, a pertinent question to ask in terms of curriculum design concerns whether or not students' goals reflect or align with the goals of their respective institutions.

Qualitative Research and Second Language Motivation

As somewhat of an apologist for qualitative research, Ushioda believes open-ended questions and semi-structured interview-based research in second language motivation may allow details to surface that would not arise in exclusively quantitative studies.[191] Tsang also claims that qualitative research is lacking in second language

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[186]The four categories were (1) the degree to which students felt their professors were concerned for their well-being; (2) "feedback," as in the correction of errors and a firm grading mechanism; (3) the difficulty of course materials; and (4) feelings of progress. Tsang, "Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language," 130, 134.

[187]Tsang, "Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language," 134.

[188]Tsang, "Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language," 134.

[189]Dörnyei and Ushioda, *Teaching and Researching*, 6; see also Abrar-Ul-Hassan, "The Motivational Patterns of Learners of English," 36.

[190]Abrar-Ul-Hassan, "A Study of the Motivational Patterns of Learners of English," 32, 36.

[191]Ushioda, "L2 Motivation as a Qualitative Construct," 76; Gardner and Masgoret's as well as

motivation studies.[192] The gap reveals a lack of necessary attention to individual cases, attention which may aid pedagogical design.[193]

As a result, this present study was not an attempt to uncover cause-and-effect dynamics as much as it was an effort to investigate whether students at selected evangelical seminaries are meeting their goals for language studies. During interviews, a related question was taken up with professors. Are institutions seeing their goals for students' language studies realized? Still another related question concerned how motivation changes over time, as students progress through seminary language courses. Finally, how did students conceptualize the rationale for their efforts: was theology a motivating factor? Qualitative interviews certainly could uncover the nature of some of these dynamics on an individual basis, on the micro level.

In terms of the methodology which this study will present in chapter 3, this review of literature concerning motivation provided interview items for professors and students which helped to answer Research Questions 3a and 3b. It is key to understand that the interview protocols were designed to illuminate—as much as is reasonably possible—a variety of perspectives on seminary language curricula. When taken together, the replies of both students and language professors shed light on the factor of motivation in the overall context of language studies at selected seminaries.

Best Practices

This section on best practices was not an attempt to survey the entire field of Second Language teaching and learning, which is a nuanced and vibrant subdiscipline of

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Semann and Yamazaki's striking data are quantitative, for example. Masgoret and Gardner, "Attitudes, Motivation, and Second Language Learning," 169-71; Semann and Yamazaki, "The Relationship between Global Competence and Language Learning Motivation," 511.

[192]Tsang, "Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language," 131-2.

[193]Ibid.

applied linguistics.[194] Nor was it an attempt to analyze and present the best way to teach Hebrew and Greek courses or to serve as a basis to audit a given teacher's methodologies and skill. It was rather an attempt to discover what was already working well for seminary language professors and their students.

When it comes to teaching formal language courses, John Norris and Lourdes Ortega asked perhaps the most basic question. Is formal second language instruction helpful, relative to informal learning? Unsurprisingly, their research provides evidence it is.[195]

Using Secular Theories

Despite a wide range of possible approaches and methods in teaching second languages, no single, exclusive method or approach resolves all issues by itself.[196] Yet before dealing with a broad, central debate concerning second language teaching methods, it would be appropriate to discuss a perennial issue in Christian education.

Teaching languages at an evangelical seminary raises the issue as to how faith influences teaching.[197] Many influential theories relevant to language teaching have secular origins. Can a Christian language professor use secular theories? In some cases a

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[194]Some major issues relevant to seminary language teaching in seminaries, however, will be discussed briefly in this section, to provide necessary background for the empirical research that will follow.

[195]John M. Norris and Lourdes Ortega, "Effectiveness of L2 Instruction: A Research Synthesis and Quantitative Meta-Analysis," *Language Learning* 50, no. 3 (September 2000): 500.

[196]See Richards and Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, 81-317, 346-7, 376; Lightbown and Spada, *How Languages Are Learned*, 1, 212. Not all approaches are equally respected, however. Richards and Rodgers claim, for example, that the Grammar-Translation Method literally has no theoretical basis, no research to substantiate its use, and "no advocates." Richards and Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, 7. Yet they report that teachers still use it in various capacities and in different locations. Ibid., 7. Technically, Sandra Fotos is an advocate for the method, granted as somewhat of an outlier. Sandra Fotos, "Traditional and Grammar Translation Methods for Second Language Teaching," in *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning*, ed. Eli Hinkel (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005), 653.

[197]See James Riley Estep Jr., "What Makes Education Christian?," in Estep and Anthony, *A Theology for Christian Education*, 25-26.

balance might be struck in which a teacher acknowledges God's sovereignty and person, while utilizing elements of secular theory that do not conflict with his or her Christian doctrines and practices. An illustration of one such balance follows.

Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural development theory has had a substantial impact on the field of second language teaching.[198] Yet in what ways—if any—does a seminary language professor need to be aware of, or evaluate the suitability of Vygotsky's theory while developing lesson plans?[199] There are points of interface between the theory of wisdom development Proverbs 1-9 presents, and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning.[200] Bringing these two theories into dialogue may illustrate how evangelical language professors and students might use a secular theorist while respecting the bounds of their biblically-shaped faith.

Zone of proximal development. Vygotsky's theory centers around the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development. Neal claims that the Zone of Proximal Development involves all of the basic elements of Vygotsky's theory.[201]

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[198]Several books and articles concerning Vygotsky's theory and its relevance to second language teaching are available. See, for example, Samran Daneshfar and Mehdi Moharami, "Dynamic Assessment in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory: Origins and Main Concepts," *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 9, no. 3 (May 2018): 600-7; Johanna Villamizar Castrillón Leidy, "The Effects of Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory on Second Language Acquisition and Language Input," *Espiral: Revista de Docencia e Investigación* 7, no. 1 (June 2017): 91-202; Sepideh Mirzee and Parviz Maftoon, "An Examination of Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory in Second Language Acquisition: The Role of Higher Order Thinking Enhancing Techniques and the EFL learners' Use of Private Speech in the Construction of Reasoning," *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second & Foreign Language Education* 1, no. 1 (2016): 1-25; Mamour Choul Turuk, "The Relevance and Implications of Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory in the Second Language Classroom," *Annual Review of Education, Communication & Language Sciences* 5 (October 2008): 244-62; Lightbown and Spada, *How Languages Are Learned*, 25, 118-20.

[199]Karen Lynn Estep Notes that Christian doctrine clearly involves the notion of absolute truth, which conflicts with a constructivist assumption that all meaning is constructed in interactions. Karen Lynn Estep, "Following Topographical Details: Learning Theory and Curriculum," in Estep, White, and Estep, *Mapping out Curriculum in Your Church*, 110-1.

[200]While arguing that Prov 1:1-7 expresses the purpose of the book, Murphy also notes that there is some scholarly consensus that chaps. 1-9, taken together, are an introduction to the rest of the book. Roland E. Murphy, *Proverbs*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 5.

[201]Cynthia Jones Neal, "The Power of Vygotsky," in *Nurture that is Christian: Developmental Perspectives on Christian Education*, ed. James C. Wilhoit and John M. Dettoni (Grand Rapids: BridgePoint, 1995), 129.

An outline of this central concept is thus pertinent. What a student can do today with help is a prelude to independent performance later.[202] The distance between what a student can do independently, and what he or she can do with help from others defines the Zone of Proximal Development.[203] These concepts in and of themselves, do not conflict with Proverbs 1-9's theory of learning.[204] At the same time, a seminary language professor might benefit from Vygotsky's theoretical framework. It may spotlight the possibility of leveraging the varying degrees of Hebrew or Greek proficiency in his or her classroom for the benefit of those students' language learning process—alongside considerations for his or her students' spiritual need for formation.

Scaffolding: a key to cognitive development. If the Zone of Proximal Development encompasses the core of Vygotsky's theory, "scaffolding" is central to its application.[205] "Scaffolding" is a metaphor which illustrates how a more knowledgeable person can assist a less knowledgeable individual to achieve or perform at a level unattainable while working alone. When a student begins to demonstrate ability to perform a target skill independently, this "teacher" can begin to withdraw his or her

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[202]Lev S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*, ed. Michael Cole, Vera John-Steiner, Sylvia Scribner, and Ellen Souberman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 86-87.

[203]Ibid. Such aid is also referred to as "scaffolding," a key term often used to describe applications of Vygotsky's theory.

[204]See James R. Estep, "Developmental Theories: Foe, Friend, of Folly? The Role of Developmental Theories in Christian Formation," in *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology and Development*, ed. James R. Estep and Jonathan H. Kim (Nashville: B & H, 2010), 55-56.

[205]While the term "scaffolding" is often associated with Vygotsky's theory, Grigorenko attributes the origin of the term to Wood, Bruner, and Ross's 1976 article, in which they coined the term, decades after Vygotsky had died. Grigorenko clarifies Vygotsky himself never specified in great detail how a teacher might engage or work with students to bring about their progress through the Zone of Proximal Development. Elena L. Grigorenko, "Mastering Tools of the Mind in School (Trying out Vygotsky's Ideas in Classrooms)," in *Intelligence, Instruction, and Assessment: Theory into Practice*, ed. Robert J. Sternberg and Wendy M. Williams (New York: Routledge, 1998), 139; D. Wood, J. S. Bruner, and G. Ross, "The Role of Tutoring in Problem Solving," *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, and Allied Disciplines* 17 (1976): 89-100. Cynthia Jones Neal dedicates an entire chapter to Vygotsky's theory, and suggests that the concept of scaffolding is important for Christian educators to consider. Neal, "The Power of Vygotsky," 124, 129.

"scaffolding."[206] Vygotsky includes not just teachers, but also one's more able peers as possible sources of scaffolding.[207] Vygotsky thus accounts for cognitive development as movement through the Zone of Proximal Development. Language professors can frame their students' learning through the Russian theorist's sociocultural lens if they choose, perhaps as one helpful lens among many.

The primary difference between Proverbs' model of wisdom development and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory consists of two categories: content and process. Specific content, such as learning about plants in a biology course, or studying ethics in a seminary course does not concern Vygotsky. Vygotsky's interests concern the learning process generally, or how individuals learn.

Proverbs 1-9, however, concerns itself with both process and content.[208] Regarding process, people learn via 'the fear of the Lord' in verses such as 1:7; 9:10. Regarding content, the book teaches that certain specific behaviors, such as trusting in the Lord instead of oneself, or avoiding bandits and thieves, demonstrate wisdom, as 1:10-19; 3:1, 5-8 model. The holistic, panoramic goals of wisdom content in Proverbs 1-9 far outstrip Vygotsky's singular focus on process.

How is Vygotsky useful for seminary language courses? Different scholars provide a variety of attractive answers. One particularly nuanced and helpful approach comes from recent work by John David Trentham. He states, "Christianity is neither anti-scientific, anti-secular, anti-modern, anti-experimental, nor anti-empirical."[209] He argues Christians cannot ignore ways in which secular social science theories of development

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[206]Vygotsky, *Mind in Society*, 86-87.

[207]Ibid., 86.

[208]See Estep, "Navigating with a Compass," 51. Vygotsky has no theological interests, something which church curriculum designers should note.

[209]John David Trentham, "Reading the Social Sciences Theologically (Part 1): Approaching and Qualifying Models of Human Development," *Christian Education Journal* 16, no. 3 (2019): 465.

are "typically oriented unto counter-biblical ideals." Yet Christian educators may also acknowledge that those same secular models of human development offer useful insights at times.[210] Via this principle of "Inverse Consistency," he seeks to find a critical balance Christians can use to read secular social science work responsibly, without drifting theologically "toward deference or polemicism."[211]

Trentham's work is a refreshing and articulate contribution to a conversation which has been going on for some time. Earlier, Estep had claimed somewhat humorously that Christian educators must "baptize" secular theories before using them.[212] Yet ultimately, the point is well taken: however one chooses to engage secular theorists, Christian educators have an obligation to do so critically and theologically, if they plan to educate responsibly.[213] In other words, each teacher must weigh those theories and their related methodologies on a case-by-case basis. In terms of praxis, some seminary professors may feel they and their students would benefit from application of Vygotsky's ideas, while others may not. Both avenues of thought are potentially legitimate.

A Pertinent Debate: Form vs. Meaning

With those thoughts in mind, it would be good to turn and review an important debate in the field of second language teaching. The debate concerns matters of both approach and method. Currently, in the field of second language teaching and learning, a discussion is centered around finding a balance of form-focused, or "explicit" instruction,

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[210]Trentham, "Reading the Social Sciences Theologically (Part 1)," 474.

[211]Ibid., 473.

[212]James Riley Estep Jr., "Spiritual Formation as Social: Toward a Vygotskyan Developmental Perspective," *Religious Education* 97, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 142. For a somewhat more extreme argument, see David Powlison, "Cure of Souls (and the Modern Psychotherapies)," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* (Spring 2007), 11.

[213]John David Trentham, "Reading the Social Sciences Theologically (Part 2): Engaging and Appropriating Models of Human Development," *Christian Education Journal* 16, no. 3 (2019): 485, 493.

and meaning-based, or "implicit" instruction.[214] Spada and Tomita define "explicit" instruction as involving overt metalinguistic explanations using technical grammatical language.[215] They define "implicit" instruction as being provided via meaning-based activities that expose students to target grammatical features as they are used in conversation, for example, but not as the topic of the conversation per se.[216] As with Vygotsky, the seminary professor must import his or her faith into the conversation: the debate is not overtly theological in nature for all involved.

Norris and Ortega's meta-analysis took account of forty-nine studies which they claim show that form-focused methodologies produce more benefit than implicit instruction.[217] They temper their claims with a caveat, however. Due to a lack of uniformity, or "operationalization" across individual research projects, their findings are not as generalizable as they could be.[218]

At times, practicality determines a choice of method. Grammatical irregularities may call for explicit instruction.[219] When they have been identified by prior scholarship—as with Greek and Hebrew—irregular forms may profitably be taught by teachers and learned by students as phenomena that do not follow the "regular" patterns of a language. Other factors such as sociocultural contexts may also be influential.

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[214]See Jeong-eun Kim, "Timing of Form-Focused Instruction and Development of Implicit vs. Explicit Knowledge," *English Teaching* 69, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 123, 125.

[215]Nina Spada and Yasuyo Tomita, "Interactions between Type of Instruction and Type of Language Feature: A Meta-Analysis," *Language Learning* 60, no. 2 (June 2010): 273.

[216]Ibid.

[217]Norris and Ortega, "Effectiveness of L2 Instruction," 417-8, 437.

[218] The potential range of variables under investigation from one primary study to another can be extremely varied, yet Norris and Ortega believe operationalization is hypothetically possible. Ibid., 418, 434, 442, 502.

[219]Ammar Ahlem, and Patsy M. Lightbown, "Teaching Marked Linguistic Structures—More about the Acquisition of Relative Clauses by Arab Learners of English," in *Investigations in Instructed Second Language Acquisition*, ed. Alex Housen and Michael Pierrard, Studies on Language Acquisition 25, ed. Peter Jordens (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2005), 194.

Context is crucial. Some scholars argue that ultimately, individual teachers must decide how to meet their students' needs in a given context. Arguing for the Grammar-Translation Method, Fotos states that culturally, communicative methods may not be appropriate, when Asian students and local teachers could be unfamiliar with such Western methods.[220] She points out that as a consequence, context may severely limit the extent to which even western teachers are able to use communicative methods.[221] On the other hand, Cho reports that communicative teaching methods are now required by the Korean government.[222]

Certain researchers do not advise relying exclusively on either form-focused or meaning-based methodologies.[223] Spada, Lightbown, and White, in their empirical work, found that form-focused instruction aids student progress when used by teachers within a communicative teaching framework.[224] Students do not always notice errors in language production without form-based instruction, contrary to the claims of the proponents of communicative methods.[225] Kim references a relatively large body of research which supports the idea that meaning-based instruction is most effective when combined with form-focused instruction.[226] His own empirical research revealed that both meaning-based instruction and form-focused methods are good to use, rather than meaning-based

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[220]Fotos, "Traditional and Grammar Translation Methods," 667-68.

[221]Ibid.

[222]Cho, "L2 Learning Motivation and Its Relationship to Proficiency," 41-42, 61-62; Lightbown and Spada, *How Languages Are Learned*, 197-98.

[223]Lightbown and Spada, *How Languages Are Learned*, 195.

[224]Nina Spada, Patsy Lightbown, and Joanna L. White, "The Importance of Form/Meaning Mappings in Explicit Form-Focused Instruction," in Jordens, *Investigations in Instructed Second Language Acquisition*, 225-8.

[225]Ibid., 228.

[226]Kim, "Timing of Form-Focused Instruction and Development," 123-4.

approaches exclusively.[227] Yet little research has been conducted by scholars to determine the exact, ideal combination of meaning-based and form-based education.[228]

At one time, Spada and Tomita claimed that form-based, explicit instruction could be more beneficial than meaning-based instruction in some cases.[229] It is telling, however, that Spada would later argue communicative methods should not be discarded altogether. She states a teacher should take care to use them in a balanced fashion, alongside form-based methods, as appropriate in a given context.[230]

Despite authors who repeatedly emphasize that communicative approaches are valuable, meaning-based methods and approaches in Hebrew and Greek classrooms are challenging, since production of original sentences and clauses, or authentic communication, is not typically a goal. Casual observation shows that translation and interpretation of ancient texts are more likely the desired outcomes. Yet while some Hebrew and Greek teachers might feel more comfortable with either form-based or meaning-based activities, available research suggest it would be worth the effort to include a balance of the two in practice.[231]

A "Post-Methods" Era

Some linguists contend that a language teacher should be familiarized with various approaches and methods and that ultimately he or she should choose whatever mix of balance of methods and approaches fits his or her respective contexts.[232] Such freedom allowed room to ask Greek and Hebrew teachers what works best in their

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[227]Kim, "Timing of Form-Focused Instruction and Development," 123.

[228]Ibid., 124.

[229]Spada and Tomita, "Interactions between Instruction and Language Feature," 286.

[230]Lightbown and Spada, *How Languages Are Learned*, 196-8.

[231]Lightbown and Spada, *How Languages Are Learned*, 197; Fotos, "Traditional and Grammar Translation Methods," 668.

[232]Richards and Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, 16, 352.

respective contexts. Which texts, exercises, software, printed handouts, games, assessments, and websites were working? There was also room to ask students what they found to be helpful in their studies: which books, resources, websites, exercises, games, study aids, flashcards, and routes of communication with their professors were most helpful? The point here is not to audit a teaching style or methodology, but to simply find what is already working. In the research design of this particular study, this review of literature concerning best practices was used to produce interview items which pertained to Research Question 3c.[233]

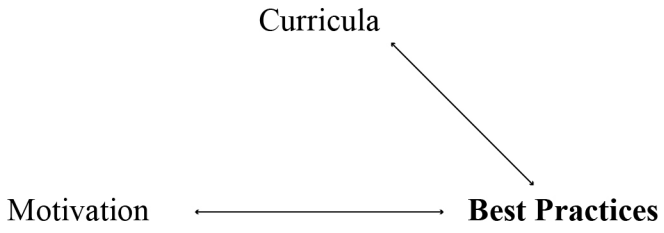

Figure 7: The dynamic node of best practices

Best Practices in the Framework for Language Curricula

As seen in figure 7, interaction between best practices, motivation, and curriculum takes place. Regarding the dynamics between motivation and best practices, it is possible that if a student does not come to class or shuts down emotionally in class—perhaps because of frustration—a teacher might need to personally adapt his or her teaching for that student, to redirect or revive the student's motivation.[234] In that way, a teacher's practices could influence student motivation. As noted above, Ambrose claims

[233]Research Question 1: "What categories emerge from the literature which can provide a dynamic framework for MDiv language curricula at selected evangelical seminaries?" Research sub-question 3c is as follows: "How do language professors and students demonstrate best practices for teaching and learning in specific seminary contexts?"

[234]Tsang, "Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language," 134.

that perceived support or lack of it from teachers or other students can affect motivation.[235]

Perhaps more obviously, a professor's practice or skills could also affect a given curriculum when a teacher determines how to best design lesson plans. In some cases, a teacher might balance how to best facilitate classroom progress towards his or her institution's objectives for language studies with what students actually want to learn, or have no interest in learning.[236]

Conclusion

This chapter has in part been organized by references to an original, hypothetical framework as a means of conceptualizing MDiv language curricula. Specific examples of how the nodes of the framework could interact have been presented as illustrations, but not as a comprehensive account of how such interactions occur.

Although rarely articulated in scholarly literature, it is obvious that at some point faculty at evangelical seminaries will have engaged in theological and philosophical discussions concerning their language programs. Curriculum does not simply appear out of the air or grow up from the ground. Also, as casual observation shows, academic curricula often change. Advances in theory and new research results can all work together to change the landscape of academic inquiries. The concerns of various stakeholders can also contribute to the shape of a seminary curriculum regarding biblical languages. Thus, conversations concerning the null, implicit, and explicit curriculum of biblical language studies at seminaries—and their relative efficacy—continue today and will likely persist into the future.

As a result, it was reasonable to assume that certain professors at selected

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[235]Ambrose et al., *How Learning Works*, 79-80.

[236]Such best practices come to the fore in the interviews with professors in chap. 4.

seminaries would be able to explain their rationales concerning the roles of language studies across their respective programs. It is expected that the same would be true in terms of the various teaching practices that language professors employ. Students, likewise, should be able to express whether or not, or to what degree they achieved their goals for language study.

Evangelicals place great importance upon knowledge of the Bible.[237] Is that emphasis on knowledge of Scripture the reason biblical language studies in evangelical seminaries are rarely discussed in print? Is the value of biblical language studies simply assumed, in other words? On the other hand, seminary programs and their respective requirements reflected a wide variety of options, revealing that there is no single pattern that all follow. Thus, to assume a consensus on how language study should be carried out in evangelical seminaries was not fair to the variety already present in the field. An exploration of these issues called for a qualitative study, as the area is largely uncharted in contemporary English-language research.[238]

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[237]See Marsden, "Introduction: The Evangelical Denomination," ix-x.

[238]Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research*, 251, 253.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study investigated the various roles and relative efficacy of biblical language studies in MDiv curricula at six different evangelical seminaries in the United States. Because of a lack of extended treatment of those issues in current English-language publications, a qualitative design was chosen for this project.[1] In this chapter, the research methodology for this study will be presented systematically, beginning with a synopsis of the research questions, followed by the research purpose statement; a design overview; definition of the research population; a description of the research sample; delimitations; limitations of generalization; instrumentation; and procedures.

Research Question Synopsis

1. What categories emerge from the literature which can provide a dynamic framework for MDiv language curricula at selected evangelical seminaries?
2. How are varying curricular priorities and outcomes expressed at selected evangelical seminaries, with regard to biblical language studies and language proficiency?
    a. How do the selected seminaries explain their theological and philosophical-educational bases for the role(s) of biblical language study in their respective curricula?
    b. How do the selected seminaries articulate their plans for how their curricular priorities will be addressed in the classroom, or in terms of pedagogy?
3. How do professors and students at select institutions express their priorities and values regarding biblical language study?
    a. How do specific teachers explain and understand the place of biblical language study within the curriculum of their respective schools?

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[1]Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 11th ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2016), 253-4.

b. How do selected students understand or articulate the efficacy of biblical language study in terms of their personal goals for ministry, or motivation for studying—their personal formation—at seminary in a more general way?

c. How do the selected language professors and students demonstrate best practices for teaching and learning in specific seminary contexts?

Research Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the role(s) and relative efficacy of biblical language studies in graduate seminary curricula for language professors and MDiv students in their last year of studies or who have graduated in the last year at six evangelical institutions, for a total of thirty participants.[2] The role(s) of biblical language studies was generally defined in terms of how curricula explicitly and implicitly express notions of the importance of biblical language study. The efficacy of biblical language studies was generally defined in terms of the degree to which students perceived the value of language study with regard to their respective careers or ministries, and the degree to which professors felt a given curriculum was effective in achieving its stated goals.

Design Overview

Qualitative study can identify "what needs to be studied" in a given field, when those concerns are not already evident.[3] The primary concern of the present research design was to explore what had previously been a mostly uncharted area of study.[4] Consequently, the approach employed for this study was qualitative.[5] Semi-structured

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[2]Again, John W. Creswell states that 20 to 30 participants will "saturate" a theme or category: "saturation" is the point at which a sample no longer provides fresh insights. John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2014), 189. Elsewhere, Creswell and Poth state that 20 to 60 interviews are sufficient to saturate an inquiry. John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2018), 87.

[3]Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research*, 251.

[4]Ibid., 253-4.

[5]Ibid.

interviews were conducted and analyzed as a main source of data, but data such as the names of language textbooks and other artifacts of education were also reviewed.[6] In addition, this study gathered and analyzed relevant information from course catalogs, syllabi, and email correspondence with participants.[7] Personal observations were also included in the data collection process, if it seemed such observations could provide important nuances to data analysis.[8]

Thirty students and seminary faculty from six selected evangelical institutions were purposefully recruited and interviewed.[9] Recruited students had graduated with a MDiv degree from one of the selected institutions within the last year or were currently enrolled in their final year of studies for a MDiv degree. The institutions represented in the data had evangelical commitments commensurate with Marsden's definition of "evangelical."[10]

Interviews followed a semi-structured format according to protocols developed with the aid of an "expert panel"[11] Interview questions were drawn from the literature review contained in chapter 2. An audio recording of each interview was produced via

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[6]Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research*, 253-4, 259; Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 98.

[7]See Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research*, 253-4, 259; Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 98.

[8]A particularly notable emotional tone related to an interview protocol item such as laughter, was noted, when it occurred. See Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research*, 258; Bruce Richard Cannon, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates Attending Christian Liberal Arts Colleges or Universities" (EdD thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 16; Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 166-9.

[9]See Creswell, *Research Design*, 189; Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 87.

[10]Marsden claims that evangelicals believe in the following: (1) the ultimate authority of Scripture following the Reformation's formulation of it; (2) the actual, historical nature of God's acts to make salvation possible, following the Biblical narrative; (3) salvation through faith in Christ alone; (4) an essential need for missionary work and evangelism worldwide; and (5) the value of personal spiritual transformation. George Marsden, "Introduction: The Evangelical Denomination," in *Evangelicalism and Modern America*, ed. George Marsden (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), ix-x.

[11]Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research*, 98. To review these protocols, see appendix 3, "Interview Protocols."

the aid of Skype. Transcripts of those interviews were subsequently developed by myself and Scribie, a professional transcription service: every third interview was manually transcribed by Scribie personnel and then checked by myself.[12] The remaining interviews were produced by machine transcription software at Scribie, and then corrected personally by myself. Completed transcripts were analyzed via "open coding" and then analyzed again as was necessary for clarity, after themes had begun to emerge from the first round of analysis.[13] As noted above, I analyzed additional sources of data to shed light on the language education process at selected institutions from multiple angles. Textbooks, course catalogs, syllabi, language websites, language software, and flashcards were all included in the interview data.[14] Ultimately, as shaped by the research questions and the literature review in chapter 2, this analysis provided insight into the rationales for, and efficacy of biblical language curricula at the six selected seminaries.[15] Through one lens, this study may have relevance for conceptualizing the role of seminary language studies in the life of the local church, as understood by the interview participants. Through another lens, the results of this study might also identify variables or themes which could be utilized in further research, in order to explore seminary language studies from additional angles.

Definition of the Research Population

The research population was made up of students and faculty members at

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[12]Scribie: Audio Transcription, Perfected, accessed September 5, 2019, scribie.com.

[13]Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research*, 296.

[14]See Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 5th ed. (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley, 2017), 25-27.

[15]Both Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (GCTS) and the Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS) have multiple locations, and I interviewed participants from Gordon-Conwell's Hamilton, MA campus, as well as the Charlotte, NC campus. I interviewed participants from both the Washington, D.C., as well as the Atlanta, GA campuses of the RTS.

denominational and inter-/multidenominational evangelical seminaries in the United States which were accredited by the ATS.[16] Accreditation from ATS provided an objective standard which member institutions uphold.

The population of student participants was composed of students in their last year of MDiv studies, or who had graduated with a MDiv from one of the selected institutions within the past year. The reasoning for this inclusion criterion was that such students would be able to analyze and reflect on their experience with language studies as being part of a larger curriculum. Such students expressed their perceptions of the roles and efficacy of language studies in the overall curriculum at their respective seminaries. This selection criterion limited the generalizability of the study because the sample included only those students who had been successful with language studies. An attempt to explore the reasons why certain students have not been successful with language studies could be a very complex and nuanced undertaking. At this time, such an endeavor is beyond the scope of this current research.[17] Students who have studied both Hebrew and Greek were selected to participate.

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[16]Notably, ATS did not specify language requirements for MDiv curricula or the curricula of any other degree. Degree language requirements are designed by specific schools. Dr. Mary Young, ATS Director of Leadership Education, e-mail message, October 8, 2018; see also Association of Theological Schools Commission on Accrediting, *Degree Program Standards*, accessed October 20, 2018, https://www.ats.edu/uploads/accrediting/documents/degree-program-standards.pdf#pagemode=bookmarks.

For the purposes of accreditation, ATS classifies MDiv degrees as "professional" rather than "academic" degrees. Yet "professional" programs such as the MDiv are certainly just as rigorous in terms of scholarship as "academic" programs. The distinction between the two types of programs is a matter of what students plan to do with their degrees when they graduate. Even within those parameters, of course, variation can occur: some students who pursue an "academic" degree go on to serve in vocational ministry, for example. Christopher The, ATS Director of Commission Information Services, e-mail message, January 30, 2019.

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (Hamilton, MA campus), for example, is accredited by the ATS. The seminary divides its masters degrees into "Academic" and "Professional" programs. Usually their "professional" programs require no biblical language study, although there is a nuance to that: their MDiv is a "professional" degree, which does require two semesters of biblical Greek and Hebrew each, as well as two exegesis courses which rely upon Hebrew and Greek skills. "Master of Divinity (M.Div.) Degree Program," Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, accessed February 20, 2018, http://www.gordonconwell.edu/degree-programs/Master-of-Divinity.cfm.

[17]A research study designed to explore the experiences of that sample and others could be undertaken in the future, as noted in chapter 5.

The population of faculty included professors at the selected seminaries with terminal degrees and who had taught biblical languages as a primary focus of their teaching loads for at least five years. One rationale for limiting the research population to such teachers was that those educators would be able to provide rich answers to this study's interview protocols in ways that teachers with less experience and education would not.

"Evangelical" institutions were identified as such by a correspondence of their respective institutional mission statements with the elements of Marsden's definition, or by a commitment on behalf of the faculty and students to the five elements of Marsden's definition of "evangelical."[18] The selected institutions all fell into the categories of either evangelical-denominational or evangelical inter-/multidenominational.[19]

Description of the Research Sample

Purposeful sampling was utilized, as "Purposeful sampling means that researchers intentionally select (or recruit) participants who have experienced the central phenomenon or the key concept being explored in the study."[20] Elsewhere, Creswell states that the idea behind purposeful sampling is that an effective researcher would select the participants who can best help him or her understand the research problem and answer the research questions.[21] All institutions and individual participants selected for this study were purposefully recruited according to the following criteria.

Creswell and Poth suggest that for qualitative research, "maximum variation"

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[18]Marsden, "Introduction: The Evangelical Denomination," ix-x.

[19]This categorization came from Jonathan Derek Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians" (EdD thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016), 8.

[20]John W. Creswell and Vicki L. Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, 2nd ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2011), 173.

[21]Creswell, *Research Design*, 189.

can be used as a sampling technique to draw out diversity and a multiplicity of viewpoints.[22] These authors offer support for choosing both a multiple number of seminaries and a multiple number of participants from each seminary. Six representative seminaries were selected as they met the criteria for inclusion in the study on the basis of official affiliations, public statements, and available published materials.[23]

In terms of "official affiliations," each selected seminary was accredited by the ATS. The selected institutions collectively represented a variety of evangelical affiliations with explicitly stated ties to denominational or inter-/multidenominational communities.

In terms of "public statements" and "available published materials," it was confirmed that each selected seminary had publicly expressed an explicit evangelical commitment such as a mission statement which cohered with Marsden's definition of "evangelical."[24] Each selected seminary also had a publicly expressed commitment to teaching biblical languages in their respective MDiv curricula. The simple presence of language requirements in an MDiv program satisfied this final inclusion criterion for seminary participants.

From those seminaries, 30 individual participants were recruited for interviews.[25] Twenty-four student participants—who were in their last year of MDiv studies, or who had graduated within the past year with an MDiv degree from one of the selected institutions—were recruited for interviews, along with 6 language professors. Both overlap and variation occurred when professors and students from different

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[22]Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 158.

[23]See Creswell, *Research Design*, 189. The categories of "official affiliations, public statements, and available published materials" came from my advisor. John David Trentham, email message, February 28, 2019.

[24]Marsden, "Introduction: The Evangelical Denomination," ix-x.

[25]Creswell, *Research Design*, 189; Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 87.

denominational and inter-/multidenominational seminaries answered questions based in the review of literature in chapter 2 with regard to theology, philosophy, curricula, motivation, and best practices. This study deliberately attempted to include a variety of evangelical traditions or denominations in order to prevent a biased sample. By including a variety of traditions, this study exposed both points of unity as well as a variety of theory and practices as they related to language curricula.

Delimitations

1. This research was delimited to students and faculty at seminaries accredited by the ATS in the United States.
2. This research was delimited to faculty and students at the seminaries selected for this study, seminaries which are affiliated with either evangelical denominations or inter-/multidenominational evangelical traditions.
3. This research was delimited to professors who can explain rationales for MDiv language curricula at their institutions.
4. This research was delimited to language professors who have terminal degrees.
5. This research was delimited to language professors for whom teaching biblical languages has been a primary emphasis of their teaching responsibilities at their respective seminaries for at least five years.
6. This research was delimited to students who were currently in the last year of their MDiv studies, or who had graduated with an MDiv within the past year.
7. This research was not delimited to students who are "language people," or among those who enjoy language studies, or who feel they have gifts and strong interests in language study.
8. This research was delimited chronologically, as it had to be conducted over a specified and limited period of time.[26]

Limitations of Generalization

Although qualitative studies do not typically allow researchers to generalize to a larger population very easily, "representative" cases—such as those identified for this

[26]Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 120.

research—could lend more strength to the possibility that the research findings will be transferable.[27] Also, as noted above, "maximum variation" in a sample can provide a valuable multiplicity of points of view on a given subject."[28] Nevertheless, generalizability of the research findings that this study uncovers were limited in the following ways.[29]

1. Attempts at generalization to populations outside those of the selected evangelical seminaries here in North America—such as Perry Shaw's description of curriculum development at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary—may be untenable.[30] In such cases, differences in sociocultural contexts involve a host of influences that may not be present here in the United States.

2. Because of its delimitations, the results of this study may not be generalizable to populations of students and language professors at non-evangelical seminaries.

3. Because of its delimitations, the results of this study may not be generalizable to populations of students who are not enrolled in their final year of MDiv studies, or who have not graduated from a MDiv program within the past year.

4. In this case, the research findings might or might not generalize to other evangelical seminary programs.[31] The number of participating institutions was not sufficiently large enough to guarantee generalizability to all North American evangelical seminaries, or to all MDiv language students at those seminaries.

5. The results of this study will not be generalizable to seminaries which are not accredited by the ATS.

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[27]Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 99.

[28]Ibid., 158.

[29]Ibid., 102.

[30]With regard to curricular priorities, Shaw reports that professors at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary responded to some of their students' lack of biblical language usage after graduation. While languages were not removed from the curriculum altogether, "Hence, we have placed our language emphasis on teaching our students English." This route of action was undertaken as a means of providing access to a wide variety of theological works and a, "global Christian community." Perry Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education: A Practical Handbook for Integrative Learning* (Carlisle, UK: Langham Global Library, 2014), 10. Native English-speaking students in United States seminary programs would obviously not share the same challenge of learning English in order to access English-language theological works or the benefits of the English-speaking global community.

[31]Yet importantly, this study elucidated avenues for future, follow-up research on these same concerns, the role and efficacy of language study in seminary curricula. Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research*, 254.

Instrumentation

As stated above, data for this study primarily consisted of semi-structured interview data. Three phases of research, each involving specific instruments, unfolded along the following lines.[32] An institutional eligibility form and a participation form were followed by thirty semi-structured interviews.

One note on the interview protocols is appropriate here. As a matter of instrument design, a single research question can be quite generative. For example, each of this study's research question produced several distinct interview protocol questions which collectively reflect multiple topics from the literature review in chapter 2. Thus, interview questions derived from Research Question 3b in the interview protocol for student participants (i.e., "Protocol 1: Students") were based in precedent literature regarding theology, philosophy, and motivation, respectively.[33]

Institutional Eligibility Form

The first phase involved the institutional eligibility form, a means to parse officially published data regarding the formal curriculum of biblical language studies at a given institution, such as official school websites and course catalogs.[34] I also used the form to confirm that participating institutions met selection criteria relevant to this study. Those criteria, as stated above, defined the possibility for inclusion on the basis of official affiliations, public statements, and available published materials.

The institutional eligibility form was a primary means of answering Research

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[32]Gregory Long's EdD thesis was helpful while organizing this section concerning instrumentation. Gregory Brock Long, "Evaluating the Epistemological Development of Pre-Ministry Undergraduates at Bible Colleges According to the Perry Scheme" (EdD thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014), 69.

[33]See appendix 3, "Interview Protocols." Research sub-question 3b is as follows: **"**How do selected students understand or articulate the efficacy of biblical language study in terms of their personal goals for ministry, or motivation for studying—their personal formation—at seminary in a more general way?"

[34]See appendix 1, "Institutional Eligibility Form."

Questions 2a and 2b. Research Question 2b was as follows: "How do the selected seminaries articulate their plans for how their curricular priorities will be addressed in the classroom, or in terms of pedagogy?" Research Question 2a was as follows: "How do the selected seminaries explain their theological and philosophical-educational bases for the role(s) of biblical language study in their respective curricula?" As such, these two questions drew on the discussion of philosophy, theology, and curricula presented in chapter 2.

Participation Form

The second phase of the research used an email-based participation form which was sent to participants who had expressed a desire to participate in this study.[35] The participation form served to document informed consent and desire to participate. It also collected a light amount of demographic data, such as age and gender. It also served to screen potential participants, to confirm that an individual met the necessary selection criteria. In order to take part in this research, for example, potential student participants had to have been enrolled in their final year of MDiv studies or had graduated with an MDiv degree within the past year.

Interview Protocols

The third phase of this study involved the use of semi-structured interview protocols.[36] As noted above, these protocols were shaped first by the guiding research questions, as well as the literature review of chapter 2. The average interview lasted fifty-seven minutes.[37] A total of two protocols were developed: one for language professors

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[35]See appendix 2, "Participation Form."

[36]See appendix 3, "Interview Protocols."

[37]One hour was a time frame chosen to allow for in-depth responses. Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 161-2.

and a second for students.[38] After selecting the appropriate interview protocol, each interview proceeded with the scripted, open-ended questions.[39] In other words, eight or nine prearranged, open-ended questions were followed by prearranged probes for clarification, elaboration, or development of ideas central to this study as defined in its research questions.[40] Besides the prearranged questions and probes, I followed up on participants' responses by rephrasing their answers and asking for more clarification as necessary, techniques associated with "Active Listening."[41]

Procedures

I know of no study which investigates current rationales for and the efficacy of biblical language curricula in American evangelical seminaries in an extended fashion. As a result, the research instruments necessary to conduct this study were developed with the aid of an expert panel, to better establish validity.[42] Afterwards, the study proceeded through four steps: (1) Identify and Recruit Study Participants; (2) Conduct a Pilot Study; (3) Conduct, Transcribe, and Analyze Thirty Individual Interviews; and (4) Evaluate Findings and Develop Conclusions.[43]

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[38]Again, John Creswell states that 20 to 30 participants will "saturate" a theme or category. Creswell, *Research Design*, 189. Elsewhere, Creswell and Poth state that 20 to 60 interviews are sufficient to saturate an inquiry. Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 87.

[39]Creswell, *Research Design*, 190; Cannon, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 16.

[40]Creswell, *Research Design*, 190; Cannon, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 16; Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 164.

[41]Patricia B. Nemec, Anne Sullivan Soydan, and Amy Cottone Spangnolo, "Can You Hear Me Now? Teaching Listening Skills," *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal* 40, no. 4 (2017): 415.

[42]Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research*, 98. As of January 28, 2019, Suzie Macaluso, PhD; Houston Heflin, EdD; John David Trentham, PhD; Anthony Foster, PhD; and Timothy Paul Jones PhD had seen these protocols at different stages of their development.

[43]John David Trentham's dissertation was useful in organizing this section of the present study. John David Trentham, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates: A Cross-Institutional Application of the Perry Scheme" (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 135.

Identify and Recruit Study Participants

Phase 1: the institutional eligibility form and initial participant contact form. Before I made any attempt to contact potential participants, Research Ethics Committee approval was necessary.[44] When such approval was in hand, the next step was to use the institutional eligibility form to identify whether or not a given institution met the selection criteria for this study. By using the institutional eligibility form, course catalogs, and other documents that had been published online by a given seminary were reviewed in a systematic way. Those materials helped to triangulate and thus improve the validity and reliability of the interview data, as expressed by the disparate participants.[45] At times, I also contacted various registrars' offices: questions about course catalogs and other curriculum were resolved as needed via that route of action.[46]

If, upon review, an institution qualified for participant status, I then attempted to contact specific individuals who worked at those institutions. I contacted seminary registrars and professors, and asked for a list of email addresses for final-year MDiv students and the email addresses of students who have graduated within the past year with a MDiv degree. I discovered that while specific legislation bars registrars' offices from giving out student contact information, registrars tended to be very accommodating and helped me reach individual students and professors in other ways. I had developed an initial participant contact: email or telephone form.[47] It gave a general overview of my project, including both the potential benefits of the research and the cost of participation, which was mostly the amount of time required for the interview. I also made a

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[44]See Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 151. All of the research instruments used in this research were performed in compliance with and approved by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the research.

[45]Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research*, 260.

[46]See Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 25-27.

[47]See appendix 4, "Initial Participant Contact: Email or Telephone." This form was tailored to a particular individual or seminary if necessary. For a given student, I may have clarified that I am not looking exclusively for "language people," or only students who have strong gifts and interests in languages, for example.

commitment to provide the results of the study to all participants who desired to see them.

The form included an offer of a $12 Amazon gift card to all participants. Several participants declined the gift card.

The registrar at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBTS) simply forwarded the initial participant contact form to 150 potential participants. The registrar at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary's (GCTS) Hamilton campus asked for a flyer that could be posted on the school's Facebook page, or on kiosks on the seminary grounds. I developed a publicity flyer for that purpose which could be tailored to a specific institution.[48] More than one registrar used the publicity flyer, after that.

At other times by using contact information from a professor's personal or official seminary webpage, I sent emails directly to individual professors. Those initial emails followed a loosely structured format, as plotted out in the initial participant contact form. Whether or not a recipient of these emails chose to participate, I asked if he or she would feel comfortable sharing the names of other individuals—faculty or students—who also might fit my inclusion criteria and be willing and able to take part in the research. Previous to this study, I personally knew only two of the individuals out of the thirty total who ultimately participated.

Phase 2: the participation form. A participation form was emailed to each individual who expressed a desire to participate in this study. Once a participant had completed and returned the form, it was reviewed and processed before an individual was interviewed. For the purposes of this study, all participating students and faculty members will remain anonymous. Anonymity offers participants freedom to speak

[48]See appendix 5, "Publicity Flyer."

candidly and honestly. First-name pseudonyms were used in the analysis phase of the study which appears in chapter 4.

Conduct a Pilot Study

After the first few participation forms had been returned, a pilot study was conducted with one professor and one student, to better establish this project's validity.[49] After helping in this way the pilot study participants could no longer be a part of the research project. All interviews were recorded via Skype and Almoto Call Recorder, a free software designed to record Skype conversations. The interview audio was transcribed by a combination of myself and Scribie, a professional transcription agency, as was feasible with regard to time. Both manual transcriptions and machine transcriptions took considerable time to edit for readability. Once interviews transcripts were complete they were uploaded into ATLAS.ti. software, which is designed to aid analysis of qualitative data. The pilot study provided increased familiarity with the interview instruments, my interviewing techniques, the transcription process, and use of ATLAS.ti. It also exposed one awkwardly worded interview question on the professor protocol, and the question was subsequently reworded.

One more benefit of the pilot studies was that they exposed the need for a standard, short introduction to the interview protocols. These "introductions" now appear at the top of the interview protocols in appendix 3.

Conduct, Transcribe, and Analyze Thirty Individual Interviews

After the pilot study process was completed thirty semi-structured, one-hour, one-on-one interviews were conducted, one with each of thirty participants.[50] As noted

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[49]Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 165; Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical* Research, 98.

[50]An hour-long time frame was chosen to allow for in-depth responses. See Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 161-2.

above, students who were in their last year of MDiv studies, as well individuals who have graduated from MDiv programs within the past year were recruited. Again, the rationale was that such students would be able to share their perspectives on language studies as one element within an MDiv curriculum as a whole. Participants from a population of language professors who hold terminal degrees and have taught biblical language courses as a primary focus of their teaching load for at least five years were also recruited to share their expertise and experience.

Interview protocols were based upon the articulated research questions. Just as in the pilot studies, I recorded each interview via Skype and Almoto Call Recorder.[51] Every third interview was transcribed manually by Scribie personnel, a human effort. All other interviews were transcribed via a combination of Scribie's computer software, and my own effort.[52] Just as with the pilot study, these interview transcripts were analyzed via "open coding," followed by additional rounds of coding and transcript analysis, as necessary to identify themes.[53] I tried to identify themes, and then to examine the variation within those themes. The product of this data analysis was interpreted in light of its relevance to the research problem and research questions.[54]

A Special Case: Research Question 1

Research Question 1 was somewhat of a special case.[55] Research Question 2 was addressed by examination of official seminary publications such as course catalogs and seminary websites. Research Question 3 was answered by a combination of semi-

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[51]See Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research*, 269. Cannon, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 16.

[52]See Cannon, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 16.

[53]Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research*, 296.

[54]Ibid.

[55]Research Question 1 is as follows: "What categories emerge from the literature review which can provide a dynamic framework for MDiv language curricula at selected evangelical seminaries?"

structured interview data, a review of textbooks, flashcards, websites, syllabi, and other artifacts specific to students and teachers. Research Question 1, however, concerns a framework for curricula which arose from the literature review. The framework was assessed after collecting all data relevant to Questions 2 and 3, respectively. When the crucial importance of stakeholders arose in the interview data, I determined it was not sufficiently represented in the existing framework. As a result of the vast influence of stakeholders on language curricula, the original framework as it is in figure 8 was ultimately found insufficient, as will be shown and explained in chapter 4.

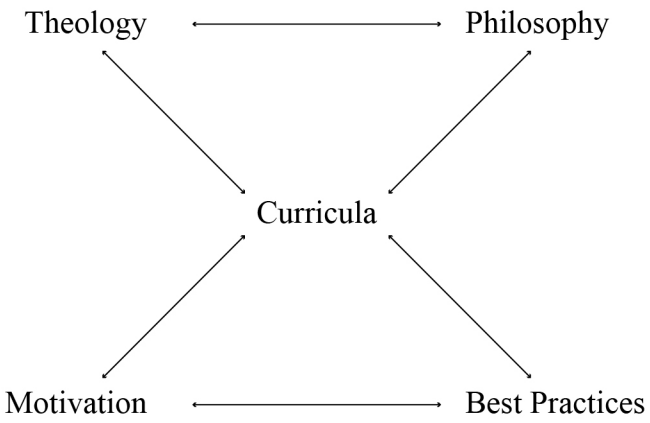

Figure 8. A tenable framework?

Conclusion: Evaluate Findings and Interpret the Data

Unfortunately, a literature review had failed to reveal a recognized or guiding paradigm for conceptualizing the roles of biblical language curricula in evangelical seminaries, or any widely accepted template against which the findings of this study may be compared. That state of affairs was, of course, partial reason for this present study. The hope was that this study could provide a window through which one might identify issues which are of great importance when seminaries engage the perennial process of curriculum revision. Did the formal roles of biblical language studies in seminary

curricula loom large in the training of Christian ministers, and by extension to a commensurate degree in the life of the church? Should they? In terms of efficacy, what could be said of language students' motivations, and whether or not institutions were also seeing their goals for spiritual and student formation realized? Could analysis of interview transcripts and other sources of data yield variables or phenomena that could be analyzed by further research, including quantitative and mixed-method studies? Once the data had been processed, research results were to be offered to each participant, as promised.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

This research project dealt with the role and efficacy of seminary language studies at evangelical institutions, specifically taking the experiences and reflections of language professors and MDiv students into account. Due to a lack of substantial literature on the subject, a qualitative study was deemed appropriate, and was undertaken to begin to explore a difficult and yet valuable portion of the curriculum many seminaries offer. Via text-based analysis of existing literature on the subject, as well as a review of seminary websites, course catalogs, language course syllabi, and semi-structured interviews of purposefully selected language faculty and students, a substantial array of relevant themes and facts emerged.[1] That analysis forms the bulk of this chapter.

Data Compilation

Data for this research project came from three primary sources. Research Question 1 is text-based, and was dealt with at length in chapter 2, so the treatment of that question in this chapter will mostly be review. There may be additional connections drawn here between the nodes of the original framework however, beyond what had arisen previously. The second source of data for this research came from official seminary publications such as websites, course catalogs, and also syllabi when they were available. Those resources helped to answer Research Question 2. The third, and arguably the most substantial source of data for this study was collected via semi-structured interviews of purposefully selected language faculty and MDiv students. The interview data was used

[1]Not all of the individuals who participated in this study offered samples of syllabi from their respective language courses.

to answer Research Question 3.

First, a literature review of relevant articles and books was conducted. Then six seminaries were purposefully selected. Whether or not they fit the necessary inclusion criteria was determined via the use of the institutional eligibility form.[2] The same form was used to guide a review of official seminary publications in order to answer Research Question 2. After that process was complete, students and language faculty at eligible seminaries were purposefully selected. All potential participants were asked to fill out a participation form which confirmed whether or not they met the requisite inclusion criteria for this research.[3] The participation form also collected a light amount of demographic data.

Once the completed participation forms confirmed 30 eligible participants, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 6 language faculty and 24 students. These interviews were recorded via Skype and Almoto Call Recorder software. The average length of these interviews was 57 minutes. Each interview was transcribed by myself, with the help of Scribie.com, a professional transcription service. Scribie offers both computer-generated transcription and manual transcription which is carried out by live transcriptionists. For the sake of efficiency, I submitted every third interview for manual transcription. An average cost for a manual transcript was around $35. The rest of the transcriptions were submitted for computer-based machine transcription. The average cost for a machine transcription was around $5. While Scribie was extremely helpful, substantial effort was necessary to clean up the transcriptions that were generated: a manual transcript might take a few hours to clean up sufficiently, while correcting a machine-generated transcript could take as long as a day. These transcripts were then coded and analyzed with the help of ATLAS.ti, software which is designed to aid

[2]See appendix 1, "Institutional Eligibility Form."

[3]See appendix 2, "Participation Form."

analysis of qualitative data.

Participation Form

The participation form confirmed that individuals met the inclusion criteria necessary to participate in this study. It also provided a smattering of demographic data and other details related to an individual's seminary experience.

Students

Since race is a socially constructed concept, students and faculty were asked to name their race in their own words.[4] As shown in table 1, out of the 24 students who participated, no less than 9 different terms or combinations of terms were elicited. That fact is a concrete reminder of the pliable nature of race and ethnicity: perhaps a few simple categories are insufficient when it comes to understanding the experience of others.

Table 1. Ethnicity and race of students

Terms for Ethnicity/Race:	Number of students who use these term(s):
Black	1
Black/African-American	1
Caucasian	7
Ghanaian	1
Hispanic	1
Irish, German/White	1
Mexican American	1
Mixed White/Asian	1
White	9
White/Caucasian	1

[4]Gail Lewis and Ann Phoenix, "'Race,' 'Ethnicity' and Identity," in *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Ethnicity*, ed. Kath Woodward (New York: Routledge, 2004), 125.

As shown in table 2, more male students than female students volunteered to participate in this study and met inclusion criteria. One relevant question that fact raises is whether or not there are simply more male students than female students enrolled in the MDiv programs at these seminaries. The answer to that query goes beyond the data available for this study.

Table 2. Numbers of male and female students

Male	Female
19	5

The average number of courses each student had taken at the time of this study is 5.5. Seven out of 24 students studied at least one biblical language as an undergraduate.

Table 3. Are students interested in or gifted to do language work?

Student name:	How students clarified their responses:
Shelley	"I speak Spanish, so in some ways I would have said yes. . . . Greek came pretty easily, but I never got Hebrew on any level other than being able to take the tests. So based on my actual experience, I am not sure I am a "language person."
Susan	"Not gifted but definitely a language person"
Veronica	"Perhaps slightly—not particularly gifted but certainly interested."

When students were asked whether or not they considered themselves a "language person," 14 answered in the affirmative. A "language person," is a layman's term which was defined in the participation form as being someone who is interested in and perhaps gifted to work with languages. As shown in table 3, regardless of whether or

not students saw themselves as "language people," they often qualified their answers by going beyond a simple affirmative or negative response.

Professors

Table 4 illustrates the diversity of responses from professors when they were asked to name their race and ethnicity in their own words These terms might simply be corralled into one category as synonyms. Yet, as race is a socially constructed phenomenon, it would be interesting to probe further, to determine if among these "White," "Anglo," or "Caucasian," professors those terms are understood in a monolithic fashion.

Table 4. Ethnicity and race of professors

Terms for ethnicity/race:	number of professors who chose these term(s):
Anglo	1
Caucasian	3
White	2

Table 5 demonstrates that one third of this small population of professors were female. The proportion of female to male professors outweighs the proportion of female to male students. Reasons for that were not apparent.

Table 5. Number of male and female professors

Male	Female
4	2

Beyond demographics, these professors were able to provide information with

regard to their professional activities. Besides Greek and Hebrew grammar, some of these professors have also taught courses in Ugaritic and Aramaic. Members of this sample have also taught various exegesis courses which rely on Greek and Hebrew skills. One professor has taught a course on the Septuagint.

Table 6. Number and affiliation of sample participants

Institution	Affiliation	Location	Number of Professors	Number of Students
Abilene Christian University	Churches of Christ	Abilene, TX	2	3
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis	Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod	St Louis, MO	1	—
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary	Inter- or multi denomination	Hamilton, MA Charlotte, NC	— 1	2 2
Lincoln Christian Seminary	Christian Church	Lincoln, IL	1	3
Reformed Theological Seminary	Inter- or multi denomination	Atlanta, GA Washington, DC	— —	2 2
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary	Southern Baptist Convention	Louisville, KY	1	10

As table 6 shows, participants came from a variety of institutions. A few notes are in order concerning this sample. No fewer than 10 student participants came from the SBTS, where the registrar had mailed an overview of my study to one 150 students. As a result, my sample represents only 6.7 percent of that population. In contrast, at Abilene Christian University (ACU) a total of 3 students responded out of an overall population of 11 students who met the inclusion criteria. As a result, my sample represents 27.4 percent of the overall population of students from ACU. A professor at Lincoln Christian Seminary (LCS) gave me the names of 6 students who met the inclusion criteria: 3

eventually participated, which was half of the overall population. A professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary's (GCTS) Charlotte campus forwarded my research project overview email to 34 professors and students, although some of the professors worked at different seminaries.[5] The students were located at either the Charlotte campus or the Hamilton campus, although I do not know how many students she contacted at each location. The registrar at the Reformed Theological Seminary's (RTS) Atlanta campus graciously forwarded my initial overview email to an undisclosed number of students and language professors who met the inclusion criteria, as well as to registrars at other campuses of the RTS. In response, the registrar at the RTS, Washington D.C. campus asked for and posted a publicity flyer on the seminary's Facebook page, which therefore reached an unknown number of potential participants.[6] Likewise, the registrar at GCTS's Hamilton campus asked for a publicity flyer and posted it on campus. She also used the school's Facebook page, so the number of people who saw the overview is also unknown. A pastor at a Missouri-Synod church in Abilene, Texas, offered to personally forward my initial overview email to his alma mater, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSSL). The registrar at CSSL forwarded the overview email to the chair of the Exegetical Department. Finally, using the contact information I found associated with CSSL's language professors on the school website, I contacted 3 directly via email, and 1 responded.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 is "What categories emerge from the literature which can provide a dynamic framework for MDiv language curricula at selected evangelical seminaries?"

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[5]See appendix 4, "Initial Participant Contact."

[6]See appendix 5, "Publicity Flyer."

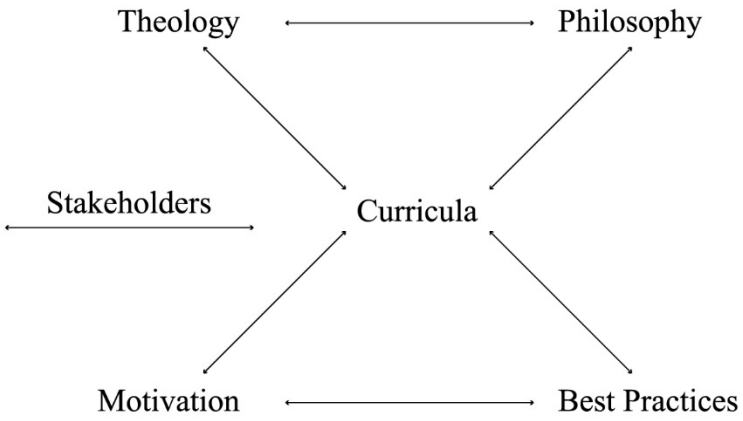

Figure 9. The influence of stakeholders

General Overview

Five central categories emerged from a review of the literature. They were graphically arranged into five interactive nodes of an original framework. The nodes were theology; philosophy; curriculum; motivation; and best practices. After analyzing the interview data, a sixth node arose: stakeholders, as represented in figure 9. The influence of stakeholders on the design and delivery of language curricula at these seminaries is substantial and will be discussed in detail in the analysis and interpretation of interview data below, when Research Question 3 is addressed.

Theology

Without a theological foundation, there would be no such thing as "Christian" curriculum. It is also worth noting that all evangelical Christian teaching, preaching, discipleship, church administration, leadership, and other applications relevant to Christian education depend on scriptural texts. As a result of the centralized location of Scripture in church life, it is no surprise that study of the original languages of Scripture can thus be valuable to evangelical Christians, even though certainly not all Christians

must be language scholars.[7]

Nevertheless, with regard to Christian language curricula, George Knight points out that theology and philosophy interact to form, in part what takes place in a Christian curricula.[8] Thus, the arrows in between the nodes of theology, philosophy, and curricula represent the fact that theology and philosophy work together to shape the processes of language curricula.

Philosophy

Philosophy relevant to language curricula can be approached by an educator from a variety of angles. A primary thrust or claim of certain philosophers such as Parker Palmer is that biblical epistemology involves growth in knowledge which arrives through the channels of an individual's intellect, emotions, and spirituality in concert and not as separate and isolated phenomena. Otherwise, teaching can become less than holistic, and distorted.[9] In that way, in this framework the node of philosophy interacts with the node of theology: whole-bodied discipleship may even be the central focus—telos—of both language students and language teachers. Via worship, students and teachers can also examine their philosophical roots, including their ethics.[10]

Questions emerge. In what ways do philosophy and theology work together at a given seminary, to foundationally determine null, implicit, and explicit curricula when

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[7]See James Riley Estep Jr., "Toward a Theologically Informed Approach to Education," in *A Theology for Christian Education*, ed. James R. Estep Jr., Michael J. Anthony, and Gregg R. Allison (Nashville: B & H, 2008), 268.

[8]George R. Knight, *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective*, 4th ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2006), 34-35.

[9]Parker J. Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, 10th ann. ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 5.

[10]James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*, Cultural Liturgies 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 27, 219-20; Steven Garber, *The Fabric of Faithfulness: Weaving together Belief and Behavior*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 195.

it comes to the study of biblical languages? Do language studies transform students and build community?

Curricula

In the framework, "curricula" is the node at which all other nodes converge. It is the place where explicit, implicit, and null curricula take form. In that sense, it is both what a student encounters firsthand during a language course, and also includes what teachers have planned and deliver.

As noted above, Christian professors may think of Christian education as "applied theology."[11] In a fashion analogous to Parker Palmer's ideas which were just discussed above, Shaw argues also that Christian curriculum is ideally holistic, not limited to a singular focus on cognition or rationality—as found in ancient Greek philosophy or influenced by the Enlightenment.[12] Again, deliberate incorporation of theology and philosophy are foundational for biblically-founded Christian curricula.[13]

Also as mentioned above, the addition of stakeholders to the framework was necessary after the interviews for this study were analyzed. A detailed discussion of that phenomenon and the strength of its influence on seminary language curricula at the selected seminaries will follow in this chapter. For now, it is sufficient to say that seminary curricula are negotiated, and that various stakeholders can have a direct and powerful effect on the design and delivery of language curricula.[14]

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[11]Estep, "Toward a Theologically Informed Approach to Education," 294.

[12]Perry Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education: A Practical Handbook for Integrative Learning* (Carlisle, UK: Langham Global Library, 2014), 4, 69

[13]See Knight, *Philosophy and Education*, 34-35.

[14]Robert Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 17ff.

Motivation

A discussion of motivation began with a short history of theory and research relevant to second language teaching and learning specifically. Some consensus amongst researchers exists on the point that motivation is an essential consideration when seeking to understand successful and unsuccessful attempts to learn a second language.[15]

More generally, analyzing the "value" language studies hold for a given student, as well as that student's "expectancy"—whether or not a language-learning goal seems in reach—provides powerful lens. That lens may elucidate how motivation and curricula interact in the original framework of this study.[16] If one of the selected students sees no value or little value in the Hebrew or Greek curriculum, he or she may not engage in the classroom. But what if a student feels success is out of reach? The "expectancy" of failure, not a lack of desire to succeed, could be the cause.

In terms of interaction between motivation and best practices in the framework, Ambrose states that the degree to which an environment is supportive can also influence motivation for language learning.[17] If the teachers and perhaps other students selected for this study demonstrate best practices by showing support for others, is it possible that motivation may increase?[18]

Best Practices

There is currently no one method or approach that works best for all language teachers at all times.[19] The present research was designed in part to simply find out what

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[15]Gaby Semann and Kasumi Yamazaki, "The Relationship between Global Competence and Language Learning Motivation: An Empirical Study in Critical Language Classrooms," *Foreign Language Annals* 48, no. 3 (2015): 511.

[16]Susan A. Ambrose et al., *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 69, 74.

[17]Ibid., 79ff.

[18]Ibid., 79-80.

[19]Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*,

is currently working for these students and professors. Which books, software, and exercises are helping these students learn and teachers teach?

Besides debate concerning the relationship between Christian education and secular education theories, another relevant debate was surveyed. The latter is a matter of looking for an appropriate balance of form-focused, or "explicit" instruction, and meaning-based, or "implicit" instruction.[20] Again, first faith and then context may determine the most helpful methodology or combination of methodologies. The concept of a "post methods" era thus leaves room for faith-based approach when a given professor is writing lesson plans and determining whether or not to use a given theory, thus shaping the curricula students encounter.[21]

Sufficiency of the Framework

Was the framework helpful in accounting for various factors that arise in these participants' seminary language curricula, as will be explored in the two remaining research questions? The answer would be mostly in the affirmative. Again, the role of stakeholders in the curricular design process was not apparent in the literature review to the extent it was so prominent in the interview data. The influence of stakeholders on language curricula at the selected seminaries will be discussed below in this chapter.

Research Question 2 and the framework. While reviewing data for Research Question 2, the framework did sufficiently allow space for a discussion of different explicit curricula which were presented in course catalogs, on seminary websites, and in

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3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 81-317, 346-7, 376.

[20]Jeong-eun Kim, "Timing of Form-Focused Instruction and Development of Implicit vs. Explicit Knowledge," *English Teaching* 69, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 123, 125.

[21]Richards and Rogers, *Approaches and Methods*, 16, 352.

sample syllabi. The framework did helpfully represent the notion that philosophical and theological rationales can interact with each other, as well as influence curricula.[22]

Also with regard to Research Question 2, the somewhat general framework was spacious enough to provide room for the differing theological and philosophical rationales for language curricula which are stated in official seminary publications. These publications also allowed triangulation and analysis of data from the semi-structured interviews with selected students and professors.[23] At times data relevant to best practices—such as required textbooks—appeared in written form, in syllabi. Research Question 2 did not cover much in terms of student motivation, however, as motivation was addressed most clearly in interviews designed to answer Research Question 3.

Research Question 3 and the framework. The framework was not contradicted by the data collected for Research Question 3, but it was largely augmented by it. The framework's nodes of theology, philosophy, motivation, curricula, and best practices were all explored in semi-structured interviews. Other than the surprising entrance of stakeholders, by the time the data from Research Question 3 had been analyzed, the framework had proved itself to be sturdy enough and well-organized enough to accommodate thematic variation within its nodes.

One last note on the framework and interview data associated with Research Question 3 is in order. While the recruited professors were presented with questions about their personal philosophical notions, students were not. It was assumed that the recruited students have little direct voice or influence at the philosophical level when it comes to curricular design. Other than that exception, the framework was broad enough to allow exploration relevant to each specific node during interviews with both students

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[22]See Knight, *Philosophy and Education*, 34-35.

[23]Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 11th ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2016), 260.

and professors.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 is, "How are varying curricular priorities and outcomes expressed at selected evangelical seminaries, with regard to biblical language studies and language proficiency?" The question presents two sub-questions. These questions are addressed by review of official seminary publications such as course catalogs and course syllabi.

These seminaries tend to provide important but broad descriptions of desired program outcomes on school websites or in course catalogs—but these do not always mention a rationale for language studies specifically, in an explicit and developed way. Rather than explained, their curricular role may simply be assumed—again, perhaps due to the emphasis evangelicals place on Scripture—and thus be expressed as "implicit curricula." When explicit rationales for language studies were available, an attempt was be made to recognize those commitments here.

Research Sub-Question 2a

Research Sub-Question 2a is "How do the selected seminaries explain their theological and philosophical-educational bases for the role(s) of biblical language study in their respective curricula?"

Although there is great variation in the specifics of how programs are designed and executed at these seminaries, each one of these programs has both ministry and personal formation as central goals. Within the theological and philosophical framework laid out in general program descriptions, the specific roles of language studies meet essential program objectives or outcomes, as described below.

Abilene Christian University (ACU)

The Graduate School of Theology lays out the rationale for its MDiv program as

follows.[24]

> The Master of Divinity (M.Div.) is the most comprehensive formational degree for ministry that ACU's Graduate School of Theology offers. It is our shared mission to serve the church by equipping students.
>
> The M.Div. is designed to offer you a firm grounding in scripture, history and theology as well as training in practical ministry skills such as the art of preaching and reading cultures and contexts. This graduate degree will prepare you to enter into all forms of ministry or expand your current vocation; it also provides a solid foundation for further study in Ph.D., Th.D. and D.Min programs."

More specifically, ACU's Graduate School of Theology—through which MDiv degrees are offered by the university—has five "Student Learning Outcomes."[25] Two of them which are relevant to language study appear on the school website.

The first one is "Christian Scripture." It reads "Graduates will have knowledge of the content and theological shape of the Christian Scriptures." It consists of four elements or "indicators." As a result of his or her studies, a student will be able to accomplish the following four activities.

> (1) Comprehends the full range of biblical materials. (2) Exercises sound critical exegetical practices. (3) Critically evaluates scholarly views and traditional readings and applies them constructively in the interpretation of biblical texts. (4) Exhibits theological discernment in the identification, evaluation, and synthesis of fundamental biblical themes.[26]

The second Student Learning Outcome which deals with language studies—and which appears on every syllabus from ACU that was submitted to me for this research—is "Languages." It reads, "Graduates will demonstrate competency in languages appropriate for their degree." Such wording is straightforward and clear, making a connection between and general ideas and application in a classroom somewhat easy to imagine.

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[24]"Master of Divinity," Abilene Christian University, accessed September 5, 2019, https://www.acu.edu/on-campus/graduate/college-of-biblical-studies/graduate-school-theology/divinity.html

[25]"Graduate School of Theology," Abilene Christian University, accessed September 5, 2019, https://www.acu.edu/on-campus/graduate/college-of-biblical-studies/graduate-school-theology.html.

[26]"Graduate School of Theology," Abilene Christian University, accessed September 5, 2019, https://www.acu.edu/on-campus/graduate/college-of-biblical-studies/graduate-school-theology.html.

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSSL)

In broad strokes, CSSL describes its MDiv degree on a webpage. "In keeping with the major function of Concordia Seminary to equip men for the Holy Ministry of Word and Sacrament in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree is the normative route to certification for ordained ministry in congregations and other ministry settings."[27]

Based on the "Credit Distribution" link on the same page, clearly language courses are an emphasis: twenty-one hours out of ninety-eight are language courses, before any of the twelve elective hours, which could be used for language electives are taken into consideration. The rationale for the role of languages in the curriculum is both implicit and also very hard to miss, however: what is implicit is that languages, like all other curricular requirements function to support and aid exegesis from a pulpit, or via leadership in "other ministry settings."

From the *Academic Catalog 2019-20*, one finds other general statements which could help to explain the rationales for language studies in the curriculum, even though technically, they also do not mention languages specifically. Take for example, the "Goals" of the MDiv program, as presented by the *Academic Catalog*.[28]

> The MDiv program forms and equips students with the knowledge, attitudes and skills requisite for the parish ministry . . . . The campus community and curriculum provide opportunities for growth in . . . knowledge of the church's religious heritage founded in biblical revelation . . . as these serve the pastoral ministry and leadership appropriate to the mission of the church in its contemporary setting.

While Hebrew or Greek are not mentioned specifically here, it is clear that the application of Scripture is central to the goals of the seminary's MDiv curriculum design.

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[27]"Master of Divinity (M.Div.)," Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, accessed September 5, 2019, https://www.csl.edu/academics/programs/master-divinity-mdiv/.

[28]Concordia Seminary, *Academic Catalog 2019-20*, accessed September 6, 2019, https://www.csl.edu/academics/academic-catalog/, 18.

Another similar example comes as the first of two "Theological Foundations" for the program.[29] "A graduate of the MDiv Program will accept the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions as authoritative for faith and life." Obviously Scripture is an essential focus of the MDiv, whether or not "Greek" or "Hebrew" are specifically mentioned.

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (GCTS)

The overview of the MDiv program at GCTS reads, in part, as follows:

> Our flagship degree, the Master of Divinity prepares nearly 40% of our students to serve in ministry around the world. If you feel called to vocational ministry, to nurturing and growing churches locally and internationally, taking the Bible seriously through intensive study, and sharing the Word of God faithfully, the MDiv is designed for you.[30]

References to biblical languages are explicit no less than twice on the online MDiv "Program Overview" page. The lists of "Degree Goals" and "Program Distinctives" for the MDiv program provide explanations for Gordon-Conwell's commitment to biblical languages as a means of achieving the substance of the "Program Overview."[31]

One of eight "Degree Goals" is "to gain competency with the biblical languages in order to develop exegetical and hermeneutical skills using the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek text of the New Testament." One of six "Program Distinctives" is "Emphasis on the study of original biblical languages." These commitments are the same at both the Hamilton and the Charlotte campuses.

In a similar way, "Article 1" of the seminary's Mission and Purpose statement is a direct reference to Biblical exegesis. In light of the seminary's MDiv goals and distinctives—and the language requirements which will be described below, in response

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[29]Concordia Seminary, *Academic Catalog 2019-20*, 18.

[30]"Master of Divinity (M.Div.)," Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, accessed September 5, 2019, https://gordonconwell.edu/degree-programs/masters/master-divinity/.

[31]Ibid.

to Sub-Question 2b—biblical exegesis is conceived of as being carried out via study of the original languages.

> Article 1: To encourage students to become knowledgeable of God's inerrant Word, competent in its interpretation, proclamation and application in the contemporary world. Because the teaching of God's Word is indispensable to the well-being and vitality of God's people, the seminary has a fundamental responsibility to encourage in its students a love for Scripture. The seminary is to teach exegetical skills by which they will be able to apply Scripture effectively.[32]

Lincoln Christian Seminary (LCS)

This seminary introduces its MDiv program along the following lines: "Lincoln Christian Seminary's Master of Divinity is a three-year (75 hour) professional degree for leaders who serve in a church or church-related setting. Our focus is on developing 'servant leaders,' which we define as those who humbly follow the call of God, the life of Christ, and the leading of the Holy Spirit to serve and equip others."[33]

The program design of the MDiv at LCS involves four "Program Learning Outcomes" that serve as goals for student formation.[34] One of them states graduates should, "Comprehend Scripture and the value of theological tradition."[35] While it is not independent of the other three outcomes, it is specifically used to categorize the role of biblical language studies at the seminary. All required biblical language courses appear under the heading of "Comprehend Scripture" in a breakdown of degree requirements in the *2019-2020 Graduate and Seminary Catalog*.[36] Nevertheless, the fourth "Program Learning Outcome" appears in almost every language course syllabus that was available

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[32]"Mission and Vision," Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, accessed September 5, 2019, https://gordonconwell.edu/about/mission-vision/.

[33]Lincoln Christian Seminary, *2019-2020 Graduate and Seminary Catalog*, accessed September 5, 2019, https://lincolnchristian.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2019-2020-Graduate-and-Seminary-Catalog-2019.07.22.pdf, 20.

[34]Ibid., 20-21.

[35]Ibid., The other three outcomes are as follows: "2. Understand themselves. 3. Engage their ministry context effectively. 4. Implement the skills necessary for Christian ministry."

[36]Lincoln Christian Seminary, *2019-2020 Graduate and Seminary Catalog*, 21.

for this study. The fourth outcome is "Implement the skills necessary for Christian ministry." The connection between this outcome and the study of the original languages is thus made explicit in such syllabi.

Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS)

Before developing a robust description of their MDiv curriculum design, RTS states the purpose of its MDiv program very succinctly: "The MDiv curriculum is designed as preparation for the pastoral ministry."[37]

The seminary then introduces their MDiv curriculum design as follows. "Concentrated study in three basic areas—Bible, systematic theology, and pastoral theology—characterizes this three-year program. In addition to preparing for pastoral ministry, the curriculum is designed to aid in the student's sanctification."[38]

On that same webpage, language studies explicitly fall under the Bible portion of the curriculum. The MDiv webpage states that along with study of each book of the Bible, "Principles of hermeneutics and exegesis, using the original languages as well as the English Bible, are also included. Students learn to apply Scripture to contemporary circumstances."[39]

Syllabi from the Washington, D.C. campus identify ten "Student Learning Objectives" which help to shape the MDiv program. Yet as can be seen in the individual syllabi that were submitted for this research, each professor determines the extent to which those ten objectives are addressed and emphasized, and how achievement of the ten objectives are measured, on a course-by-course basis. The ten objectives are: Articulation (oral and written); Scripture; Reformed Theology; Sanctification; Desire for

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[37]"Master of Divinity (MDiv)," Reformed Theological Seminary, accessed September 5, 2019, https://rts.edu/degree/mdiv/.

[38]"Master of Divinity (MDiv)," Reformed Theological Seminary, accessed September 5, 2019, https://rts.edu/degree/mdiv/.

[39]Ibid.

Worldview; Winsomely Reformed; Preach; Worship; Shepherd; and Church/World. A teacher for a Greek Exegesis course might decide that "Sanctification" for example, has no place in the grading rubric for his or her course, while assigning a "strong" place in the grading rubric to the outcome of "Scripture." The rationales for these decisions are recorded in short statements of "justification," or "mini-justification" in the syllabi. "Scripture" is perhaps the most obvious "Student Learning Objective" to consider, in terms of relevance to this thesis. It is defined as follows. "Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. . . . Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives." Two professors who co-taught a course in Greek Exegesis, for example, provided a "strong justification" for role of the outcome in their syllabus along the following lines: "Each week the student will exegete verses from the Greek New Testament."

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBTS)

The SBTS presents a general overview of the MDiv program in ways that correspond with the other seminaries' programs: concerns for the formation or education of Christian servants are paramount. At the SBTS, two schools offer MDiv degrees: the Billy Graham School and the School of Theology. In the *2018-2019 Academic Catalog* the following description or general rationale for the MDiv programs in Billy Graham School is available.[40] "The Master of Divinity is the foundational graduate degree program for ministry preparation offered by the Billy Graham School. The program of study is designed to give the student comprehensive knowledge in biblical and theological studies for the purpose of applying that knowledge in the practice of missions,

[40]The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, *2018-2019 Academic Catalog*, accessed September 5, 2019, https://sbts-wordpress-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/sbts/uploads/sites/3/2010/11/AA-333-2018-Southern-Seminary-Academic-Catalog-2018-Print.pdf, 104.

evangelism and ministry."

The general rationale for the School of Theology's MDiv programs is almost identical.[41] "The Master of Divinity is the foundational graduate degree program for ministry preparation. The program of study is designed to give the student comprehensive knowledge in biblical and theological studies and to help the student develop the specific skills needed for effective ministry."

Out of seven "Learning Outcomes" for the Billy Graham School's program, as well as those of the School of Theology, one of them could be most obvious or relevant in terms of a rationale for biblical language requirements. The outcome is, "Demonstrates significant knowledge of the Bible, interpret Scripture's original meaning, and apply Scripture to contemporary situations."[42] A second outcome—at both schools—to which language study is of immediate concern could be "Preaches/teaches Scripture clearly and passionately so as to engage the mind and move the heart." In terms of a rationale for language studies, this second outcome is perhaps less directly relevant to biblical language studies at the SBTS than the former, and yet it is arguably still relevant.

In the *Southern Seminary 2018-2019 Academic Catalog*, the following rationale for MDiv biblical language studies is concentration specific. For the Biblical and Theological Studies MDiv concentration for example, a general rationale for language study is brief but clear. "The Biblical and Theological Studies concentration is designed to focus on the study of Scripture and theology. Through this concentration, students engage in intensive biblical language study and explore theology, philosophy, and history in depth."[43]

While there is variation among them, the rationales for these programs all

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[41]The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, *2018-2019 Academic Catalog*, 70.

[42]Ibid., 70, 104.

[43]The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, *2018-2019 Academic Catalog*, 73.

place a high value on the role of biblical languages in respective MDiv offerings. As will be shown in what follows, the actual design and execution of curricula at these seminaries are equally variable and yet still focused on making a connection from theological or philosophical commitments to actual classroom practice.

Research Sub-Question 2b

Research Sub-Question 2b is, "How do the selected seminaries articulate their plans for how their curricular priorities will be addressed in the classroom, or in terms of pedagogy?"

Table 7. Course requirements

Seminary	Initial Hebrew and Greek courses (hours)	Additional required courses (hours)	Choice of electives and/or concentrations
ACU	12		Available
SBTS: School of Theology	6	6 "Syntax and Exegesis"	Available
SBTS: Billy Graham School	6	3 "Syntax and Exegesis"	Available
GCTS: Both Hamilton, MA & Charlotte, NC campuses	12	6 "Interpretation;" 12 exegesis	Available
LCS	6	6 exegesis; 3 "NT use of the OT"	Available
CSSL	12	9 exegesis	Available
RTS: Both Atlanta, GA & Washington D.C. campuses	12	4 exegesis	Available

Table 7 is a summary of language course requirements at each of the six selected seminaries. These requirements will now be discussed in detail. Although

program requirements are appropriate to discuss here, and syllabi have already been mentioned above, one more note is pertinent. The specifics of how these seminaries' commitments to language studies develop and are measured in a given classroom—including quizzes, exams, homework assignments, class readings, classroom activities or expectations; and so forth—are more often found in course syllabi than seminary websites or even course catalogs. In other words, in this study's data syllabi are the clearest link between global, institution or program-wide goals, and the instructional goals and objectives that account for the everyday execution of the explicit curricula. Notes on syllabi will be addressed below when they are appropriate.

Abilene Christian University (ACU)

The MDiv program at ACU has two tracks: a Ministry Track and a Missions Track. Both tracks require twelve hours of languages. Both are seventy-two-hour programs. Six hours of Greek are required: Elementary Greek I and Elementary Greek II. Six hours of Hebrew are also required, Elementary Hebrew I, and Elementary Hebrew II. These four courses are listed under the heading of "Interpretation" in the 2018-2019 course catalog, but no further explanation is given there, regarding what "Interpretation" means in a more explicit or elaborated way.[44]

Once the four introductory courses are completed, however, the program offers the potential for another nine hours of language electives under the heading of "The Story of the Church—Scripture." It is also possible that an additional three hours of language study could be taken, under the heading of "Other Electives" in the catalog.

It should be noted that in the "Course Descriptions" portion of the website, one finds that if a student is to pursue additional language courses beyond the required four

[44]"Master of Divinity, Ministry, MDiv (BMDI)," Abilene Christian University, accessed September 5, 2019, http://catalog.acu.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=5&po id=2040.

classes—two in Greek and two in Hebrew—a three-hour Intermediate course is required first.[45] Two Syriac courses are also possibilities for elective work.

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSSL)

The seminary's *Academic Catalog 2019-2010* specifies the following language requirements.[46] Out of ninety-eight total credit hours required for the MDiv, six hours of both Hebrew and Greek are required for this program. Once these courses are complete, six exegesis courses are required: Synoptic Gospels; Pauline Epistles; The Torah; The Prophets; Psalms; and The Gospel of John. The six exegesis courses are one-and-a-half hour courses, and depend upon and develop Geek or Hebrew language skills, respectively. Twelve hours of "free electives" are also a part of the MDiv curriculum, which might also involve language studies.

At CSSL, a Missionary Formation Concentration is mentioned in the *Academic Catalog*, but it is described as something that would be arranged through an academic advisor. No details about which language courses would be required are available in the catalog.[47]

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (GCTS)

Although GCTS has four campuses, this thesis explored language studies at only two of them. The language requirements for the MDiv were the same at both.

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[45]"Course Descriptions," Abilene Christian University, accessed September 5, 2019, http://catalog.acu.edu/content.php?catoid=5&catoid=5&navoid=237&filter%5Bitem_type%5D=3&filter%5Bonly_active%5D=1&filter%5B3%5D=1&filter%5Bcpage%5D=2#acalog_template_course_filter.

[46]Concordia Seminary, *Academic Catalog 2019-20*, 24-25.

[47]Concordia Seminary, *Academic Catalog 2019-20*, 25, 26.

Hamilton, Massachusetts campus. The MDiv program at the Hamilton campus is a ninety-six-hour program.[48] There are three Special Tracks at that campus: Anglican/Episcopal Studies; Urban Ministries; and World Missions. The language requirements for every track are the same. In general, GCTS requires two semesters of Basic Greek and Basic Hebrew, respectively, for a total of twelve hours.[49] Two more three-hour courses, Interpreting the New Testament, and Interpreting the Old Testament—which are not solely language courses, but depend on and require engagement of Greek and Hebrew language skills—are then required in the MDiv course sequence. After those courses, two more courses which rely upon Greek and Hebrew are required: two New Testament exegesis courses, and two Old Testament exegesis courses. In all, ten three-hour language courses are required for all MDiv students. If students pass the school's Old Testament and New Testament Competency Exams at the Hamilton campus, up to six hours of General Electives may open up additional time for language courses.

Charlotte, North Carolina campus. The MDiv program at the Charlotte campus is a ninety-one-hour program.[50] Four concentrations are available: Christian Leadership; Pastoral Ministry; Ministry Practitioner; and Pastoral Care and Counseling.

Two Special Tracks are also available: an Anglican/Episcopal Studies Track and a Lutheran Studies Track. The Lutheran Studies track is a ninety-six-hour program, and the Anglican/Episcopal Studies Track is a ninety-one-hour program.[51] The language

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[48]"Master of Divinity (M.DIV)," Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, accessed September 5, 2019, https://gordonconwell.edu/degree-programs/masters/master-divinity/#hamilton.

[49]"Master of Divinity," Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, accessed September 5, 2019, https://gordonconwell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/hamreg_mdiv.pdf.

[50]"Master of Divinity: Degree Objectives, Requirements, and Estimated Costs," Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, accessed September 5, 2019, https://gordonconwell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/mdiv_brochure1.pdf.

[51]"Master of Divinity, Lutheran Studies," Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, accessed

requirements for all of these concentrations and Special Tracks are identical to those required at the Hamilton campus.

In terms of role in the curriculum, a syllabus from an interpretation course—midway between two introductory semesters of Greek and two semesters of Greek Exegesis, and which involves Greek language skills—directly links the specifics of the course to the mission of the seminary as a whole much like syllabi from others institutions such as ACU do.

> Relationship to the Mission of Gordon-Conwell: This course, which seeks to maintain academic excellence in the highest tradition of Christian scholarship (GCTS Missions Statement, Article 2), helps students to become knowledgeable of God's word and competent in its interpretation (GCTS Missions Statement, Article 1).[52]

Lincoln Christian Seminary (LCS)

The MDiv program at LCS is a seventy-five hour program.[53] A wide variety of specializations are available: Biblical Languages; General Bible; New Testament; Old Testament; Church History/Historical Theology; Philosophy and Apologetics; Theology; Chaplaincy; Christian Education; Intercultural Studies (Missions); Leadership Studies; Pastoral Care and Counseling; Preaching Ministry; Worship Studies; and a No Specialization option. In the case a student chooses No Specialization, he or she would have twelve more elective hours than a student who chooses to pursue a specialization.[54]

September 5, 2019, https://gordonconwell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/MDIVLutheranInsert.pdf; "Master of Divinity: Anglican/Episcopal Studies," Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, accessed September 5, 2019, https://gordonconwell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/MDIVAnglicanInsert.pdf.

[52]Article 1, as quoted in full above, references practical ministry and exegesis. It can also be found on the seminary's website. "About us: Mission and Vision," Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, accessed September 5, 2019, https://gordonconwell.edu/about/mission-vision/.

[53]"Master of Divinity (MDiv)," Lincoln Christian Seminary, accessed September 5, 2019, https://lincolnchristian.edu/academics/programs/masters/divinity/.

[54]Lincoln Christian University, *2019-2010 Graduate and Seminary Catalog*, accessed September 5, 2019, https://lincolnchristian.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2019-2020-Graduate-and-Seminary-Catalog-2019.07.22.pdf., 20-21.

The specific courses required for a Biblical Languages concentration are not printed in the course catalog: the catalog states that the "Student works with an advisor on selection" of courses specific to a concentration. Yet for all MDiv programs, five three-hour language courses are required: Greek Basics; Greek Exegesis; Hebrew Basics; Hebrew Exegesis; and New Testament Use of the Old Testament.[55]

Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS)

The RTS has eight brick-and-mortar campuses: Jackson, Mississippi; Orlando, Florida; Charlotte, North Carolina; Atlanta, Georgia; Washington D.C.; Houston, Texas; Dallas, Texas; New York City.[56] Students from two of the RTS campuses participated in this study.

Atlanta. For the core MDiv requirements at all locations, two three-hour courses in Hebrew and Greek, respectively are required by the seminary. These four courses are Greek I and II, and Hebrew I and II. After those courses, two additional two-hour exegesis courses are required which utilize both Hebrew and Greek language skills. The result amounts to a total of sixteen hours. An additional ten hours of free electives are then available, which students can use to pursue language courses. The MDiv program at the RTS is at least 106 hours total.[57]

Washington, D.C. The core requirements for an MDiv at this location share the same core as other campuses. There is no difference.

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[55]Lincoln Christian University, *2019-2010 Graduate and Seminary Catalog*, 20-21.

[56]"Visit a Campus," Reformed Theological Seminary, accessed September 5, 2019, https://rts.edu/.

[57]"Master of Divinity (MDiv)," Reformed Theological Seminary, accessed September 5, 2019, https://rts.edu/degree.mdiv. It should be noted that the Jackson, MS campus offers a "Biblical Exegesis Emphasis," which requires an additional eight hours of exegesis courses. Those courses displace elective hours offered as a part of the basic MDiv curriculum.

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBTS)

According to the *2018-2019 Academic Catalog*, MDiv degrees are offered through the School of Theology, as well as the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism, and Ministry.[58]

Language requirements in the School of Theology. In the School of Theology, a large number of MDiv concentrations are available.[59] Four such concentrations are Christian Ministry; Pastoral Studies; Biblical Spirituality; and Worldview and Culture. These programs share the same seventy-hour core. Two three-hour courses—Elementary Greek and Elementary Hebrew—are not necessarily considered to be a part of the seventy-hour core, but they are required either before or after admission to the program. In addition to those two three-hour courses, two more—Hebrew Syntax and Exegesis and Greek Syntax and Exegesis—are also required as a part of the seventy-hour core.[60] Elective language courses are available.

Programs in the School of Theology which do not share the same core language requirements are the Advanced MDiv, Boyce Alumnus; Advanced MDiv; and the Biblical and Theological Studies concentration. The Biblical and Theological Studies concentration requires two three-hour courses, one in Elementary Greek and one in Elementary Hebrew respectively, in addition to four three-hour exegesis electives, and two three-hour elective courses from the following categories: (1) NT Elective Language Exegesis, Backgrounds, and Textual Criticism, and (2) OT Elective Language Exegesis, Backgrounds, and Textual Criticism.[61]

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[58]Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, *2018-2019 Academic Catalog*, 104.

[59]Ibid., 70.

[60]Ibid.

[61]Ibid., 73.

The Advanced MDiv—designed for students who already have a BA or an MA in religious studies—requires both one semester of Elementary Greek and one in Elementary Hebrew, as well as a second semester of each language: Hebrew Syntax and Exegesis, and Greek Syntax and Exegesis. Two additional three-hour electives in Hebrew Exegesis and Greek Exegesis are also required.[62] The Advanced MDiv, Boyce Alumnus program—designed for graduates of SBTS's undergraduate program—has the same language requirements as the Advanced MDiv.[63]

Language Requirements in the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism, and Ministry. Most concentrations for the MDiv in the Billy Graham School require the same seventy-hour core.[64] Two three-hour courses, Elementary Greek and Elementary Hebrew are required, as well as one course in either Hebrew Syntax and Exegesis or Greek Syntax and Exegesis.[65] In other words, a total of three courses are required by the Billy Graham School's seventy-hour core, which is one less than the four required by the School of Theology for most MDiv concentrations. The various MDiv concentrations which require the seventy-hour core are Great Commission Studies; Apologetics; Biblical Counseling; Church and Pastoral Ministries; Church Planting; Discipleship and Family Ministry; International Missions; Islamic Studies; Itinerant Evangelism; Leadership; Missions and Biblical Counseling; North American Missions; Urban Missions; International Church Planting; Missions and Bible Translation.[66]

There are some exceptions to the seventy-hour core. A concentration in

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[62]Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, *2018-2019 Academic Catalog*, 76.

[63]Ibid., 77.

[64]Ibid., 104.

[65]Ibid.

[66]Ibid., 105-10.

Worship Leadership does not use the seventy-hour core, but the language requirements are unaffected by that variation.[67]

The Advanced MDiv—for students with a previous BA or MA in Religion or Biblical Studies—requires both Hebrew Syntax and Exegesis and Greek Syntax and Exegesis. Those requirements are identical to the School of Theology's plan for MDiv degrees.[68] The Advanced MDiv curriculum does offer nine hours of Free Electives which could be used for language courses, however. The Advanced MDiv, Boyce Alumnus program—designed for graduates of SBTS's undergraduate program—also has language requirements that are identical to those of the seventy-hour core, even though other parts of that core are modified for the Boyce Alumnus program.[69]

It is important to note that the Billy Graham School's and the School of Theology's MDiv programs' seven "Learning Outcomes" are not explicitly identified or referenced in the course syllabi that were made available for this project.[70] Yet that does not mean they are not attended to during the semester, per se. On a smaller scale, the "learning objectives" or "course objectives"—that were included in each course syllabi students permitted this researcher to review—are specific to that course. While two syllabi for Elementary Greek—syllabi for the same course, taught by two different professors—contained almost identical objectives, even then there was some minimal variation. One syllabus contains the objective, "Describe basic Greek exegetical resources and their value." The other syllabus does not contain that objective.

The respective degree requirements for MDiv language studies and the

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[67]The Advanced MDiv, Worship Leadership Concentration has language requirements identical to those of the seventy-hour core, even though the core is not applicable as a whole to this program. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, *2018-2019 Academic Catalog*, 111, 113.

[68]Ibid., 112.

[69]Ibid., 114.

[70]Ibid., 70, 104.

delivery of language curricula at these seminaries present a wide variety. Yet when one considers their intricacies, a deep commitment to an evangelical sense of the mission of the church and to meeting the needs of different students are evident in concrete ways.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 is "How do professors and students at selected institutions express their priorities and values regarding biblical language study?" The question begets three sub-questions. These three sub-questions were addressed by two different interview protocols, one for students and one for professors. While there is some overlap between the two thematically, this study will initially present the student and professor protocol data separately.

Research Sub-Question 3a: Emergent Themes

Research Sub Question 3a is, "How do specific teachers explain and understand the role of biblical language study within the curriculum of their respective schools?" Underneath the canopy of the macro themes, "learning Hebrew and Greek is valuable," and "learning Hebrew and Greek is difficult," one may find three major themes, most of which have sub-themes. The three major themes are, "role in church life," "role in academic curriculum," and "discipleship and/or character." Before discussing the three major themes and their attendant sub-themes, a comment on the two macro themes would be appropriate and helpful for those seeking to understand the experience of these professors.

Macro Themes: The Value and Difficulty of Language Studies

Both students and professors ascribe value and difficulty to learning languages, but students and professors see the issues from different sides of the same fence. These professors are hardly indifferent to their students' difficulties, and yet perhaps are fully aware, from their own experience, that effective, enduring learning is usually brought

about by strenuous effort.[71]

Professor Rachel recognizes this challenge, "For my students it's a ten-month, nine-month process for most of them, this first year Hebrew course, [it is] two semesters, and it can get exhausting. It can get monotonous." The care she expresses for the difficulties of the journey her students take—with her as a guide—is perhaps best described as a flare of empathy: she too was once a beginning Hebrew student.

Professor Barnabas also notes the difficulty inherent in learning a second language, for all who attempt to do it: "And I think there's also just the discipline of learning the language in general: it's hard work, isn't it?" But if one lets these two professors finish their thoughts, they—along with all of the other professors interviewed for this project—overwhelmingly agree: the value of learning Hebrew and Greek more than justifies the difficulty.[72]

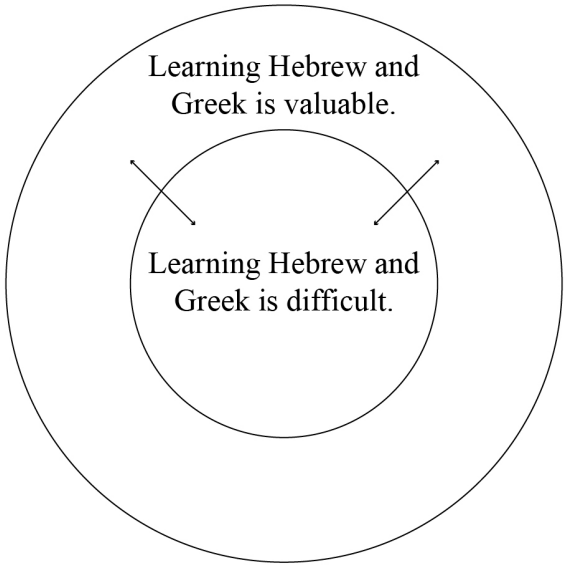

Figure 10. The difficulty and value of language studies

[71]Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger III, and Mark A. McDaniel, *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 73.

[72]See Susan A. Ambrose et al., *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 74-79.

Sometimes what is valuable is difficult to attain. The arrows in figure 10 symbolize that the value and difficulty of learning biblical languages bleed over into one another. One may conceptualize the interconnected value and difficulty of leaning biblical languages at these seminaries—which are illustrated in figure 10—as being a foundation. It is a foundation upon which a more robust analysis of professors' interview data can be developed, as described below.

Role in Church life

So what is the "value" these professors saw in language studies? As represented in figure 11, it seems to largely be a combination of (1) their "role in church life," or their contribution to enhanced practical ministries, as well as (2) their "role in academic curricula" and then finally (3) the personal benefits of "discipleship." These professors' interviews seemed to indicate that these three themes will ideally converge in a seminarian's education. Language studies' "role in church life," or the ways in which language studies can be applied in the local church will be examined by this thesis first.

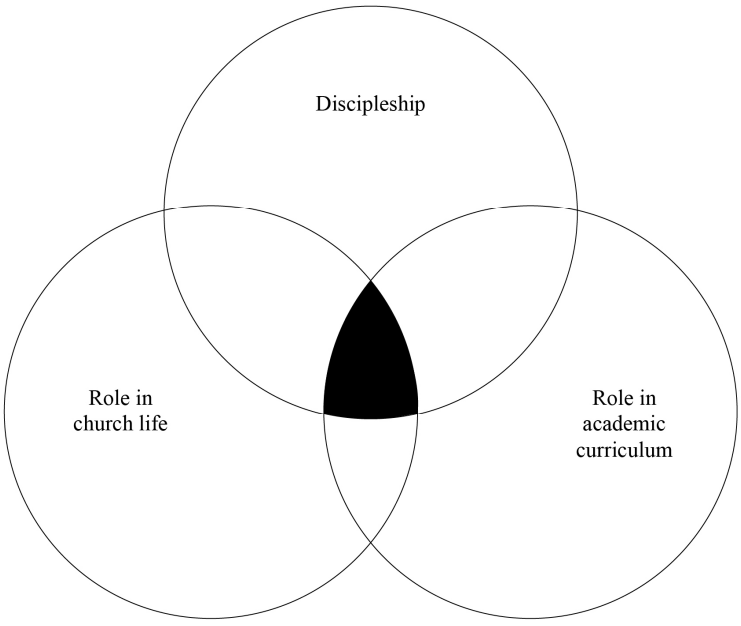

Figure 11. Academic roles and church roles

Enhanced Ministry

Several professors noted that language studies are much more than just an academic exercise, or something that is unconnected to church life: enhanced preaching and teaching of Scripture are some of the weightiest benefits which can come with knowledge of biblical languages.

When effectively undertaken, languages can pump blood into the ministry of preachers and teachers. Professor Barnabas states, "I would say yes, I would say it's extremely valuable . . . because I think one of the primary roles of ministers is the teaching of Scripture and the languages certainly deepen understanding of Scripture. . . . You can't get the feel of it, of the text as well, just from reading English translations."

As such, skillful use of language studies can have a perennial value when it comes to practical ministry. Professor Ben adds, "Obviously I'm going to say this as a Bible person and a languages person—as much as models of ministry may change . . . the biblical text, having the ability to access it in its original languages, I think always is a useful tool! So I would argue that it should be required, especially in cases of people who plan to do preaching and teaching."

One professor feels so strongly about the value of languages for practical ministry that he won't teach or preach without engaging Scripture in its original languages first. "And my basic thing is whenever I go to preach, to teach a lay Bible study, whatever, I have spent time, whether it's Greek or Hebrew, in the original text and I've really focused on just, 'What does this text really say?' I am just better equipped to do it!"

In other words, these professors thus see great value in language studies, as they can be used to build up the church: the value of language studies is not exclusively academic or only personal. Language study is not an obscure exercise without relevance to the points at which Scripture intersects with the daily lives of church members. Via practical ministry, academic language study bleeds over into church life, and church life

bears influence upon academic studies.

Yet now an important caveat is in order. Professor Rachel makes a point that is important enough to warrant an extended quotation.

> And again, I don't mean to say that you know, you automatically know God better if you study Greek and Hebrew . . . . I've also heard people, laypeople speak, who know the Lord very deeply, who don't know Greek and Hebrew. But I'm saying it is a tool that allows someone who loves the Word and knows the Lord and is called to preaching and teaching to engage it in a deeper way themselves, and then they have more to offer their congregations.

This point will be returned to in more detail below. For the moment, however, it may be sufficient to say that knowing languages certainly does not impede the ministry of someone who has committed their life to God, and more likely will enhance his or her service in the local church. Additional points of contact between academic studies and church life at these seminaries will be elaborated upon in the following sections.

Mission

Contact with Scripture's foundational documents, which are the bedrock of the church's mission, can better equip seminary students to carry out the mission of the church. Professor Barnabas argues that there can be a direct connection between linguistic analysis—including an increased familiarity with the grammar and artistry of biblical texts—and the action of the church in mission.

> Anyway, so I think some attention to the original languages . . . should give you a much better sense of those kinds of things and therefore much better understanding of the biblical text, and therefore a much better ability to engage it theologically, and therefore to carry out the mission of the church. So that's a lot of weight to put on proper grammar and syntax, I know, but I think . . . I think that's absolutely right.

Professor Ben chimes in on the usefulness of studying the original languages in terms of the church's history and mission a given context. For him, it is "extremely practical" when a church leader can engage the text beneath the copious numbers of English translations. "I think the primary use I have seen for language acquisition is it just makes people to, I think to have a better understanding and insight into what the

scripture says, and therefore being able to communicate that to a congregation."

Goals of Seminary Language Studies

One more sub-theme of the "role in Church life" concerns the philosophical notion of telos, or the essential goals these participants have for teaching Hebrew and Greek. To form her argument, Professor Rachel poses a rhetorical question, asking what the Bible itself is. She responds as follows. "I mean, this is God's written self-revelation: we want to know it as well as we can! . . . And of course in exegesis, we talk about literary context, historical context, all that stuff, but that all starts with the languages. The end goal is to know Christ, and to make him known, in short, I guess."

In this way again, most of the participating professors stated that the telos, the end goal of teaching and learning biblical languages is realized in more effective practical ministry. For these professors, the goal is hardly restricted to an academic purpose, unrelated to the practices of the local church.

Professor Barnabas' sense of the matter corresponds with that assessment. "Well, the kind of big macro goal, I've already talked about it: it's helping you understand Scripture, better." The first and second years of language studies concentrate on basic Hebrew syntax and increasing ability with Hebrew prose and poetry, he specifies. Additional courses beyond that tend to focus on developing exegetical skills. Exegetical skills are, "an important skill set," he clarifies. Perhaps the goal these professors have in mind may thus be restated as a cyclical movement from personal study, to building up the church, and then repeating that process: a type of long-term missionary effort.

The following quotation illustrates such a concern. In her teaching, Professor Esther keeps the goal of enhanced practical ministry in view.

> That's my goal. Just the other day, I had a former student with whom I'm friends on Facebook. They were posting that they had been walking through the Greek text in preparation for their sermon, and had found something fun in the text:

> my goal is to, not just that they put it on Facebook, but to know that someone that I helped gain those skills is continuing to use them in their ministry.

It seems important to highlight that more than one professor explicitly stated that effective practical ministry must always and only be an outflow of personal engagement with the text: enhanced practical ministry is secondary, a lesser goal. Along with Professor Barnabas' quote immediately above, Professor John provides an important nuance to this discussion. He insists that while exegetical skills are helpful, they are secondary to the goal of simply reading the original texts. Reading the text is foundational, and practical use or application is secondary. "The goal is to get them to where they will actually read and continue to read the text, and so in this I'm a little different from some others, I do not consider the goal to be to develop exegetical skills. . . . Those exegetical skills are fine, but they are secondary; the main thing, the purpose behind it all, is to learn to read the text."

Professor David's notion of the telos, or the end goal of language studies, is another example of how personal engagement of Scripture should be the foundation for whatever practical ministry may come afterwards. While he presents an illustration of a student, or perhaps a pastor preparing to preach or teach by dipping beneath existing translations, he does not explicitly reference practical ministry. "Even if the guy uses an English translation, he's going to say, 'Wait a minute. Is that actually reflecting what the Hebrew says, or the Greek says?' And at the very least, they should be having the two side by side, . . . Better is that he can actually work from the Hebrew or Greek, and then compare translations."

Motivation and Life-Long Learning

Two more related sub-themes of "role in church life" are "motivation" and "life-long learning," as the following quotations illustrate. Several professors state that in their mind, grades are not the most important sign of success. Professor Rachel believes that students who take ownership of their language studies and transfer that into practical

ministry are a better indicator of success.

> And so I consider it just the greatest sign of success when they not only master the content, but then they understand why it's valuable, and then they start using it for themselves. . . . the measure of success is not only mastering content, and kind of getting a sense of why it's important, but then being able to use it, to understand Scripture and to teach others.

Such "life-long learning" thus is another sub-theme of the languages' "role in church life." It is an indicator of success which stretches beyond classroom grades. Professor Barnabas explains that "I think the real measurement is, to me, a real measurement is, 'Can we sit down with the text and start reading?' . . . I think another measure of success is 'Do they want to keep at it? Are they wanting to keep learning?' Even if students have no motivation to study Hebrew beyond the fact that it is a program requirement, he hopes they still might consider the experience valuable, as they go forth from the seminary.

Professor John expresses similar sentiments about life-long learning and success. "And that's the most important thing. . . . the grade is not the most important thing: a student can, a student might have less native ability, and they work really hard and they get a B-minus. But if they catch that 'this is important' and they stick with it, then the course was a success."

Professor David does not mention grades at all when it comes to student success—or life-long learning—but he clearly sees success with language study as being directly related to application in church life. His understanding of student success involves humility before the text, an appropriate attitude towards it that prevents ministerial error from encroaching upon church life:

> Well, the first thing I look for is what I would call 'humility,' humility before the text! That there is a world underneath the text that I don't necessarily know . . . . Um, now, that covers a multitude of sins right now, right there, even if you don't know much of the language. At least like I said before, 'You know what you don't know.' And you don't do stupid stuff.

Institutional Efficacy

If students' personal success is understood by teachers in these largely practical ways, how do these professors feel that their institutions' goals for language studies are achieved? One final sub-theme of "role in church life," deals with institutional effectiveness.

Currently, none of the seminaries represented here have any official or formal, institutionally-recognized method to track whether or not, or how students use their language skills after graduation—or perhaps in practical ministry. But that could change, Professor Rachel explains. Two years ago at Gordon-Conwell, the seminary signed on with Accordance Bible Software: the deal the software purveyors offered was that if she required the software for her students, those students would receive a fifty-percent discount. At that time, several students agreed to allow her to follow up with them three years later. She is currently planning to contact them and ask whether or not they are currently using the software, either to support language work or perhaps misusing it, as a "crutch." She continues by saying, "So these students all agreed to participate in that, but I only started it a couple of years ago. So I'm waiting maybe another year before I kind of tap that first group."

Professor Barnabas also raises the question as to the value of a formal mechanism for evaluating institutional goals concerning continued language use after graduation. "I think it's a very good question. And I think, I'm not sure that we have an adequate assessment of that, program-wide. . . . So that's probably something for us to work on, actually."

Yet not all of these teachers felt the idea of measuring the effectiveness of their institution in terms of a post-graduation assessment is necessary. Professor John feels that whether or not an institution sees its goals realized depends largely on student motivation, and reasonably moves most of the responsibility for achieving success with language studies to them.

> Now, all I can tell you is this: again, it depends heavily on the student and I know there are students who just, they do what they have to do to get through a course, and this would be true for Hebrew, it would be true for systematic theology, it'd be true for preaching. They just get through that course and they say, 'Thank goodness that's over,' and you can't do anything about it: you can't go and reach in there and change their heads.

At the same time, he explains that often, he has students tell him of the love they have developed for the Hebrew Bible during language courses. Language studies thoroughly alter their reading of Scripture. Does such a dramatic change influence their ministries as well, even though the experience itself may never appear on an academic transcript in some explicit way?

Finally, in terms of student success, Professor Ben is keen to connect academic and church work, justifying the difficult development of language skills in light of their value for practical ministry. He has co-taught a course with a homiletics professor called, "Preaching the New Testament." With the aid of the other teacher, Professor Ben walked students through the process of working from the Greek texts to pulpit preaching: "So, it's a really, it was one of my favorite classes to teach and it helped me to see and think about, you know, for many of my students . . . . This is an essential class, because it helps them see how to go from Greek text to proclamation . . . . because it's not seamless, I mean, work has to go into that process."

Discipleship and Character

"Discipleship and Character," with regards to biblical language study specifically, is another important emergent theme for these professors. To simplify its presentation here, figure 12 below illustrates the topic in broad strokes or themes, which will later be accompanied by sub-themes below. In the figure, the vertical arrow represents growth in engagement with the message of Scripture, character development and growth as a disciple of Christ—as described by the selected professors. The horizontal arrow in the figure represents growth in language skills. Finally, as represented

by the diagonal arrow in figure 12, growth in linguistic knowledge when combined with greater engagement with the message of Scripture will yield an increased contribution of language skills to exegesis and practical ministry. The point at which such practical ministry is executed is the point at which academic study of biblical languages makes contact with the mission and the people of the church. Conversely, at the same time, the mission of the church—which is rooted in discipleship, or an active submission to divine love—has stretched into the life of the seminarian.

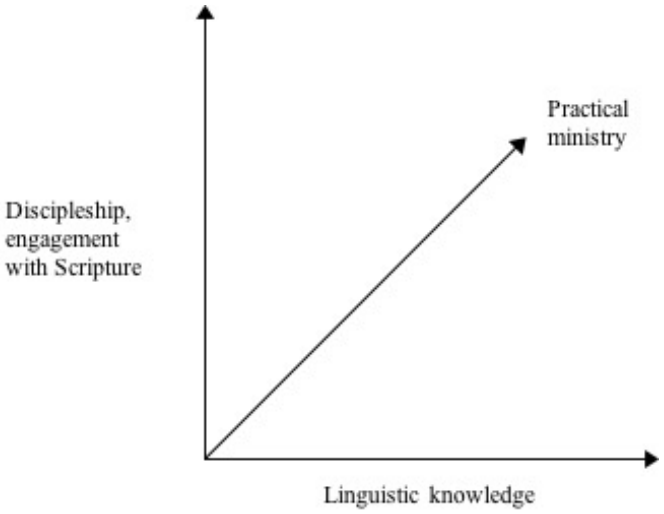

Figure 12. Discipleship and practical ministry

Obviously this is not always the case. Seminary education does not necessarily equate to the spiritual maturity or character required of a church leader.

Professor John feels that practical ministry is not the immediate concern of language studies, and so he might see only the horizontal and vertical arrows as immediately important—although he certainly sees the value of practical ministry as being large on the horizon of seminary studies. His unique thoughts justify a long quotation, to capture the nuances of them:

> I say, just mastering a language, first learning the vocabulary, learning the grammar and then reading, say, from the Hebrew Bible every day, is itself, in my opinion, an edifying and a maturing process. And then again, the time you spend directly in the Word—and then you know how you can share it with people in any kind of setting—is going to have practical outcomes.
>
> In other words, I think it is worthwhile having certain aspects of education that are frankly more in terms of cognitive ability and skill set, particularly the skill set of learning the language, as opposed to everything you study having a very direct path to a kind of practical outcome. I think you have to have courses that do that, but I think it would be a mistake to say that's the only thing you need.

He thus does not see language studies as "academic only" concern. Yet Professor Rachel makes a more vocal attempt to lead her students from what begins as purely linguistic analysis to a greater encounter with the message of Scripture, and does identify practical ministry as the immediate concern. She teaches her students, "No, this is not just for the academics in the ivory tower. This is for you, in the pulpit." She goes on to explain that she is not just preparing students for PhD work: language work is "imminently practical," she stated more than once.

Whether or not practical ministry is mentioned directly, discipleship is valued highly by these professors. Professor Barnabas feels linguistic studies should lead to "awe before God." "But I feel you have to teach it in the way that says, 'This can go somewhere, this can feed your soul in some way and be part of your life as a believer.'"

While emphasizing the importance of discipleship, Professor Ben makes a similar, astute observation that is central to the argument here: in his opinion, a commitment to God which marks the Christian disciple and teacher is a choice. One cannot assume that simply because an individual studies Greek or Hebrew, that he or she is committed to Christ in an active way. He also adds that not just linguistic knowledge of languages, but knowledge of their original social, historical, and literary contexts can inform discipleship, via a wider base of knowledge upon which one can interpret Scripture. "You learn, you begin to sense like, 'Oh, this is how Paul or whoever is putting a particular twist on it [an idea from his social context].' . . . "And you can't really do that if you don't study, not just the original language, but the original language in its literary and historical and rhetorical contexts."

Obviously discipleship is a primary concern for these professors thus far. In what further ways does discipleship knock on the doors of these seminary students? To emphasize the inner workings of seminary students' personal development as disciples, Professor David mentions research into their spiritual development. In the beginning, students may have much to learn, he states. "They want to spend fifteen minutes at the end of the day, doing their devotional stuff, and instead they don't have time for that now. Because they've got to do their homework." Some students make a transition from the fifteen minute stop-and-go to a full-time devotion: "What happens is that fifteen to thirty minutes gets expanded to almost 'twenty-four seven,' that this is all they're thinking about, because they're essentially full-time theological students, and you can't be handling the Word of God without having it rub off on yourself!"

Turning to look at the direct effects of discipleship as influencing ministry after seminary, Professor Rachel makes a powerful appeal to the spiritual formation language studies can provide, for church leaders. Language study should not be only academic, and academic only: "And I think, the other thing that I think is kind of underrated in this, is how formative it is for the preacher or the teacher, when they themselves study and work with Greek and Hebrew. It forms them, it shapes them. It's a formative experience, and it's not just a dry academic experience: if it is that, it shouldn't be!"

Here is one more angle these professors take on discipleship and spiritual formation which is specific to language studies: even the discipline required to learn a language—any language—can be formative or valuable, Professor David argues. Professor Barnabas' agreement with that sentiment is worth repeating here: "And I think there's also just the discipline of learning the language in general: it's hard work isn't it? It forces you to be disciplined and that's a good thing." It is clear these professors see an immediate connection between discipleship and language studies.

In summary, it may be fair to say that there is evidence here that these

professors value both a "passive" discipleship, in which an individual is submitted directly to God via faith, and an "active" discipleship, which occurs when a Christian leader is teaching or making disciples of others. The church is at work in seminaries, just as seminarians can contribute to church life.

Role in the Academic Curriculum

Via the power of metaphor, professors were asked to ruminate on the function of language studies in the overall MDiv curriculum at their schools. If the curriculum as a whole is a human body, or an automobile, what do languages do that other parts of the curriculum are not doing? Their answers portrayed language studies as foundational to the curriculum as a whole, and therefore consequential, as the seed bed of practical ministry in the church.

Professor Rachel laughs and acknowledges that not all of the practical ministry faculty at GCTS would share her point of view completely. Nevertheless, she feels that languages fortify practical ministry in ways that other areas of study may not. "If you use that kind of a 'body' analogy, I think it would have to be somewhere like central organs as something that's really, really required for life. . . . it's part of what breathes life into the other things, including the practical ministry. I see that practical ministry is like the goal, right? . . . It's the reason we do all this language study."

Professor Barnabas agrees that practical action—faith lived out in ministry—is the desired outcome of the MDiv curriculum. Using the car metaphor, he feels it receives its "fuel" from the "fuel pump" of language studies. "The MDiv curriculum is the fostering of theological imagination that that leads to action, not just sitting around and thinking things. . . . the encounter with Scripture is what feeds the imagination to a degree greater than anything else. And so, I think that's the fuel. Maybe the languages are a pump? . . . I'll stick with that."

At the end of the day, all six of the professors that were interviewed for this

study presented explicit connections between language studies and practical ministry which are of immediate value to church life beyond the seminary walls. Professor David provides a poignant illustration to clarify his thoughts about how language studies function alongside other parts of the curriculum.

> I'll give you an example. If I were teaching and designing a course in Pastoral Theology 101, what it means to be a pastor, okay: where would you go? Well, why don't we start at 1 Timothy 3 and read it in Greek? Maybe we'd learn something about what the pastoral office is all about. . . . You know, pick your topic: I don't care what it is, sooner or later, it starts with the biblical text.

Curriculum Revision

Inherent in the immediately foregoing discussion is an unavoidable fact: language teachers are not just writing the language curricula at their respective institutions by themselves. They negotiate. If, as Jack Seymour claims, curriculum revision is a perennial process, who then are the stakeholders when a seminary revises its language curriculum?[73]

Professors and seminary administration as stakeholders. It is perhaps rather obvious to state that seminary faculty are some of the most influential stakeholders in language curricula revision. Professor Rachel said, "What's interesting is that at Gordon-Conwell the MDiv is the one degree that is controlled by all of our campuses together. So no one campus can make a change in the MDiv curriculum without it being a united faculty decision." Professor Esther reveals that unified faculty decisions ultimately determine overall MDiv program structure at ACU. "In 2014, the full faculty voted to adjust the MDiv curriculum from eighty-four hours to seventy-two. So we lost 12 hours." The program currently requires twelve semester hours in language studies, as opposed to the fifteen that were previously required, although language electives are still available.

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[73]Jack L. Seymour, "Best Practices in Master of Divinity Curriculum Revision: A Research Report," *Theological Education* 43, no. 1 (2007): 36.

Yet none of these professors felt or hinted that languages were at risk of being eliminated from their respective MDiv programs altogether. Professor Rachel notes that while some practical ministry specialists may feel less strongly about the value of language studies, at GCTS the faculty—including all the Bible professors and theology professors—have no intention to even talk about removing language requirements from the MDiv curriculum.

It is not just one seminary which feels the need to keep or maintain language studies as they are. Professor John reports no significant recent changes to language curricula, and expresses a general satisfaction with the status quo at SBTS: "We're pretty well set! I am constantly making adjustments to how I teach the course . . . but in terms of our curriculum, I just, I cannot think of any changes we've made in the last number of years relative to our language." If a change were to be made in the MDiv language requirements, it would come from a joint decision between language faculty, the head of the Biblical Studies Department, and the language faculty, he explained.

Other seminaries, accreditation processes, and economic factors influence stakeholders. What other seminaries do also influences curricular requirements at these seminaries when it comes to languages specifically. Professor Rachel elaborates as follows. "But what we have done in response to the reality that other schools are dropping the languages and we're losing students as a result. . . . what we have done is we offer a degree. It's a Masters of Arts." This program, she goes on to explain, does not require language studies. It is for students who would like to teach in church but are not necessarily seeking ordination. They may be non-traditional students who do not want to commit to the full length of an MDiv program. "But that's been our response: rather than cut the languages out of the MDiv, we now offer a separate degree that is kind of the equivalent of other institutions' MDivs without languages."

Clearly curricular design is a dynamic process at these seminaries, from the

point of view of the interviewed faculty members. Professor Esther notes that language curricula is not only influenced by what other seminaries are doing, but it is also influenced by formal accreditation processes: "The standard for our accrediting agency is seventy-two [hours]: it had dropped to seventy-two hours and so we were seeing some competition from other schools and losing some prospective students because of that. . . . So other schools were more attractive because you could finish your degree sooner and for less money."

Professor David almost echoed Professor Esther's take verbatim. "I'm a little out of ATS circles now, but certainly the trend over the last twenty years has been to find alternate routes to the MDiv. Everybody believes the MDiv is the 'gold standard,' so to speak. But on the one hand, it's pricing itself out of the market, both in time and money."

Technology and social contexts influence stakeholders. In the contemporary landscape of these professors' experiences with language curricula, technology must be reckoned with, or else these seminaries stand to lose students. In terms of stakeholders, Professor Ben notes the value of adapting to changing social contexts and advances in technology. "I don't know how much that's factoring in the work you're doing, but I'd be really curious to see that, because I think we're going to have to do—just for the sake of keeping the doors open at some places, . . . we've got to do more online things."

Professor Rachel agrees, and states the following, in reference to online delivery. "So this is a new way of teaching . . . . we're open to it, and we're actually going to do it the best we can, because the reality is enrollment will tank, if a seminary is not offering anything online." Technology is a weighty factor for these stakeholders to consider.

Along these lines, changes in the social contexts of these seminaries force professors to respond, or possibly revise curricula. At the same time, for these professors, biblical languages hold a special, unchanging value or role in the curriculum, as

discussed above: they have a perennial value. Professor Esther explains the importance of adapting to changing social contexts, and yet contends that some elements of an MDiv curriculum, including language studies, should remain constant. "We're always thinking about what's going on in the world today, what's happening in churches today . . . . The people needing ministry training, what do they really need . . . ?" While practical ministries always need updating, some parts of the curriculum hold perennial value, she argues: "Ministers are always going to need focus on the Word, ministers are always going to need solid understanding of Church history, so they don't repeat the mistakes of the past into the future." She concludes, "So there are certain aspects of the curriculum, and I think the biblical languages fit in with that: that's a part of the curriculum that shouldn't change."

Students as stakeholders. Students do not only affect language curricula through decisions as to where they choose to study. They also affect curriculum after their admission to an MDiv program: teachers may bend or adapt their teaching to different groups. Whether the explanation is "multiple intelligences," or theological—such as the notion of a "gift of tongues"—there are some students who enjoy or have more interest in languages than others.[74]

The lengths to which these professors will go to adapt their teaching to the needs and interests of their students is remarkable. Professor Barnabas explains that in his first-semester Hebrew course, he gets three kinds of students. The first group is composed of students with an eye towards PhD studies: they are excited and motivated to learn whatever they can. He sees this situation as a good one. But then he has a second group of students who are geared more towards preaching and teaching. "Their brains are just as good, they're just as well, perform just as well, in some cases, even better than the

[74]Brown, Roediger, and McDaniel, *Make It Stick*, 148.

first group." His third group of students simply, "don't want to be there": they are "good-spirited" about it, but given a choice, they would spend their time elsewhere. "So part of my job, I think, is to feed all of them," he concludes, in a noble fashion. Common observation shows that both linguistic expertise and a deep passion for the church's mission would be required to carry out what has become his response to the needs of his students.

The same might be said of Professor Ben. He has different expectations for students who plan to be professors, in contrast to those who desire to be pastors. "I mean, they're taking the same exams in class, so. But I think it's helpful to measure students' success based on 'ultimate goals' on some level, . . . I try to tailor it a bit." All of these professors envision something more for their students than simply receiving linguistic facts and understand the makeup of their students in a holistic way, a way that takes into account differences in how their students plan to use the language skills they do acquire.

Professor John in turn, notes the effort many of his students—but not necessarily all of them—put into language studies. He emphasizes that despite the workload, interest in language studies is not in some sort of general decline. "I mean, I have, again, a range of students in my classes, but I have a lot of classes of students who work really hard, and who, they totally throw themselves into it, and they love it and they're very engaged. They ask insightful questions, and so, you know it's not as if I have a sense that it's all dying. I think it's still there."

In all of these cases, the point is that students themselves influence the delivery of language curricula, even if they are not aware they have such influence. Finally, Professor Rachel contends that language studies can have relevance, regardless of what a student plans to do in ministry. After working on an exegesis assignment for eleven weeks, a student told her, "'I think this was my favorite assignment of the whole course so far.'" Then he added that "It drew me to worship, it drew me to repentance, it drew me into a proper stance before God." This student is a church planter, and not someone

planning to pursue a PhD, she emphasized. And yet, via his interest and effort, he adds one more layer to the rich variety these professors encounter when it comes to adapting their delivery of language curricula to specific individuals. Students are stakeholders, in other words.

Necessary or Ideal Level of Language Requirements

What appears to be a perennial question that arises whenever curriculum is revised, or negotiated amongst different stakeholders, concerns how much language is sufficient or appropriate for an MDiv curriculum.

Professor Esther reflects on the realities of seminary language education, "If we could keep students here forever and if they could keep taking classes for free . . . then everybody needs to learn Greek and Hebrew and take a couple of years of it." Yet she recognizes that seminary education is a temporary stop on the way to the final destination of ministry in local church life. No universal curriculum exists for MDiv language studies, as the discussion has demonstrated so far.

Professor David refers to the legacy of previous, or traditional requirements for language studies when he considers a question as to how much language is enough. He argues that a desirable, "intermediate-reading" level traditionally had been attained via two entry-level semesters, followed by a third semester of reading biblical texts in their original languages. And that is just the beginning. "And, following the traditional model, that it takes about two semesters to get the basics down, and then you need at least a third semester to read . . . where you start finally putting it together and getting a little bit of a more native, intuitive feel for how syntax works, and how sentences work."

Without regard to tradition, per se, Professor John apparently appeals to what he feels is necessary: a semester of Greek and one of Hebrew is a "minimum," he claims. Yet he elaborates and explains that different MDiv program options at Southern allow for far more language work. So what role do electives and prerequisites, or perhaps even

choices as to MDiv concentration play? "So, for example," Professor John states, "if they go into a program that is a Biblical Studies MDiv, then they are electing to go into a program that will require more semesters." Other students enroll in programs with fewer language requirements, but then take language electives, he adds.

Professor Esther is elated when students pursue elective work, and would like to see increased student access to what are currently elective exegetical seminars. As noted above, bringing students to the point of increased exegetical skills is a common desire of these professors, although linguistic contributions to exegesis are not fully accessible to beginning language students, of course. Professor Esther and her colleagues are in dialogue about adjustments to their MDiv curriculum. In the past, students could not move into exegetical courses until they had taken three semesters of a language. She expresses her concern that "nowadays in the MDiv curriculum students don't have space for that."

Professor Ben sees opening a door to increased student agency—when it comes to language course options and requirements—as a possible spur to student interest. He is considering an innovative agenda with regard to integrating exegesis courses into the MDiv program at an earlier point in the process. He believes it could be a way to increase student motivation. One obstacle he sees is the fact that beginning language courses are heavy on memorization, with little "payoff" in terms of engaging the message of Scripture. "Basically, what I'd like to see is us figure out how to use our exegetical courses as not just post-Greek options, but a more, almost like a 'wheel' that you can jump in on at any point, and once you've had an exegesis course, hopefully that's going to push you back into a more fervent excitement and motivation."

He acknowledged that memorization would still be necessary to some extent in the beginning. Yet at the core of his concern is his own experience with learning Greek: "I was more captured by thinking about meaning than memorizing paradigms."

Innovation as a Result of Challenges

Ironically, or perhaps as an oversight, not one interview protocol item mentioned or explicitly addressed online education, and yet the topic came up in almost every interview. Indeed, these professors shared no common ground when it came to discussing the potential of future changes to their respective MDiv language curricula, other than questions and thoughts about the dynamics of online delivery. Professors Ben and Rachel offered interesting perspectives on how online courses are delivered at their seminaries, respectively. Ben states that a "synchronous," or a live classroom is preferable to students tackling Hebrew or Greek apart from a community interaction. "My goal . . . is to make every class synchronous learning rather than an online class that's asynchronous where you can just sort of 'jump in' . . . but where, if you're in the Greek class, you're either virtually in the classroom from your computer, you know, in Florida, or you're physically in the classroom in Illinois."

Professor Rachel's "Digital Live" delivery format sounds similar to Ben's "synchronous" classroom. "We're teaching languages now through what's called . . . we're calling it 'Digital Live,' So we're using Zoom and it's live and it's online, . . . And what it's allowing us to do is for students literally around the world who are not going to move to Charlotte, to take our courses."

Taking up the church's work of missions, she has had students recently from Japan, the former Soviet Union, as well as the United States who participate in class remotely, via the internet. She might have two or three students physically present in person, and an additional twenty-five on Zoom. The new practice has strengths and weaknesses. On one hand, she laments the loss of live, face-to-face interaction, "But I do think missionally, it allows our reach to extend anywhere that there is internet connection. And so I just want us to be able to do it and do it with excellence."

Her zeal for excellence in language education is remarkable and yet not hers alone. Online learning certainly offers some strengths, in the minds of some of these

professors. In general, Professor Esther also has an optimistic view of the strengths that online delivery can offer. “Just from a kind of a course design or a ‘pedagogical approach’ kind of question, is just understanding the benefits and limitations. Sometimes we focus too much on the limitations of trying to teach a language online, but there are some things that you can actually gain in that format.”

And yet online learning has weaknesses as well. Professor Barnabas expressed a critique of a decision to offer an MDiv program online. While acknowledging benefits of online delivery, he felt there have been significant losses as well. Students who take their language classes online are missing out on live human interaction, specifically hearing the languages spoken in real time: “So if you design a program that’s people sitting, reading a lesson online, taking a quiz, by themselves, and all of it’s done in silence, that’s no way to learn a language! It’s impossible, it’s ridiculous! . . . So I think we have to think through, in a much more dynamic way, how this is delivered.” Behind such warranted differences of opinion there is what appears to be a broader, shared desire to provide the best education possible in light of the available technology.

With all of these participants and their respective institutions, the question is open: there is no consensus concerning any particular way in which digital learning or online delivery can best be presented to students. Professor Esther notes that with regards to teaching pronunciation, there are many questions. “There are things that you can do to try to accommodate for that . . . but then as I’m in regular conversation with our faculty who are teaching both Greek and Hebrew online [we ask] ‘How do we do that well? How do we address the concerns for that?’”

Research Sub-Question 3b: Emergent Themes

Research Sub-Question 3b is, “How do selected students understand or articulate the efficacy of biblical language study in terms of their personal goals for ministry, or motivation for studying—their personal formation—at seminary in a more

general way?" This section will present six major themes which arose from their responses to the interview protocol: Different Types of Students; Curriculum; Learning Hebrew and Greek is Difficult; Learning Hebrew and Greek is Valuable; Motivation; and a continuum between "Not Practical and Practical."

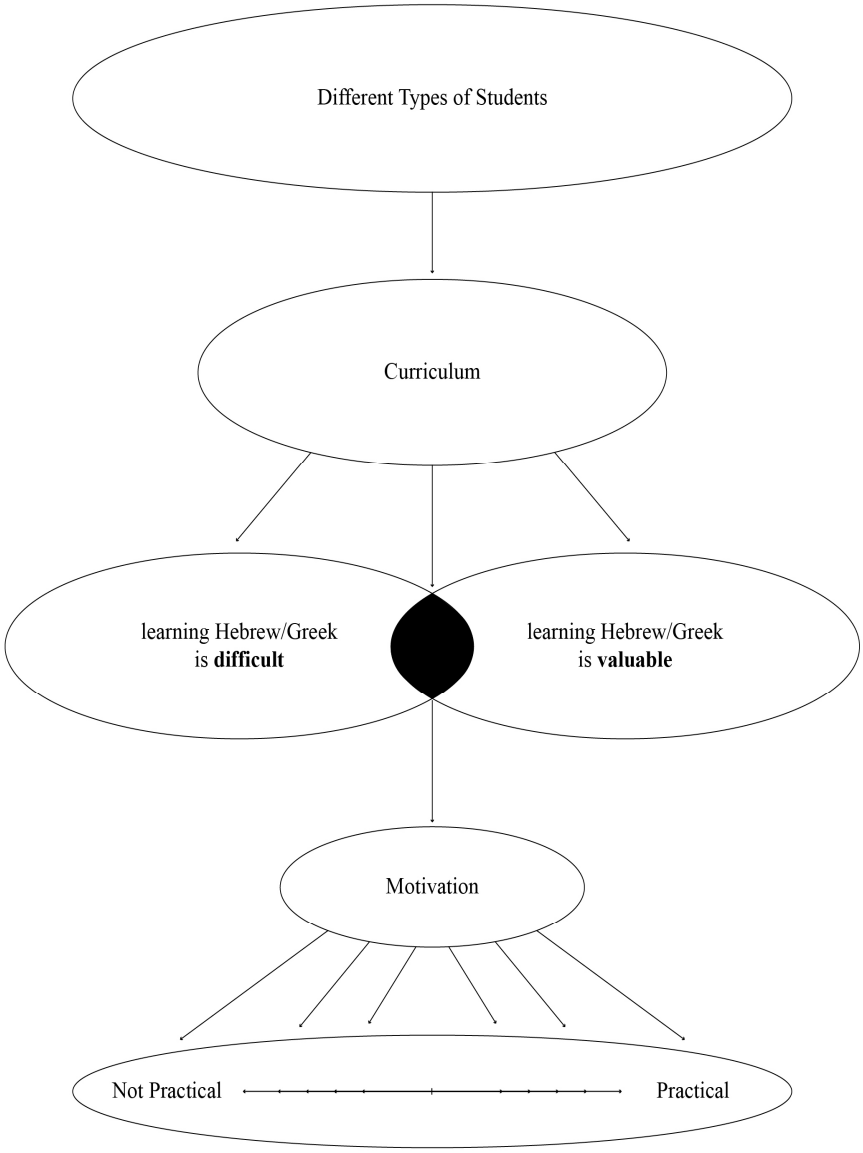

Figure 13. Language studies: the experience of students

Figure 13 above is an attempt to illustrate some of the dynamics in seminary

language learning which arose during the student interviews. It could be construed as a "Meditation on Motivation." In short, students begin their studies with a variety of motivations. Yet those motivations can change during their studies, which may ultimately affect how students use their language skills after graduation.[75] These elements of students' experiences with language studies will be dissected now.

Different Types of Students

As noted, it is clear that students initially approach seminary language courses for different reasons.[76] It would be helpful to pause and survey the responses of specific students here, to get a feel for the nuances and textures of the interview data on this point.

Language-Oriented Students

Some students, such as Carl, come to seminary specifically to learn languages: "And to me, there wasn't a question of whether it was going to be beneficial. I, I came to seminary to learn what I could not learn on my own. And learning Greek and Hebrew on your own is difficult."

As extreme as that may sound, other students expressed the same commitment to languages. Shelley and her husband had a similar rationale. She initially felt that language study was the most effective way she could spend time in seminary. "Correct: [language study is] the thing that would be hardest to get outside of a classroom setting."

In the minds of these students, languages have a unique value. Scott states very clearly that language studies were an essential factor in his mind when he considered seminary work. "I chose Gordon-Conwell in large part because they were going to use the languages. That was really important to me going in, . . . I probably took it a little bit

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[75]See Zoltán Dörnyei and Istvan Otto, "Motivation in Action: A Process Model of L2 Motivation," *Working Papers in Applied Linguistics* 4 (1998): 43.

[76]As with the professors' interviews, it should be stated explicitly here that an interest in languages or a lack of one is not the same thing as knowing the Lord or necessarily having an effective ministry.

more seriously than some other students would have. Because I know some fellow students don't enjoy the languages so much."

Less Interest

Certain students have much less interest in languages than those just mentioned. Consider Victor's lighthearted honesty. He recounted that "Yeah, well if I'm going to be completely honest with you, I took Greek and Hebrew right away, so I could get them done with, and kind of forget about them! Yeah, it's like, if you got a plate of food and you have to eat all of it, 'I'll eat the broccoli first, so I don't have to worry about it later!'"

Other students also initially approached language studies from another extreme, when considered alongside the passion of Carl and Shelley. Terry states, "And my degree, at least when I started it, the MDiv, I was told, 'This is a professional ministry degree.' And so there are academic parts to it . . . . But I got it because I wanted to be an effective minister in the local church." He goes on to explain that learning to use software tools would have been more effective use of time over the long run than a second semester of Greek or Hebrew. He would have preferred to have taken other courses which he felt would more directly address the roles of leaders in a local church.

Spiritual Gift

Earl provides a theological explanation to account for the differences amongst students when it comes to their interests in language studies. "The church, I believe the church needs all of us who are gifted in different ways. . . . We don't need everybody going out to do Bible translation because then who's going to do the rest of the stuff?" When asked if he was thinking of 1 Corinthians 12-14, he replied in the affirmative. "Yeah, that's a great way to put it, I think. That's spot-on, what I'm getting at."

Carl also offered a theological basis for the role of language studies in his seminary education and ministry after school. He feels that the language skills simply

augment a "gift" of teaching and preaching, which began to arise for him while he was in high school.

Previous Studies

Some of the students who were interviewed had studied biblical languages prior to seminary. All in all, while undergraduate study can be helpful, it does not determine success in a graduate program: not all of these graduating students had studied languages prior to their respective MDiv programs. On one hand, for example, Justin was able to transfer twelve hours to his MDiv program after majoring in ministry as an undergraduate. Stan, on the other hand, saw the same issue from the other side of the fence. "For me, I was a political science degree with a business minor, coming from never having done biblical languages, . . . while people in the class will come in, having taken Greek and Hebrew for three years each, in their undergraduate Christian ministry degrees."

Again, a lack of language studies as undergraduates did not keep any of these students from succeeding with their MDiv language requirements. Fred attributes his success to another factor. He appreciated the fact that although he had not studied biblical languages prior to seminary, his teachers helped him succeed. "Well, I think mission, the mission was accomplished when it comes to teaching someone who didn't have any background in Greek or Hebrew . . . . If you follow all [of] the program they set before you, then you'll be off and running in the original languages!"

Curriculum

This section will deal with students' experiences with "Explicit Curriculum," or, "Those publicly known, stated and planned educational events which are commonly understood by all those who are participating."[77] Specifically, the study will examine and

[77]Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education*, 79.

analyze students' experiences or perspectives on their respective programs' language requirements.

Necessary or Ideal Level of Language Training

Not one of these students, at the end of his or her admittedly successful language studies, claims that languages should be removed from his or her program. Not one stated directly that non-language requirements were completely unimportant.

When asked about any changes he would like to see in language requirements for an MDiv degree, Joshua emphasized the importance of language requirements from the beginning. "I think before you're allowed to take any theology classes, church history classes, any of these other courses that I still . . . I will admit they are very important. I don't want to diminish the importance of those classes, but before you can take any of those, you must pass a language exam for at least Hebrew and Greek."

Some students placed less of a foundational role on language studies, and questioned whether or not the current level of Greek and Hebrew required for an MDiv at their respective institutions truly prepares students to engage Scripture in a meaningful way. Stan, for example, said the following. "I was in a program where I had to take two of one, and one of the other. And honestly, maybe if you took two Hebrews and one Greek you'd have enough room to like, run with the Greek. But if you take two Greeks and one Hebrew, you really don't have enough Hebrew to really do anything with."

Justin also decried what he felt was insufficient preparation when it comes to developing one's personal interpretations of biblical texts in ministry, instead of just relying on more advanced scholars' commentaries. Based on his experience as a full-time pastor, he makes the following observation. It is in accord with Stan's sentiment, perhaps. "And there's people who come to the graduate program with no undergraduate time in Greek and they take one or two years, and they leave with MDivs or MAs. And really what you begin to see is, you know you really need more like five or six years, to be a

serious contributor, in my opinion."

Somewhat in opposition to Justin's comments, Fred and other students state that after their course of study, they feel they have sufficient language skills as they move forward after graduation. Fred said, "So I thought that was good, that you come away from those three courses, certainly with the tools to. . . . If you're faithful to keep up with it, I think it's a foundation for a really rich engagement in Greek."

Lindsay also noted that her extensive training, what amounted to five language courses in Greek and Hebrew each, respectively, makes her feel at ease when reviewing biblical texts, as well as skillfully handling commentaries and other secondary works. "But yeah, as far as what was helpful, it's interesting because I think a lot of what has been really helpful to me in learning Greek, and Hebrew, is I don't feel any more like anything is outside of my reach or understanding, as far as like books, right?"

After considering all of the above, a trend seems to be developing: although some students felt languages were foundational to their conceptions of seminary training in a general way, most of these students placed importance on language studies only to the extent they felt language use would be practical or accessible in their ministries. Earl feels somewhat unenthused about the requirements for his program, as they stand. Rather than the requirement of first semester Greek, first semester Hebrew, and then one additional course in one language or the other, he feels one semester of each would be sufficient. His rationale depends on the degree to which one is planning to use Scripture in his ministry. "I think it's better than having both of them required, especially if you are just not going to be interacting with the originals a lot in whatever ministry path someone is going to take." Depending on the individual case, he feels time spent after the first semesters of Hebrew or Greek could best be spent by students elsewhere.

Electives

Electives are of supreme importance to some of these students. Some of these

students wanted to study languages as much as possible, and exhausted the availability of electives as a result. John wants to study biblical languages more. In regard to the requirements for his program, he made the following comments. “I definitely think it’s, it is a good minimum. Of course, I wish it could be higher, but I understand that not everybody is gifted that way and nobody needs to know Greek or Hebrew to be a faithful Christian or a faithful pastor, their whole life.”

Several students express the same sentiment and report that they have taken language electives as a result. David describes his rationale for pursuing electives at his seminary. He had a seminarian friend who advised him to “take as many language classes” as possible, since after graduation, “‘You’re never going to be sitting in front of a Greek or Hebrew master, learning languages in that way.’”

After finishing his required classes, Jimmy also took electives, as he feels that language studies are foundational for his future plans. “I feel like it was beneficial to have a, coming away from it, a nice base to build on . . . they have a couple of advanced, a Greek Readings and a Greek and Hebrew Readings course, as electives, and I took both of those.”

Online Delivery vs. Brick and Mortar

As with the professors’ interviews, one sub-theme was not explicitly mentioned in any interview protocol, and yet it appeared in virtually every interview: “online delivery vs. brick-and-mortar.” Some students took all of their language classes online, other students took some of their language classes online, and still others enrolled in a “modular” format, or a “flipped classroom,” the latter two being a combination of online work and live, in-person classroom time.

The issue of how best to do so is up for debate. John found both strengths and weaknesses with his online learning. “Okay, strengths: definitely, if the recorded lectures are good, you can listen to them almost on repeat. Which in-person, . . . you can’t really

go back and re-listen to it, over and over again." In terms of weaknesses, John missed the immediacy of the interaction available in a live classroom "I mean, at times it was hard if you didn't have, like if you had questions about something, it's hard to get in contact with somebody like, 'Hey, how do you pronounce this?'"

To an extent, Susan's experience with online learning corroborates John's statements. "What I love about the online, what I love about the online language classes is, I can go back and re-watch that lecture over and over again, and drill it in, you know, just drill it home." On the other hand, she identifies what she feels she might have missed by taking courses online. "So I think what I'm doing there is what I would miss in the classroom, . . . Just having that interaction between the teacher and students and being able to ask questions on the spot rather than re-watching the lecture fifty times!"

Yet Susan does differ with John somewhat, when she states that her professor was imminently available throughout her studies: "Dr. Plummer followed up with me throughout my classes with him, and I mean, . . . I mean he built a relationship with us [she and her husband] because he cared about us as people, . . . he firmly believed that our languages will bless our ministry."

Clearly these students' experiences of online learning, and the extent to which they felt their professors were available to them is muddied and nuanced. Shelley stated succinctly that, in her experience, whether or not a professor was available to her as a distance student, "depends on the professor." Casual observation shows that each professor may have his or her own style of teaching, in a brick-and-mortar setting also.

Again, the experiences of these students varied greatly, and not all students felt they were missing out on interactions with their professors or other students. As a commuter student, for example, Scott didn't particularly expect to find the camaraderie amongst fellow students, or to receive any particular attention from his teachers that might be available to students in a residential program. "I was a commuter student, so I was driving three and a half to four hours, to get to Charlotte. And the way our classes are

set up, it's a flipped classroom. So you just go once a month for a weekend. So I didn't expect professors to care super-deeply about me."

Successful, supportive teaching will be discussed more below, but in the meantime, it may be important to point out that students have succeeded with online learning, and online learning is not synonymous with unsupportive teaching. Patrick took all of his language courses online. In some of his Greek courses, the students "dialed in" on the internet, but for others, he simply watched pre-recorded videos. He made the following observations about the support available even in an online format, however. "And so while the level of interactivity was obviously different on each of those style of courses, I never felt there was a lack of ability to contact a professor, . . . but it is a different style of learning, and not everybody, not everybody adopts well to that."

Hebrew vs. Greek

Some students prefer Hebrew and others prefer Greek, but there is no consistent rationale about why that is so in these student interviews, with the possible exception that Hebrew is not as closely related to English as Greek is, in terms of language family classification, as will be discussed more in the next section.

Several of these students found much to enjoy in language studies. Mark has a somewhat unique and interesting perspective. "But I do think I'm more interested in the Hebrew language, and that's largely because so much of the Bible is in Hebrew, and so, so much of the Bible is Old Testament." Not all of these students would agree with him.

Susan, for example, enjoyed both languages but favored Greek over Hebrew. She explains that Greek was less work, as Greek grammar and the alphabet are similar to the English grammar and writing system she uses as a native speaker. At the same time, she was also effusively interested in Hebrew. "Yeah, but it's also, Hebrew is very intriguing, because it is not similar, . . . when you read a Psalm in Hebrew, there's the richness. It becomes very rich, I think, because of the way God designed that language."

Again, there was no discernable pattern in terms of why some students preferred Hebrew, Greek, or both. These students are, after all, individuals. What is clear is that some of these students were motivated to study Greek or Hebrew despite the difficulties involved, as will be discussed in the following section.

The Difficulty and Value of Learning Hebrew and Greek are Reflected in One's Motivation

These themes are not watertight. On one hand, in Figure 14, "Learning Hebrew and Greek is valuable" bleeds over into "Motivation,"—as symbolized by the downward arrow. Perceived value is a large factor in motivation.[78] "Learning Hebrew and Greek is Valuable" appears in figure 14 in large part to offset "Learning Hebrew and Greek is Difficult." If learning Hebrew and Greek was more difficult than valuable, few would persist in it.[79]

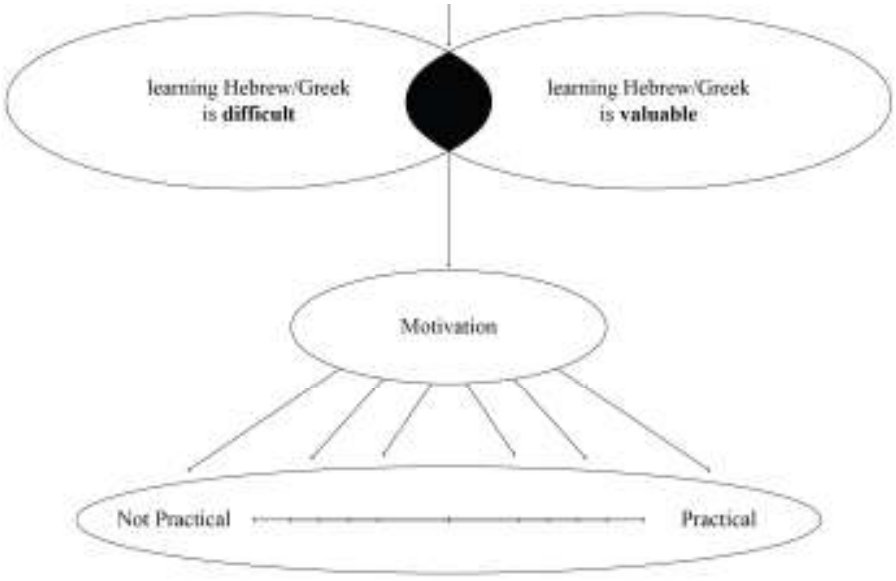

Figure 14. Motivation: difficulty and value in tension

[78]Ambrose et al., *How Learning Works*, 74-75.

[79]Ambrose et al., *How Learning Works*, 74-78.

On the other hand, "Learning Hebrew and Greek is Difficult" also bleeds over into "Motivation," as symbolized by the downward arrow. Difficulty causes tension in one's motivation.[80] To varying degrees, these students found both difficulty and value in learning Hebrew and Greek. Via figure 14, the attempt here is to reflect that if learning could be placed under a microscope, one would see that learning Hebrew and Greek is a difficult, complex process driven by an individual's perception of relative value.[81] It is not a simple or one-dimensional process.

Learning Hebrew and Greek Is Difficult

Before going further, it would be apropos to note that each of these students—all graduates or students who are planning to graduate within the next few months—have had some success with language learning. Not all seminary students do.

Not one student or professor even intimates that learning languages is an easy task. Because of that, the difficulty of leaning Greek and Hebrew in a general way may not need much more elaboration here: everyone sees it as a difficult or challenging process.

Noble character. What is remarkable, however, is the character students often display during their seminary language studies. At times, students put in heavy hours, even though languages might not have been perceived as their favorite or most useful courses, in terms of their plans for ministry. Such actions and attitudes demonstrate noble character. Nearing the end of his MDiv program—which he completed while serving as a full-time staff pastor at his church—Victor shares the following. "And I feel like I'm not the typical 'language person,' who carries their Greek New Testament around. When I've

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[80]The topic of "demotivation" will be discussed below.

[81]Figure 14 is simply the bottom half of figure 13. The top half of figure 13, which is a large graphic, has been cropped away here for the sake of space.

seen guys like that, I'm always like, 'Man I could not do that!' So, but it's cool though. Some people do that."

Clearly, language studies do not inspire all who seek to engage them with equal fervor or interest. Fred shares his experience. The workload was relatively steep. "I tried to review my vocabulary regularly, at least weekly. That got tougher as the semesters wore on, and the list of vocabulary to review gets longer and longer."

Jamie has a similar story. He describes a sturdy attitude and grit. "Well, I think, despite the difficulty level in learning the languages, I still, I knew I needed those tools, you got it? . So although I had to put in a lot of work, . . . I knew that for me, to be effective and efficient in my ministry as a teacher of words, I needed those tools."

Again, when it comes to learning the difficult subjects of Hebrew and Greek, noble character and valiant effort may be rewarded with success and encouraged by a skillful professor. Earl expressed some legitimate frustration with the difficulty of the terrain of language studies. At the same time, he appreciated the work of his teacher. "He's an excellent instructor. . . . like even though the course was hard and I wasn't very good at it, he made it really accessible and it wasn't like a needlessly hard class. He could have made it much more difficult."

Greek is an Indo-European language. One very obvious difficulty that many English-speaking students encounter is the fact that Hebrew is a Semitic language, as opposed to Greek, which is Indo-European and much more closely related to English.

Veronica notes some of the differences. "For me, Hebrew has been far more challenging, primarily because the reading is from right to left instead of left to right. . . . The verb can be in the middle of the sentence or at the end of the sentence, . . . So that for me has been the biggest deal. I could have continued to study Greek and probably never gotten tired of it."

The dearth of Hebrew and English cognates is also a challenge. Terry identifies

the differences between not only the Greek and Hebrew writing systems, but also on the lexical level as a source of difficulty. “And it helps that I’m familiar with a lot of the [Greek] characters going into it, and there’s a lot of cognates, whereas in Hebrew, there might have been some, but I didn’t notice any. And so that helped with the acquisition as well.”

But these differences between Greek, Hebrew, and English, as well as the difficulties they may present do not offset these students’ interest in Hebrew altogether. To Mark, Hebrew seems more difficult than Greek at this time, but he has an interesting comment to make about the value of studying Hebrew. “As it turns out, think I am better at Greek than Hebrew, because Greek is so much more similar to the English language. But I do think I’m more interested in the Hebrew language, and that’s largely because so much of the Bible is in Hebrew, and so, so much of the Bible is Old Testament.”

Learning Hebrew and Greek Is Valuable

Personal formation was one reason why many students felt Hebrew and Greek studies were valuable. Other students did not feel that was as true for them personally.

Valuable for personal formation. Several students valued and described a passionate, full-bodied joy in the workings of God in their lives via the study of biblical languages, as a source of their Christian formation. This formation occurred when students incorporated a posture of devotion into their language studies.

At the outset, it is once again important to note that none of these students, who have taken language courses and successfully completed that part of their seminary curricula, say that there is no value whatsoever in studying biblical languages. That is hardly the case. Veronica shares a perspective that is representative of several students: “I mean, I think everybody should have to take Greek and Hebrew! Because I just think it’s such an enriching, and a positive experience.”

Susan was convicted during the process of learning Greek. Her teacher

encouraged devotional reading and walked his students through 1 John over the course of the semester. Susan felt that process drew her nearer to the message of Scripture in a way that reading her English translation did not. “Yeah, most definitely! It does contribute to my spiritual formation and my growth as a Christian . . . . How, what great depth a great God would go to, to rescue a sinner. And that was 1 John, for me, in Greek, that I did not get by reading it in English.”

Fred agrees. He also feels that language studies are formative for him. “I would say they definitely do contribute to my spiritual formation, if for no other reason, by virtue of the fact that you’re able to come closer to the original text of Scripture.”

Sometimes professors modeled a posture of devotion. Joshua shares his feelings. “But we have . . . I mean, at Southern we have fantastic professors who are trying, intentionally, to teach you to integrate the languages into your life, and obviously sermon preparation. But it’s modeled for us, I think, very well, how to incorporate it personally, in my own life.”

Bible reading took on added depth at times, when it was pursued via the original languages of the texts. Several students emphasized the value of having to “slow down,” while reading the Bible in its original languages. David explains his experience. “I think a big takeaway that I had from learning the, just Greek and Hebrew, is that it forces you to slow down. And so that influenced my spiritual life and devotional life, when . . . . Now I’m more interested in depth, rather than quantity, . . . I have no problem sitting with a few verses for a week at a time.”

The Bible is different than other books, one student passionately emphasized: it deserves extra attention, no less than the effort involved in reading it in another language. Mark states, “Because it does force you to slow down and really pay attention to what the Lord is saying in the Scriptures. . . . Because too often we read the Bible like it’s a book, like Harry Potter, or something like that.” He goes on to explain that the Bible is God’s “inerrant, infallible word,” and quotes a line from a popular movie *Ferris*

Bueller's Day Off, to illustrate what is at stake if one hurries too much through the biblical texts. "Life's a blast! If you don't slow down to enjoy it, you just might miss it!"

Less relevance to personal formation. At times, some students did not feel language studies contributed to their Christian formation as much. As different individuals, there are nuances, of course, to their thoughts on the subject.

John explains that at one time, language study was formative for him. Currently, however, he feels he lacks sufficient language skills to continue. "Previously, when I was studying them more so, I would say 'yes, they did contribute spiritually as I was learning,' but not [currently] through my own personal study."

Some students saw language studies in a more remote fashion, something that did not pique their interests. Earl feels language studies were "purely an academic thing." But that is not the entire account. He explained that hearing his professor exegete the text in class, "was good for my spiritual development." But he reaffirms that personally, "Because I'm not a language guy, I've never really been interested in them or invested in them. So for me, it's always been a chore to kind of do the languages."

One student saw relatively little connection between language studies and his spiritual life. Andrew takes a rather firm position on the value of languages for his own experience. "I feel like it's like 98% a cognitive exercise, in terms of the process of knowing and interpreting the word, and maybe a slim percent in terms of yeah, personal growth, yeah, or maturity."

Yet even in that case, he does feel that there is some value in studying biblical languages. "I guess I would say that there are certain insights that I've received, as a result of knowing the language, . . . Yeah, I feel like there's certain little insights or nuggets that illuminate certain truths about God's word or his nature, which is just lost on English."

It is not just personal formation that many of these students value, however.

Much like the professors who were interviewed for this study, these students see value in relation to practical ministry, or the application of language skills in that capacity. Several of those practical uses will be discussed below, under the theme of "Not Practical or Practical." Before turning to that section of this account, the topic of "Motivation" is apropos.

Motivation

As noted in chapter 2, motivation might be the most influential factor in terms of the reasons why students succeed with language studies, or do not.[82] With such an emphasis in the literature, the importance of motivation in seminary language studies can be examined in a number of ways.

Change in Motivation during One's Studies

Student motivation may fluctuate during seminary language studies.[83] Stan reported that exposure to language studies in seminary increased his motivation, or his desire to understand. "Yeah, as I discovered biblical Greek, I came into biblical Greek being like, 'I just need to learn how to parse, that's it! Teach me to parse, and I'm done!' But I'd say the more that I learned of biblical Greek, the more that I'm like, "Okay, like I should actually like learn this."

Fred also experienced an increased motivation as a result of his seminary studies. "So I think it's just important, I've just seen the importance of . . . like there's never going to be a time when we can say 'Oh we've got good translations. We don't have to keep going hard on Greek and Hebrew.' So that's one reason that it's become so

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[82]See A. M. Masgoret and R. C. Gardner, "Attitudes, Motivation, and Second Language Learning: A Meta-Analysis of Studies Conducted by Gardner and Associate," *Language Learning* 53 (2003): 169-73.

[83]See Zoltán Dörnyei, "Motivation in Action: Towards a Process-Oriented Conceptualization of Student Motivation," *British Journal of Education Psychology* 70 (2000): 519.

valuable to me."

Yet Justin relates a harrowing tale about race, social inequality, and academics. While he enjoys language studies, and was successful with them, he felt their value can meet with limitations at times. His motivation was thus affected during seminary.

> So there was a time in my graduate work that I was spending a lot of time with the underserved communities . . . and my Greek and Hebrew meant absolutely nothing to them! Like it just didn't! . . . So I hadn't been trained at all to communicate spiritually with those from the lower economic portion of our society, those who don't care about . . . anything as it relates to the academic world. I just hadn't been, I just felt terribly ill-equipped, to serve people who look like me!

Supportive Environments, Demotivation, and Coping

Again, no single student even vaguely suggested that learning biblical languages is easy, or without difficulty. Tsang defines "demotivation" as any mindset that impedes learning, such as a desire to quit working towards learning the target language.[84] Although these ideas might fit within the theme of "Learning Hebrew and Greek is Difficult," they may also abide under the theme of "motivation," since they are so closely related to it in substance. Indeed, "motivation" and "demotivation" are separated by only a simple word-level negation (i.e., the morpheme 'de-').

When it comes to demotivation, some students such as Fred simply took the coursework so seriously and planned for it so carefully that common setbacks such as a low quiz grade simply did not occur. He notes that as a full-time student, he was able to put significant work into language classes. "I didn't have many setbacks because it was a priority, those semesters when I took them and I was able to study full-time, so I had no excuse not to buckle down."

Yet there is no implication or suggestion in the data that other students who

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[84]Sin Yi Tsang, "Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language in the Context of an American University: A Qualitative and Process-Oriented Study on De/Motivation at the Learning Situation Level" *Foreign Language Annals* 45, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 132; Dörnyei and Ushioda, *Teaching and Researching*, 138-9.

have setbacks are not working hard as well. What is interesting to see is the various ways in which students rebounded from difficulties. Those responses might be grouped into three categories: (1) social support from other students; (2) psychological "self-talk"; and (3) professor support. It would be helpful to note at the outset, that if students perceive their environment to be supportive, motivation can increase as a result.[85]

Several participants describe special relationships with other students that were of great support. Mark describes one such relationship. "Alex, I remember once before we had a Greek Exegesis quiz, we were studying in our Greek classroom for the quiz, and I was like, 'Alex, I'm not going to learn this. . . . He was like, 'No! We're going to study this 'till get it.'"

Clay also relates his positive experience with a group of student study partners. "I could always go to someone, 'Hey, I'm having trouble with this. . . . Do you want to go study together and get it?' . . . We could always rely on each other. Maybe not everybody here can say that, but I definitely felt like I relied on my fellow students."

In a particularly poignant statement, one student described how he balanced the stress and difficulty of language studies with reason. Andrew describes an inner response, a noble exercise in achieving perspective via self-talk or an inner dialogue. "I gave it my best, you know, and I didn't overly stress about it. I knew that it was a struggle for me . . . and so even though I may have seen other people excelling or having an easy time with it, I didn't let that discourage me."

Terry, on the other hand, described how he had relied upon a combination of sources of support. He describes social support from other students, as well as self-talk, and then reliance on support from his professors if necessary. When Terry had trouble during his studies, he first relied upon his social network by contacting other students: if they were having similar difficulty with a given concept, he felt better. "Okay, I'm not

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[85]Ambrose et al., *How Learning Works*, 79-82.

the only idiot, we're all idiots together!" After such self-talk, his next step was to contact his professor, as needed. "But then, I would always reach out to the prof, if I had a problem."

Supportive Professors

What the interview data overwhelmingly communicates thus far is that the vast majority of these students felt their professors were interested in them as human beings, not just as cognitive processors. Angela provides a rich example. While struggling in her first semester of Hebrew, her professor continually encouraged her with the words, "It'll pay off, it will!" Towards the end of the second semester, she excelled in a public translation exercise during class time, in front of the other students. Her teacher took the moment and praised her work in front of the class, despite her previous difficulties. She gave him credit. "So I think there was a lot of very specific intentional encouragement, verbally and investment of time, as well as some of the things he did where he would kind of encourage other members of the class to encourage each other, and so created a nice sense of camaraderie: 'We're all in this together!'"

Professors—not necessarily the ones interviewed for this research—were able at times to help students connect their language studies to their social contexts, creating a meaningful contribution to students' concepts of meaningful ministry. Justin celebrates an experience with one of his language professors. He was encouraged by the way one of his professors integrated a topic very dear to him into the curriculum, revealing how Galatians had impacted race relations in the contemporary world—certainly a problem or generator of life stress for many people in the United States. "And yeah, so ACU, I think did a phenomenal job of just choosing really good people. . . . They were very caring people, for my own well-being, and for things outside of language. It was, they made for great teachers, for that type of content, because they helped it to be something that was bigger."

A Supportive Environment, Online

As noted above, the support of teachers was at times very important to online learners. It could be important to quickly revisit that topic here. After beginning a program at GCTS and then transferring and graduating from the SBTS, Fred took all of his language courses online. He extols the supportiveness of his professor.

"And I took no language at Gordon-Conwell but Dr. Plummer is, I'd say he's the most excellent online teacher I've had, because he takes extra care to connect with his online students." Fred recounted how important or encouraging it was when his professor sent him a handwritten note in the middle of the semester, saying, 'Hey, keep up the good work!'"

Certainly, some of these students felt support was available, online. Jamie also shares how his professor made online learning a supportive environment. He had a difficult first semester. "For instance, . . . Dr. Tucker sort of had time to offer me tutorials, beyond normal and class hours. So we would meet on Skype." His professor would send him assignments and then grade the finished work, which Jamie felt was helpful while working through the difficult terrain of Hebrew language study successfully.

Unsupportive Environments and Implicit Curriculum

While these students exhibited an array of methods for dealing with classroom stressors, not all students felt supported by their colleagues at all times. Jamie felt that students in the United States could be more oriented towards individualism than students in Ghana. "Over here [in Ghana], people are open to that idea of group, of collaborative learning. But over there, I found out that, as we say in Ghana, 'Each one for himself, God for all.'" David, in turn, explained that professors could create a more nurturing, Christ-centered social environment if they were to occasionally state that grades do not necessarily confirm one's call to ministry, or the lack of it.

> I'm not sure how it is on other seminary campuses, but I've talked to a lot of people, and there's a shared consensus that there's just a, competitive nature on campus, and especially within the language classes, and it's not in what a professor says, but in what they don't say. . . . when it's not said and that Gospel message just isn't continually integrated and spoken, it's really hard to believe the opposite.

David's comments—although they express a truly rare sentiment in this interview data, when it comes to the supportiveness of professors—provide a natural transition to a discussion of "implicit curricula" in seminary language education. Reviewing what has already been presented above, although there are some exceptions, it seems clear that the attitude of most professors and students conveys a fairly consistent implicit curriculum. The overall message of that implicit curriculum may simply reflect these professors' and students' commitment to Christian values, which yield a nurturing community.

So, in terms of a loving Christian community, it is interesting that although Jamie prefers group-oriented study such as what currently might be found more so in Ghanaian culture than amongst Americans, he also states that he has had a very good experience with his professors in the United States. Were his teachers supportive of him? "Yes! I think one of the greatest blessings of ACU is the professors you meet. They teach what you do more than what they say in class. . . . So they are very personable, and affable, and they show a genuine desire to help."

Motivation: Value on a Scale of One to Ten

In what is perhaps the most dramatic section of interview data available for this study, students ranked their own perceptions of the value of language studies on a ten-point scale, ten being the most important, and zero being not important at all. Answers ranged from two to ten. The most common ranking was actually "ten," with four students submitting that reply. The average answer was "seven" although three students listed a two as their response. Some sorting out of these numbers is in order.

Terry feels language skills rate as a two out of a possible ten. He does not use

language skills much in his current ministry roles, although he states he can see how it would be important for "other guys." He feels that ineffective leaders could be more effective if they had more training in practical ministry, as opposed to a second semester of Hebrew and Greek. At the same time, he reports that if he were preaching on a regular basis, language skills would be more important for him.

Deborah, likewise, ranked the use of languages in her ministry as being fairly low—a three—and yet she did highly value the language skills she has acquired, ranking them as an eight in terms of personal value. She explains that contextualization of the Gospel is more towards the forefront of her concerns, rather than explicitly teaching about Greek or Hebrew grammar concepts from the pulpit.

> Because it seems to me more people are asking questions about school shootings or 'Where was God when this happened or whatever?' And so, they're less asking questions about Hebrew noun paradigms or whatever! . . . but that doesn't change the fact that I'm so grateful personally to have learned this, and I am convinced that it has made me a better teacher.

Katie's distinction between personal value and ministry value suggests there are nuances to the issue. More solidly on the other end of the spectrum, in terms of how much value she ascribes to language studies in her ministry is Susan. She is planning to open a non-profit biblical counseling practice with her husband. She reported her delight in language studies by using figurative language, stating that she was "like chocolate" when she began to study Hebrew and Greek. She saw immense value in studying those languages and using them in ministry. As to her rank of "ten," she states, "Yeah, and I don't mean that lightly: for me, it's very important! It's very important because it's a way that I can honor the Lord, by seeing what he really said. Yeah, so it's really a ten!"

A few students made similar comments about the value of language studies: for them, language studies are extremely important because all of the elements of the MDiv curricular requirements are important. Martin ranked the importance of language studies as a nine, for example. It was very important for him, but not to the exclusion of other courses. "I don't know if I would say it is the most important thing: So that's why I

wouldn't put it at a ten or something like that."

Mark substantiates his opinion on similar terms: all parts of the curriculum are important. He sees a vital connection or interweaving between seminary studies and his ministry, and he ranks the importance of biblical language studies along with every other element of the curriculum as a ten.

> And so yeah, it's something that, every class in seminary is important. . . . because I'm like, 'If I don't take notes, wait, I might not need this for the final, but I might need this ten years down the road when I have a student come to me and say, 'Hey my best friend is thinking about committing suicide, how can you help me? How can you help me help him, or her?' And so yeah, I think every class in seminary is important, yeah.

Not Practical and Practical: A Continuum

This section of the data analysis is further associated with practical outcomes, or how students expect and plan to use language skills after school. Although there is no attempt here, to quantify these students' actual use of languages in ministry, it is possible that—based on where they ranked the importance of language skills in their ministries, respectively—a general sense of how these students use or plan to use languages in ministry is available.

Figure 15 represents the practicality of various applications of language skills as being on a continuum, as opposed to an artificially sharp, black-and-white categorization of "practical" use of language skills in ministry versus "not practical," or a total lack of practical application for language skills in ministry after school.[86] Thus at one end of the continuum, "Not practical" signifies a hypothetical attitude of "These language studies are relevant only to school, and in no other way at all." On the other end of the continuum, "practical" signifies an attitude in which a student sees definite roles

[86]Figure 15 is simply the bottom half of figure 13. The top half of figure 13, which is a large graphic, has been cropped away here for the sake of space.

for language skills in ministry.

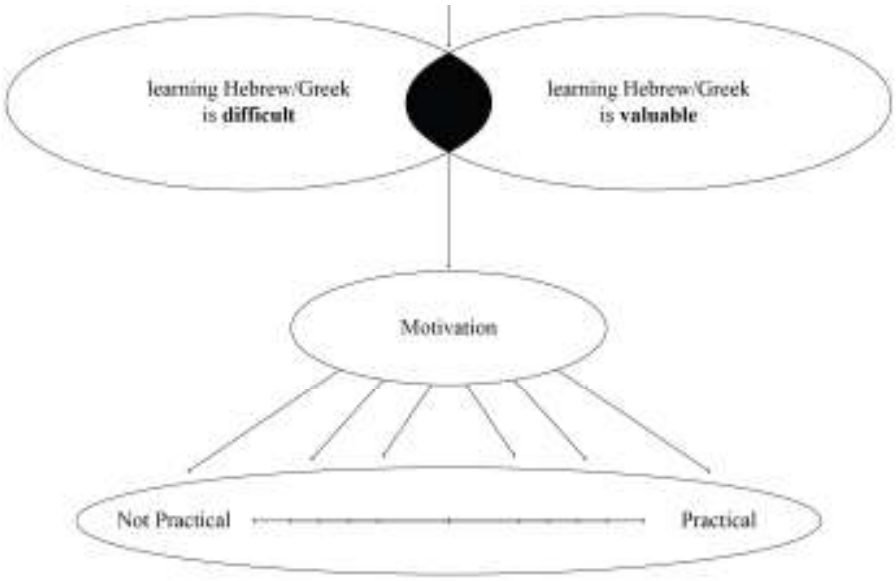

Figure 15. Practical or not? A continuum

It should be noted at this time that out of the 24 students who participated in this study, only 2 of them are currently planning to pursue PhD work. One more student began his program with the intent to pursue a PhD, but changed his mind during his MDiv studies. Two other students are planning to open or continue with a biblical counseling practice, respectively. One student is planning to plant churches in India with his wife. One more student is not sure yet how he might spend his time after seminary. Besides pastoral work in a local church, one participant also teaches at the Pacific Islands University in Guam. The remaining participants are either already in full-time ministry in a local church or planning to be involved in a local church as pastors, preaching and teaching. There was not a single student who did not plan to use his or her language skills at all. The following sections attempt to account for different ways students plan to engage the Bible in its original languages, and in their respective contexts.

Pastoral Concerns

Many students have what could be called a "pastoral" motivation. Jamie states such an attitude plainly: "I am motivated by the fact that learning the original languages would give me the tools to be able to discover God's word on my own, and be able to be confident about what I'm teaching, what I'm preaching about. So for me, I think that is the primary reason."

Many others share his sentiment. Studying languages can be a way of developing a stronger root system for one's faith, which pays out in ministerial fruitfulness. Consider Carl's account: "To know God's word at a better, more intimate level is my desire and that's what motivates me personally, with my study for languages. And then yes, professionally, I wish to preach better. I think that's the natural conclusion: from knowing God's Word better, I want to explain it better."

Other students are also seeking fruitfulness in ministry. Clay cites improved biblical theology as his motivation for language studies and states he has a goal to use, understand, and teach the Scriptures better. David also identifies knowing God's word better as his primary motivation for studying languages. But his thoughts quite naturally follow through with concerns about accurate exegesis and communication of the message, especially when faced with a difficult passage of Scripture: "And then you take time to translate it and go through the exegetical process, and all of a sudden it clicks, and you're starting to put these pieces together, understanding how the passage functions within the context of the book, within the context of the biblical story. And it's just amazing!"

In addition to these thoughts about pastoral fidelity to the text, for several students it is also important to speak of poor or misguided teaching, a separate and yet related "pastoral concern." More than one student listed having a better ability to identify unhelpful or unfounded teaching as being valuable. Patrick provides an example: "Discerning, being able to discern whether somebody has just gone way off the path.

Like the dude that's sitting there talking about Cain being the son of Satan because the verbs that are, the particular Hebrew words . . . I'm like, 'Oh dude! Really? Did you listen in Hebrew class?'"

While walking through the same minefield, John referenced faulty word studies as a problem. Like many of these students, he exhibits a pastoral concern for solid teaching. "Or, you know, they'll say one word in Greek, 'this word has like these three different meanings,' and they show that each of them apply in this text! Like that's not how any language works!"

Missions

For the purpose of this section, "missions" includes the ways language studies extend "what it meant," to "what it means," moving from the biblical texts' original historical and linguistic contexts to other, contemporary contexts—often via preaching and teaching which facilitates the impact of the Gospel. Jamie, for example, teaches a Bible study on Tuesday nights. Recently, someone asked him about a specific word Paul used when he was writing to Timothy about prayer: "So that is where knowledge in the original languages help me to explain in detail how a certain, specific text of Scripture needs to be interpreted. So I think those languages become handy, especially in Bible classes."

Veronica agrees with that sentiment, that the church's mission can be extended via faithful engagement with the text in its original languages. "Yeah, I really think that's the goal of preaching is trying to make those translations for people, you know it's an ancient text, and so how are we helping them . . . ? 'What did this mean for you today in the circumstances of your life?' So I think that the language just gives us a very important step in the process."

Scripture can be applied in numerous ways. Susan uses her language skills while counseling with her husband. She feels more confident of Scripture's message as a

result: “But it gives me a confidence, when I say ‘I’m a biblical counselor.’ So when I sit across the table from a young woman, . . . I have the ability to really go back and look and see, ‘What did the original language say? And how is it worded in such a way that maybe I can help to clarify what’s going on for her?’”

Some of these students may engage the original languages in a less extensive way, but they still consider their language skills valuable. While he does not necessarily translate large portions of Greek or Hebrew texts while preparing sermons, Earl does use Greek to sort through commentaries: “But in terms of sitting down with the Greek New Testament to prepare a sermon, I’m not rolling with it like that, that’s not something I’ve ever really done. But having that little bit of a working knowledge has kind of unlocked some higher-level commentaries I guess. . . . there’s been benefit in that.”

Conscientious Language Use

More than one student felt that skillful use of the languages in ministry must take into account possible misuses of language skills. Jimmy shares a story to illustrate: “I think I was talking to one of my students, he was a high schooler and he was saying, he was asking me if it’s like ‘second rate’ to read the Bible in English and things. I was trying to reassure him like, ‘No, no, no, that’s not the case at all.’”

Fred, along similar lines, stated that his language professor had taught him that language skills should be like “underwear.” They serve an important purpose, but they don’t necessarily have to be seen. He wants to apply that advice and avoid misuse of the Hebrew or Greek in his own ministry: “And so I try to keep that in mind because I’ve certainly sat under a number of teachers who, they’re constantly referring to Greek meanings and how we as the audience don’t understand this like he does, and that can be tedious at best . . . . So I never want the languages to serve me in that way.”

Life-Long Learning

John, along with some of the other students, expressed a desire to continue

with his studies after school. He wanted to follow up and learn more. “I can’t wait to graduate and take Greek again on my own! Just delve into it and re-learn it.”

A few students expressed less of an initiative to persist in language studies after graduation, and yet value what they have learned already. Andrew, for example, felt comfortable with his current level of proficiency. He has plans to keep what he has, without necessarily planning to learn more after graduation. “So yeah, I mean, I’m moderately motivated to keep it up, because I think it could be easily lost, but even what I’m, at the level at which I’m using them, I think I could sustain without a whole lot of effort, you know, so.”

David described a particularly long-range quest for mastery a program of study which it appears he has undertaken. He states that it is unrealistic to hope to be a “master” after a few courses, “But I feel like, at least what our curriculum did was set us up for, so that in ten or fifteen years, I will be a master at it, if I keep up the things that they instructed me to do.”

A group of these students were already familiar with informal language studies, which take place without the guidance of a seminary professor. Jason had personally familiarized himself with Greek before seminary, forgot much of it, attended seminary language classes, and then almost let his proficiency slide again. Not wanting to repeat the process, he has become more active in maintaining his language skills. He now utilizes a web-based tool for maintaining Greek language skills. “So I actually do the ‘Daily Dose of Greek,’ because I thought, ‘This is really silly, I’ve spent so much time learning this! I don’t want to forget it—I want to use it!’” Obviously some of these students see value in language studies beyond the classroom.

Research Sub-Question 3c: Emergent Themes

Research Question 3c is “How do language professors and students demonstrate best practices for teaching and learning in specific seminary contexts?” The

question is addressed below by professor and student interviews.

Professors

Professors choose a variety of ways to help their students access the message of Scripture.

Contact with Scripture Affects Motivation

It seems, possibly without needing to be said, that all of these teachers have increased access to Scripture for their students as a focus when they choose the textbooks, homework assignments, and software they will use in the classroom. In discussion about those materials, a general theme emerges: contact with Scripture is precious, even in introductory courses.

Professor Barnabas made the following comment. "I like Pratico and Van Pelt mainly because of the workbook. It's all biblical stuff, it's not, not conjured up stuff. So you're immersed in real texts."

Professor Ben explained a similar rationale when it comes to explicitly including Scripture in the classroom. "In Croy you're translating New Testament text by the third or fourth lesson. . . . And if you get them reading New Testament texts, I think that excites them." This excitement that occurs when students make contact with Hebrew or Greek Scripture—not just Hebrew verb paradigms or Greek vocabulary—may be due to the fact that such exercises align with the students' motivations to preach or lead better, or simply understand Scripture better as they pastor or teach. In some cases, it may thus touch the very core of their rationale for seminary education.

Introductory Textbooks

Professors David and Barnabas both pointed out the large variety of quality introductory textbooks available to use. David advises his students in the following way: "'You can learn the languages from any [of the] textbooks: they're all decent.' I don't

feel like they're, one is terribly deficient. A lot of it depends on the instructor that uses this, and how much he explains, and can supplement, and drill."

Professor Barnabas made a similar observation about the market for introductory textbooks. There may be a sense of gratitude in his reply, appreciation for the plethora of texts that are available. "You know, frankly there are what, a couple of dozen Hebrew grammars and the elementary Hebrew grammars in print—it's some number in that ballpark—or were recently in print, at least. And they're not, there's not that much difference amongst them . . . because I think the paradigms are the same in all of them, right?"

Indeed, with so many hearty options, English-speaking students have much to be grateful for, when it comes to the variety of textbooks available to them. Two of the professors interviewed for this research had written their own introductory Hebrew textbooks, and the reasons they wrote them were personal.

Professor David explains, "Yeah, I think, look: everybody gets to that point in language teaching where you just have your way of doing it. . . . I got kicked upstairs, I was Academic Dean for ten years. So part of the reason I wrote the textbook was to sort of carry on what we had built over twenty years, so anybody can teach it now."

Professor John moves along similar lines. Using his own textbook, and the fact that his institution allows him to teach as he likes is ideal, he feels. "So, my primary textbook is my own textbook . . . . I think I have to teach Hebrew the way I understand it, and I don't like having to follow someone else's method. So, I teach my own textbook, and for me, it works a lot better when every professor is free to do it how they want to do it."

Yet once students have progressed beyond introductory grammar courses, and move into more advanced grammar and exegesis courses, textbooks become less general and more focused: an exegesis course on Ephesians would involve different secondary texts than an exegesis course on Genesis, of course. Professor Barnabas describes the

movement from first year grammar to second year studies, and then exegesis courses.

> It's *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. I use that in the second year. . . . So you sit down and read texts and you say, "Oh that's not," most of it, you say, "Well, yeah, most of it, that's what Pratico and Van Pelt taught me, and that's most of it." But there are other things you think, "What on earth is going on here?" So beyond that for the exegesis courses, it would depend on what text we're reading.

Professor John confirms that the goal of introductory Hebrew textbooks is to allow students to begin using the original text of the Bible as their textbook. "When they get beyond first year Hebrew, and I teach, say, a course, in 'Exegesis of Jeremiah,' the main thing is just the Hebrew Bible. Any commentary, anything like that is secondary."

Various Supplemental Resources

While this thesis is not focused on teaching methodologies, it would be a loss not to spotlight the resources these professors have developed to help their students: if nothing else, it shows the personal commitment each teacher has to helping students learn biblical languages. While what follows is neither a comprehensive list of everything these teachers do to help their students, nor a critique or endorsement of "effective teaching." Yet the professors who participated in this study are incredibly creative. What is highlighted here is not a particular activity or resource, but the effort and skill each of these teachers has put into helping his or her students learn.

Besides weighing the relative value of the lecture videos, flashcards, and other products developed for the *Basics of Biblical Hebrew* grammar by Pratico and Van Pelt, Professor Rachel also developed her own Quizlet resources for her students.[87] Since she feels *Basics of Biblical Hebrew* was somewhat lacking in terms of syntax, she has also developed supplementary resources. "And then I started supplementing a little bit, just my own notes, things I want, like the syntax piece I want to add for next year. . . . I don't want to overwhelm them, that's where I have to kind of figure out, 'It's not an

[87]Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew: Grammar*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019).

intermediate Hebrew course, it's a first year Hebrew course.'"

She uses teaching assistants to provide weekly tutoring sessions that are not mandatory for students who maintain an A average. For students who are struggling, however, the tutoring sessions provide more time with a live instructor. Also, since there is not always time to cover pronunciation in class, she has developed her own videos to help students. "Yeah, so I've used QuickTime and what I do is make a screenshot video, and I'll have, like I did the whole Book of Jonah, and I just read very slowly. And so they just have a couple verses a week. They watch the video and work on their pronunciation. So they do that on their own."

Professor John has also made his passion for teaching tangible. He has developed his own collection of resources to go along with his textbook for introductory students. "I've got the textbook, I've got a workbook. I do have a lot of audio files and some video files that they can watch. So that's all there. And so I don't really go beyond that."

Software Tools: Etiquette

One important theme which arose in these professors' interviews is that care must be taken by professors, especially in their students' early stages of language acquisition, to ensure that software tools such as Logos or Accordance—if they are used—are utilized in a helpful manner. Professor Esther, for example, weighs the strengths and weaknesses of such tools. "They're helpful tools. And again, if the focus is on knowing how to use the resources well, those are resources. And so we talk about the pros and cons of those kind of softwares, what's really useful in that, and what's maybe turning into a crutch." She references a decision made by the faculty at ACU. They decided that, as helpful as such software tools may be, for students in the early stages of language learning, the temptation to, "let the computer do your homework for you" could be too much.

Professor David likewise identified not only the strengths of such softwares, but also the need to use them judiciously. He is not opposed to such tools, and acknowledged they may have great benefit. Yet he also warns against the distinct possibility of misusing them. Care should be taken to ensure software doesn't replace the language acquisition process in the beginning: "And again, the electronic, the electronic stuff like Logos . . . can be a great help here . . . . A lot of people say, 'Well I don't need to learn the languages, I'm just going to use Logos.' Well, good grief! I wouldn't touch Logos, unless you've had at least the two semesters of grammar!"

Students

These students, along with their professors, have engaged their respective curricula with creativity and hard work.

Study Habits: Students
Exert Great Effort

Beyond specific techniques or practices, a common theme that emerges from this project's interview transcripts is that "students work hard." Again, it is important to note that these students have all had success with language work, regardless of the extent to which they feel biblical languages are of personal interest to them.

Deborah worked around the clock. So did her fellow students. "I did all of the assignments . . . we had to do Hebrew or Greek, like six days a week . . . . Now I think we only uploaded them once a week, but there was an assignment for each day, and so that was just the big part of how I studied, because there was translation every day that we were doing."

Graduate language studies required much attention and effort for all of these students. John reported that wherever he would go, he would try to take his schoolwork with him. He describes how he practiced parsing verbs as follows: "But it was just like, literally using every moment. So when I was away, or in the Chinese restaurant, I'd print

out some receipt paper, and start copying down, and doing all the tenses, just so I wouldn't forget them."

Memorization techniques. Memorization, albeit achieved through different routes at times, is the substance of what most students employed in terms of studying, at least in the beginning. Casual observation shows that in the study of any language, at least in the beginning, irregularities call for some memorization.[88] To compliment John's example immediately above, his wife Shelley also wrote out verb paradigms until they stuck. Andrew bought flashcards which Zondervan has made available to compliment his introductory textbooks. Much as Professor Rachel had described above, Carl found Quizlet to be helpful, a flashcard program available for no cost on the internet: "Obviously having it on my phone when I'm at work, and I can flash through a couple of study sessions that are built into my fifteen-minute breaks . . . . It was just helpful."

Besides memorization, reading texts is helpful. While memorization is helpful, especially in the beginning, a few students found that simply reading Hebrew or Greek texts could be a very powerful tool for learning. Obviously reading large chunks of Greek and Hebrew texts is likely not feasible in the early phases of language learning for most students. Nevertheless, at one point in his language learning, Scott simply opened his Greek New Testament and began to read. "And I worked my way through one of the Timothys or Titus on my own, probably spending fifteen minutes a day, verse by verse. . . . but that was probably one of the biggest helps for me."

Reading a Hebrew or Greek text is an immersive experience which deals with data that is less controlled than what one might find in an introductory textbook. Yet a few students reported on the benefits of such exposure to the biblical languages. Even

[88]That situation is the case if, as with Hebrew and Greek, previous scholarship has identified phenomena specific to a language such as regular verb paradigms and deviations from them, and so forth.

early in his language learning, Joshua would resort to reading texts and his lexica. "So the way that I learn vocabulary is just by reading a lot. I just struggle through words. And, early on in language studies, . . . I would look every word up. And that's largely how I learned vocabulary because when you look up the same word forty-five times eventually it sticks!"

Textbooks

After looking through syllabi and interview transcripts, it seems clear that there is not just one book or combination of books which work best for everyone at these seminaries. Although William Mounce's *Basics of Biblical Greek* is used fairly widely in these six seminaries for beginning Greek courses, and these students for the most part seem to appreciate it, there is little common ground beyond that in terms of which books or combination of books these students prefer.[89]

Jason states, "I preferred Bill Mounce. I think Bill Mounce is probably the best, personally. He's very straightforward, he's fun, very engaging."

Scott thought along similar lines in regard to Mounce's textbook, at least as it was used in introductory courses at his seminary. "For Greek, we used *Basics of Biblical Greek* by Mounce. And my first professor didn't love that text, but that's what we used and that was fine. I thought it was okay."

If there is a theme associated with textbooks in the student interviews, it was that students generally used whatever book or combination of books were assigned by their professors, and found benefit in them. Susan, for example, explains how she reaped the benefit of the effort her professor poured into writing his textbook:

I do like that the book that we used for Hebrew was written by the prof.

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[89]William D. Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek: Grammar*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019).

> Okay, and that was helpful when he was teaching because he was referring to, like, 'Look on this page and see how this is done,' and that's, when there's so much confusing stuff going on, that was very helpful, that was a consolation.

Carl, like the vast majority of the selected students, was undeniably positive about the textbooks chosen by his professors. "Anyway, so I would say really all the primary textbooks that were required for each of my classes, are—I'm not selling them, I'm keeping them—they're all books that I built my library for. . . . But honestly, all of them were amazing."

Pre-Manufactured Resources

At other times, pre-manufactured resources such as videos, flash cards, and workbooks were made available and appreciated by students. Sometimes students reviewed their professors' pre-recorded lectures. Again, Susan explains, **"**What I love about the online, what I love about the online language classes is, I can go back and re-watch that lecture over and over again, and drill it in, you know, just drill it home."

Not just teachers, but publishers offer a variety of supplemental resources for learning. Andrew gives an example of a publisher-developed curricular resource package. **"**Oh, yeah, I mean, it was basically just like, *Basics of Biblical Greek* and *Basics of Biblical Hebrew*. . . . So those were the main texts that we worked through . . . and then obviously, the workbooks to go along with them, which was our homework."

Ultimately, these students tended to appreciate the creativity of their teachers when it came to language learning resources. Shelley recounts the following: "I don't know if you've seen any of Dr. Plummer's videos, but he always does like an introduction for each chapter explaining what you're going to learn, using a passage of Scripture to show how it connects. . . . And he had this puppet, I mean just silly things, but just . . . . But yeah, he just had silly things like that, too."

Software

Because of their influence, it may be helpful to briefly stop and discuss

software tools in more detail. Students are, along with professors, seeking to incorporate computer driven learning tools into their seminary studies. The question in most quarters seems to be, not a matter of whether or not they have merit for learning, but rather a matter of finding a healthy balance. How much and when tools should be used by students?

Software Tools: Etiquette

A desirable approach seems to be that software should not be a replacement for language studies per se, but a helpful augment to them. The idea is perhaps analogous to the fact that many students have used a typewriter to write a paper, but that currently, they could also use a word processor. Healthy use of language software can be influenced by seminary faculty. Scott recounts how language tools were incorporated into the curriculum during the third semester of his language studies: "Yeah, so by the time you get to the interpretation course, they recommend Bible software . . . . And then like Dr. McDowell is the one who brought Accordance into Gordon-Conwell or made it a big push so that students could get a discount. I think it's a phenomenal resource."

Sometimes a healthy attitude towards software is more of a personal decision rather than the result of a seminary policy. Joshua, who is now enrolled in a ThM program, described his initial attitude towards language software and how he uses it currently: "And, early on in language studies, I did not use computer software as a principled decision. I avoided it at all costs." His current perspective or attitude is based on the fact that, over time, he has cultivated a greater facility with Hebrew and Greek: "Where I'm at now, just as a matter of convenience I do use Accordance. . . . I don't prefer to use Accordance grammars. I would rather grab a book off the shelf for a grammar. But I do lean heavily now on Accordance for my studies."

Tools-Oriented Courses

Two students who participated in this research explained that they would

prefer more of a tools-oriented instruction. Terry shared the following frustration. "And my degree, at least when I started it, the MDiv, I was told, 'This is a professional ministry degree.'" He has a goal of more effective local church leadership. A tool-based approach would be more helpful for him, he states, as opposed to studying "some of the more intense grammar concepts" that a second semester of Greek or Hebrew brings, or even pursuing PhD-level proficiency in biblical languages. "And so I think being able to use the tools would have been a better use of my time, . . . by the time a year rolls around, I'm not going to remember this. What I'm going to remember is, 'How do I need to use Logos or tools like that in order to help somebody interpret a passage, or to help myself interpret that passage?'"

Victor shares some of Terry's frustration. Victor currently serves as an associate pastor at his church, and his father is also a pastor. Victor does use Greek and Hebrew when preparing to preach, but wonders if a tools-based course would have been helpful than what he learned at seminary. His father took a course which focused on sermon preparation with the aid of language software: "Yeah, and so it wasn't like, 'Here's learning the language,' but learning how to use the tools to study the language in order to preach. And I thought that was really interesting and I thought, 'You know, that would be helpful if I had learned something like that.'"

Concluding Thoughts on Data Analysis

This concludes an analysis of the data collected in order to address this project's three research questions. Presentation of research implications and research applications will take place in chapter 5. Yet for the moment, it would be appropriate to discuss strengths and weaknesses of the research design.

Evaluation of Research Design

As with any study, this research has strengths and weaknesses. Although others may exist, here are a few that are apparent already.

Strengths

A qualitative approach was appropriate, due to lack of substantial treatment of the topic in precedent literature. Although there is no universally accepted number of participants for qualitative research, Creswell states that 30 qualitative interviews can "saturate" a sample in grounded theory, and that case study research may intentionally select 4 to 5 cases, although 6 seminaries are explored here.[90] Again, there is no universally accepted number of participants, but one principle at work in this research design is that a variety of evangelical affiliations may enhance the research.[91]

Another strength in terms of sample is that this present study dealt only with MDiv students within one year of graduation. The total population of seminary students who may or may not take a language would be much more of a challenge for any researcher, seeing that the overall number of evangelical seminary programs is frankly just too broad for any one study to explore at the depth that was possible when the focus was on a more narrowly defined sample as it is here.[92]

Another benefit of this qualitative research design was that semi-structured interviews prevented me from overlooking the almost ubiquitous subject of language studies and the internet.[93] As noted above, while the interview protocols for both professors and students did not mention online learning, the topic arose in almost every interview quite naturally, seemingly on its own. It is an important area of concern for these participants which was not documented with regard to language teaching and

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[90]John W. Creswell states that 4 to 5 cases or institutions is common in case study research. John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2014), 189. Creswell also states that 20 to 30 participants will "saturate" a theme or category for grounded theory. Ibid.

[91]Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 11th ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2016), 253.

[92]The researcher is grateful for the willingness of the registrars and professors who helped locate participants. They were creative and resourceful.

[93]Tsang, "Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language," 132-3.

learning in the literature review.[94]

Transcribing directly by correcting transcripts that were produced by a computer or manually, by human efforts, allowed a familiarity with the data to emerge. The analysis of this much data is no easy task, but it benefitted from the attention necessary to check every word in every transcript more than once. The coding phase of the analysis called for such attention.

Weaknesses

Perhaps the most salient weakness of this study is that only one person was coding the interview transcripts. There was no one who could confirm or challenge the choices I made in terms of identifying emergent themes. On the other hand, I think there is sufficient data to support the emergent themes as they have been presented in this chapter, and even more evidence for them in material which was not explicitly included here in this chapter for lack of space.

Another weakness is that there were no existing or standard interview protocols for the topic of this research when the study began. The tools necessary for the job were developed on site, based on the literature review in chapter 2, and then evaluated by my advisor and several other professors prior to their deployment.[95] The protocols seemed to hold together, however, and more than one of the recruited professors told me that the questions were good or helpful. Two students told me they felt the interview was helpful, that it helped them to process their seminary experience.

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[94]Skype and Almoto Call Recorder were accessible and effective research tools. Almoto Call Recorder is a free add-on for Skype, which records audio with high-quality precision. Interviews were recorded with participants from across the United States with relative ease. Participants could be interviewed wherever they were, and whatever they were doing, as long as they had a phone connection.

The combination of Skype and Almoto Call Recorder also facilitated clear audio for interviews which were conducted around the world, literally. One participant in Ghana, and another in Guam made significant contributions to the study.

[95]Suzie Macaluso, PhD; Houston Heflin, EdD; John David Trentham, PhD; Anthony Foster, PhD; and Timothy Paul Jones PhD had all seen the protocols at different stages of their development.

In terms of sample, one weakness was that because I was working with a limited timeframe, it was not possible to include every person from every school who volunteered. I turned one student from GCTS away, for example, because I had already transcribed four interviews of GCTS students, and only had three student interview slots remaining. Since at that time, I had not interviewed a single student from LCS, I made the decision to explain my situation and turn away that particular student from GCTS.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Having now completed an analysis of the participation form responses; official seminary publications such as program websites, course catalogs, and syllabi; as well as interview data, certain facts and themes emerged. With all of these results in hand, it is time to present research implications, research applications, and possible agendas for future research.

Research Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the role(s) and relative efficacy of biblical language studies in graduate seminary curricula for language professors and MDiv students in their last year of studies or who had graduated in the last year at six evangelical institutions for a total of thirty participants. The role(s) of biblical language studies was generally defined in terms of how curricula explicitly and implicitly express notions of the importance of biblical language study. The efficacy of biblical language studies was generally defined in terms of the degree to which students perceived the value of language study with regard to their respective careers or ministries, and the degree to which professors felt a given curriculum was effective in achieving its stated goals.

Research Questions

1. What categories emerge from the literature which can provide a dynamic framework for MDiv language curricula at selected evangelical seminaries?
2. How are varying curricular priorities and outcomes expressed at selected evangelical seminaries, with regard to biblical language studies and language proficiency?

a. How do the selected seminaries explain their theological and philosophical-educational bases for the role(s) of biblical language study in their respective curricula?

b. How do the selected seminaries articulate their plans for how their curricular priorities will be addressed in the classroom, or in terms of pedagogy?

3. How do professors and students at select institutions express their priorities and values regarding biblical language study?

    a. How do specific teachers explain and understand the place of biblical language study within the curriculum of their respective schools?

    b. How do selected students understand or articulate the efficacy of biblical language study in terms of their personal goals for ministry, or motivation for studying—their personal formation—at seminary in a more general way?

    c. How do the selected language professors and students demonstrate best practices for teaching and learning in specific seminary contexts?

Research Implications

Via the analysis of chapter 4, certain research implications can be drawn about biblical language studies at each seminary represented in this project, as well as the experiences of the individuals who teach and study there. In the section below implications from the participation form will precede implications which arose from analysis of data collected in response to the three research questions.

1. There is some diversity in terms of gender and ethnicity, but there is not sufficient data available to know if this group of students and professors reflect their seminaries' overall ethnic and gender makeup.

2. Most of these students perceived themselves as being interested in and possibly gifted to do language work.

3. The role of stakeholders in curriculum revision was initially underestimated in the framework.

4. Without evangelical theology, education would not be an evangelical Christian ministry.

5. In this sample, language curriculum is a unique part of a larger curriculum.

6. This sample demonstrates there is no universal MDiv curriculum or set of language requirements, and that for these seminaries curriculum revision is an ongoing process.

7. These seminaries have a deep commitment to biblical language studies.

8. For this sample, seminary language education is not exclusively academic, as it also has a role in church life: these two spheres of activity bleed over into one another.

9. These teachers see the value of character formation and increasing access to Scripture in its original languages as being central to the purpose of language curricula.

10. These teachers see the role of languages in the overall curricula as being central, or perhaps "life giving."

11. There is no consensus on how much language is appropriate for an MDiv program, but the general ideal for these professors usually involves developing exegetical skills at some level.

12. Even the students who rated the importance of language studies to their ministries as being lower than other students still saw some value in language studies.

13. Several of these professors and students emphasized that language studies are not the same thing as a faithful life of obedience to Christ.

14. These seminaries tend to see their institutional goals for students realized.

15. For these students, interest in languages was often pronounced.

16. Language software tools can be helpful, but they should not replace language study altogether.

17. For these professors, knowing how to best approach or deliver online language learning is an unresolved issue.

18. These students tended to see their goals for language study realized.

19. For this sample, motivation may indeed be the most important factor in terms of whether or not a student succeeds with language studies.

20. With very few exceptions, these students tend to appreciate and feel their textbooks were helpful.

Implications of Participation Form

There is some diversity in terms of gender and ethnicity in this sample, but there is not sufficient data available to know if this group of students and professors reflect their seminaries' overall ethnic and gender makeup. Seventeen of the students and all six of the faculty identified themselves as "White," "Caucasian," "White/Caucasian" or "Anglo." Nineteen students and four professors were male. While there is nothing wrong about being male, Caucasian, or both, the responses to the participation form do raise the question as to how seminary language classrooms might look from a point of

view that is different than one's own.

Most of these students perceived themselves as being interested in and possibly gifted to do language work. When these twenty-four students were asked if they considered themselves to be "language people," fourteen answered in the affirmative. A different sample, perhaps composed of students who have not completed MDiv program language requirements successfully, might likely offer a different picture.

Implications of Research Question 1 Data

In response to Research Question 1, I argued for an original framework which can account for the dynamics at play in seminary language curricula. Implications relevant to the framework are as follows.

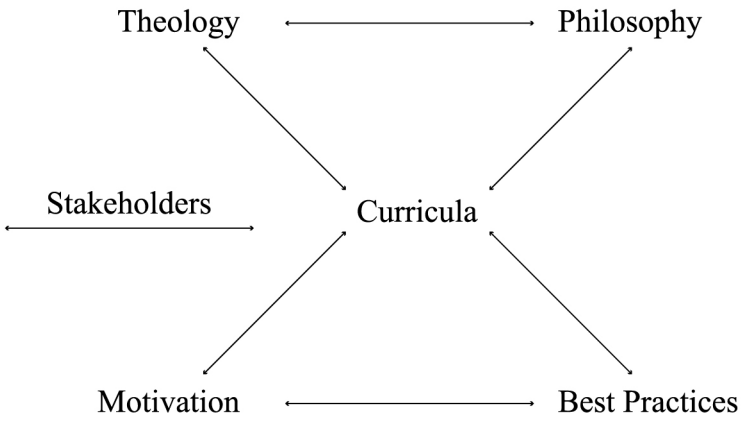

Figure 16. The revised framework

The role of stakeholders in curriculum revision was initially underestimated in the framework. The change is reflected in figure 16. The original framework held solid throughout the interviews, with the exception of the "stakeholders" node. During the interviews, it was clear that the notion of stakeholders took on much more significance in the process of curriculum revision than I had previously anticipated. Stakeholders can be numerous, and they may hold varying degrees of influence when it comes to the final

shape of a curriculum. Professors interviewed for this research project mentioned several factors that stakeholders at their respective seminaries must take into account, such as the financial cost of an MDiv program, or the requirements of ATS.

Without evangelical theology, education would not be an evangelical Christian ministry. In the framework, philosophy and theology are shown in interaction: they are foundational in terms of how a curriculum is designed.[1] A student has little to no direct influence upon the philosophy of a curriculum design, and no questions about philosophy were directed towards students in the interview protocols. Yet theology is the anchor, the foundation of the curricula in this framework. The framework might be reconfigured in such a way that theology is a foundation for the rest of the nodes, but the current design works just as well when it is explained as it is here.

In this sample, language curriculum is a unique part of a larger curriculum. The framework is an attempt to organize the findings of the precedent literature with regard to seminary language curricula alone. As is shown in the interviews, it has specific functions that other parts of an MDiv curriculum do not supply.

Implications of Research Question 2 Data

This sample demonstrates there is no universal MDiv curriculum or set of language requirements, and that for these seminaries curriculum revision is an ongoing process. Some programs require more hours of language study than others. As noted above, currently there is very little written about the specific structure of, or rationale for language requirements in seminary curricula.[2] And yet all of these seminaries focus on the personal and professional formation of students with an eye to fruitful ministry

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[1]Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Reason within the Bounds of Religion*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 108; see also George R. Knight, *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective*, 4th ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2006), 158.

[2]Perry Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education: A Practical Handbook for Integrative Learning* (Carlisle, UK: Langham Global Library, 2014), 10-11.

outside the walls of the seminary.

These seminaries have a deep commitment to biblical language studies. All of these seminaries currently require language studies, and have no intention to remove languages from their curricula altogether. The commitment to language studies is not light, if the professor interviews are indicative of these institutions' position on the subject. As noted above, official publications such as websites and course catalogs place value on language studies for their contributions to practical ministry, as well as the character formation of students.[3]

Implications of Research Question 3 Data

For this sample, seminary language education is not exclusively academic, as it also has a role in church life: these two spheres of activity bleed over into one another. In this way again, most of the participating professors stated that the telos, the end goal of teaching and learning biblical languages is realized in more effective practical ministry. The "purposes and objectives" of language study may bring glory to God, as students gain skills which feed teaching, exegesis, and preaching.[4]

These teachers see the value of character formation and increasing access to Scripture in its original languages as being central to the purpose of language curricula. The development of linguistic skill and its relation to character formation and greater engagement of Scripture is not accounted for specifically in the precedent literature, but discipleship is.[5] Esther Meek defends a wholesome epistemology by arguing that a "defective default"—which prizes accumulation of information and facts over knowledge

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[3]An emphasis on both discipleship and benefits to practical ministry fall within the range of evangelical theology, as Estep sees it. James Riley Estep Jr., "Toward a Theologically Informed Approach to Education," in *A Theology for Christian Education*, ed. James R. Estep Jr., Michael J. Anthony, and Gregg R. Allison (Nashville: B & H, 2008), 265, 268.

[4]Ibid., 265.

[5] Estep, "Toward a Theologically Informed Approach to Education," 268.

as a process of transformation—must be challenged for the sake of teachers, students, and learning itself.[6]

These teachers see the role of languages in the overall curricula as being central, or perhaps "life giving." As noted above, language courses are not the only courses a seminary student is required to take. In seminary, students can explicitly be taught to critically evaluate their philosophical assumptions regarding ethics and worldview, as well as how to utilize language-based exegetical skills. Are those endeavors better left to disparate fields of study, or does language study unify the rest of the curriculum? The professors I interviewed felt language studies should take a central role, a place in the overall MDiv curricula that fuels the rest of the system. Yet admittedly, increased overlap between language, theology, and practical ministry might most likely occur in advanced language courses, when greater linguistic proficiency makes textual exegesis more accessible.[7]

There is no consensus on how much language is appropriate for an MDiv program, but the general ideal for these professors usually involves developing exegetical skills at some level. Of course, the precedent literature does not address the specifics of language course requirements in seminary education: each seminary has its own. On the other hand, these professors—and these students as well, to differing degrees—felt that the mission of the church can be extended through language study and by increased skills in exegesis and practical ministry.[8]

Even the students who rated the importance of language studies to their

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[6]Esther Lighthouse Meek, *Loving to Know: Introducing Covenant Epistemology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 132, 134; see also Parker J. Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, 10th ann. ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 68-69, 92; Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Educating for Responsible Action* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 14.

[7]See Harry Lee Poe, *Christianity in the Academy: Teaching at the Intersection of Faith and Learning* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 22-24.

[8]See Estep, "Toward a Theologically Informed Approach to Education," 265.

ministries as being lower than other students still saw some value in language studies. A minister could use a Greek term explicitly while preaching or teaching, or simply study the word, whether or not it is explicitly used in the sermon or classroom discussion that follows. Either way, the students who participated in this study noted that knowledge of the biblical languages is important, to a greater or lesser extent, for practical ministry.[9] It was not uncommon for these students to put heavy emphasis on the value of language study for practical ministry.

Several of these professors and students emphasized that language studies are not the same thing as a faithful life of obedience to Christ. Yet several students referenced the benefit of personal spiritual formation as being a significant element of their language studies. They saw this character development, or personal discipleship as being core to language studies, alongside their academic value. This resonates with Parker Palmer's notion of epistemology, in which intellect, emotions, and spirituality balance one another out as holistic knowledge is cultivated.[10] It should be noted that not all of the students saw language studies as something that contributed to their spiritual formation, but even in that case, they demonstrated noble character by following through with difficult work of their language classes.

These seminaries tend to see their institutional goals for students realized.[11] To summarize, professors reported that students tend to pass their exams and reach the goals the seminary lays out before them in terms of explicit curricula. On another level, several professors and students place great value on life-long learning, a commitment to continually engage Greek and Hebrew after graduation. As of yet these seminaries do not

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[9]See Estep, "Toward a Theologically Informed Approach to Education," 265.

[10]Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*, 5.

[11]See Leroy Ford, *A Curriculum Design Manual for Theological Education* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1991), 39-42, 174; see also Susan A. Ambrose et al., *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 71.

systematically follow up with graduates to see if biblical language use is ongoing.

For these students, interest in languages was often pronounced. In terms of curriculum revision, it is notable that several of the schools represented in this research currently offer degrees—or perhaps a certificate—that do not require language studies.[12] Yet several of these students demonstrated interest and commitment to studying Scripture in its original languages. They also planned to use them in ministry.

Several participants agree that language software tools can be helpful, but they should not replace language study altogether. Each language has its own grammar or internal logic that operates on its own terms, not those of another language. Professor Rachel noted, for example, that translation is not simply replacing one word with a corresponding word from another language. Words have a context which affects their meaning. Language software tools were not discussed in the precedent literature.

For these professors, knowing how to best approach or deliver online language learning is an unresolved issue. Online delivery of language courses was not specifically mentioned in the precedent literature. Yet based on the interview transcripts, it is clear that an online delivery of language curricula has both strengths and weaknesses. Students and professors offered many experiences and insights, yet it seems that everyone has questions about how to best deliver online education.

These students tended to see their goals for language study realized. A few of these students enrolled in seminary primarily to engage biblical language studies: such studies were central to those students' conception of effective ministry formation. For a smaller number, their goal for language studies was simply graduation. Most students were somewhere in between those two. Graduation, for a few, is the beginning of an opportunity for more language learning. In general, these students' learning goals appear

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[12]See Jack L. Seymour, "Best Practices in Master of Divinity Curriculum Revision: A Research Report," *Theological Education* 43, no. 1 (2007): 36.

to be founded upon an honest desire to learn and master knowledge or skills.[13]

For this sample, motivation may indeed be the most important factor in terms of whether or not a student succeeds with language studies.[14] At one extreme, if a student hypothetically saw no value at all in learning a language, or if the prospect of success looked more difficult than valuable, he or she would be unlikely to persist in the attempt to do so.[15] Notably, all of the students in this sample have already had success with language studies, since graduation is a reality for each one. No professor or student claimed that seminary language studies are easy. The fact that these students saw substantial value in language studies is evident, as a result.

With very few exceptions, these students tend to appreciate and feel their textbooks were helpful. Although there was no formula to successful studying, students also felt a variety of supplementary materials—anything from pre-manufactured flashcards to professor-generated videos—were helpful. None of these course materials were discussed in the precedent literature.

Research Applications

This research explored the role and efficacy of seminary language curricula. The qualitative methodology called for several sources of data. A review of precedent literature yielded an original framework in an attempt to account for seminary language curricula. Next, an original institutional eligibility form confirmed that participating seminaries met inclusion criteria. It also helped frame an investigation of official seminary publications related to language studies. After that process, a participation form was used to confirm that participating students and professors met inclusion criteria.

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[13]Ambrose et al., *How Learning Works*, 72.

[14]A. M. Masgoret and R. C. Gardner, "Attitudes, Motivation, and Second Language Learning: A Meta-Analysis of Studies Conducted by Gardner and Associates," *Language Learning* 53 (2003): 169, 173.

[15] Ambrose et al., *How Learning Works*, 69, 74.

Finally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with thirty individuals who were seminary language faculty and students. These interviews were analyzed and coded for thematic domains.

Participating professors and students were drawn from institutions which maintain evangelical commitments with either denominational or inter-/multidenominational affiliations. The six seminaries were all located in the United States and were accredited by ATS. All students had graduated with an MDiv in the last twelve months or expected to do so within the next twelve months. As a result, there are a variety of research applications which may benefit curricular revision; language student motivation; and assessment of institutional efficacy. This study might also inform the relationship between seminary language studies and their roles in church life.

Applications from Research Question 1

This study's original framework could be used as a tool when discussing language curricula revision or MDiv curricula revision. Although generalizability for this study is limited, and with so little precedent literature this research is simply a matter of breaking the ice. Philosophy, theology, curricula, motivation, and best practices are admittedly broad categories. In response to the literature, I attempted to whittle them down to much more specific categories such as "epistemology" and "motivation" in relation to seminary language studies. There was very little written on those more focused subjects. Thus it may be possible that other seminary faculty could benefit from this project's treatment of issues important to curricular design, to the extent that those issues are analogous to issues raised elsewhere.

During curriculum revision, it may be helpful to simply name various stakeholders explicitly: stakeholders will be different at different seminaries, and over time. What I have identified in the analysis of the interviews above were stakeholders specific to the seminaries where the participating professors work. Such a finding

suggests that other seminaries might also have a different batch of stakeholders. Even the seminaries represented in this study will have different stakeholders over time as faculty, students, culture, economics, and other influential factors change.

Applications from Research Question 2

There is more than one way to prepare for ministry, and these seminaries offer attractive programs for students wishing to do so in different ways. Whether or not language study is a student's main interest, these schools have provided enough room for students to at least explore that territory, if not go deeper into electives beyond the required courses. The variety of language courses and MDiv programs these seminaries offer is a boon to prospective students.

Continuing to offer language electives is of vast importance to some of these students' seminary goals. All else being the same, students who chose to take language electives could be more equipped to serve the church with those skills, just as a student who chose to study church history electives might also be more equipped to serve in church life—although in different ways. Electives may level the terrain between programs with more rigorous language requirements and those which do not require as much class time for language studies. The literature was silent on the role of electives in seminary language studies.

Applications from Research Question 3

It may be of great benefit, even for the students in this sample who are not planning to be preachers or ministers, to take advantage of language studies. Biblical language studies may offer a more intimate engagement with Scripture that buttresses the preaching and teaching of pastors and other church leaders. Yet that application is not necessarily to the exclusion of the value of biblical language proficiency in other ministries such as biblical counseling.

These participants emphasized that language skills should be wielded

conscientiously in ministry. A pastor who overuses or perhaps misuses Greek in a sermon could give the impression that language skills open a door to knowledge that is superior and not accessible to untrained laity. Knowing Greek and Hebrew are not prerequisites to knowing and worshiping Jesus. More than one participant expressed frustration with such misuse. One of the most readily accessible applications of this research is to suggest that professors and students should continue watching for misused language skills, and even confronting such misuse if necessary.

Certainly, interaction with the text can be a huge inspiration to these students, as it may align with their goals for language studies. The participating professors see their own language classrooms as places of discipleship, although they acknowledge not all Hebrew or Greek language classrooms are. All of these teachers felt the need to integrate the message of Scripture into their discussions of linguistic phenomena. Even in the early stages of language learning, these professors attempted to help their students make those connections. The student participants in this study often prized such interactions.

Having noted the benefits of seminary language studies above, one appropriate course of action would be to simply continue in the good work already underway, and continue to encourage those who are toiling towards the same vision. The fact that these professors all noted the important role of discipleship in their classrooms may simply be a reflection of a healthy relationship between the church and seminary life.

Perhaps these professors should not underestimate the effect of their support on their students' motivation. By demonstrating support and care for their students, these professors may be fostering a more supportive classroom. The matter should be weighed or nuanced a bit as follows. On one hand, there is little a professor can do to inspire motivation in his or her students. Much of what a student brings to class, in terms of motivation, is always beyond the control of a professor. On the other hand, if a supportive

environment is a spur to student motivation, it appears these seminaries are doing something right: the vast majority of these students noted that they could call on their teacher or other students if they were experiencing difficulty.[16]

These professors—and some of these students—emphasized that language software should be used responsibly, especially in the beginning. Familiarizing oneself with the grammar, or the internal logic of a second language adds layers of depth to the interpretation of what another speaker had in mind or intended to communicate. Computer programs are simply not currently able to replicate the analytical skills of human beings that are involved in deciphering the intended message of another human being that has been expressed verbally.

Research Limitations

The findings of this research are limited in terms of their generalizations in several ways.

1. The sample included only seminaries that are accredited by ATS and are located in the United States. The results are not generalizable to seminaries that are not accredited by ATS and which are located outside of the United States.

2. The sample was composed of students who had successfully completed the language requirements for an MDiv degree. The results of this study are not generalizable to students who have not successfully completed language course requirements for an MDiv degree.

3. The sample was limited to evangelical seminaries, and its results are not generalizable to students who are not attending an evangelical seminary, or faculty who are not teaching at evangelical seminaries.

4. The analyses of the data are my own, and generalization of the results may be limited due to unconscious personal bias.

5. As much as ethnicity and race may influence this research, the results of this project are limited to the racial and ethnic diversity represented by the individuals in the sample. The same can be said about gender diversity within the sample.

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[16]Sin Yi Tsang, "Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language in the Context of an American University: A Qualitative and Process-Oriented Study on De/Motivation at the Learning Situation Level" *Foreign Language Annals* 45, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 134.

6. My sample was gathered largely through personal networks, although I knew none of the students and only two professors personally before I approached them about participating in this research project. The results of the study may be limited by that fact.

Future Research

This study was an initial exploration of the role and efficacy of seminary language studies at six evangelical seminaries. The findings of this research, along with its qualitative approach reveal many possible avenues for future research. Several topics related to this research, but beyond the scope of the present project are as follows.

1. A similar research design and methodology could be used by researchers with a sample recruited from current or former MDiv students who attempted to study biblical languages as a requirement of their respective program, but were not successful. Although recruiting a sample of such students could be difficult, the results of that research could be valuable to professors, curriculum designers, and language students.[17]

2. A similar research design and methodology could be employed with more specific student samples. This present study's sample of participants was mostly male and Caucasian. Any number of more focused samples would be interesting to explore as well. Perhaps the experience of African-American MDiv students or the experience of female MDiv students at evangelical seminaries would be fruitful. These more focused samples could enhance the findings of this present study.

3. A similar research design and methodology could be used by researchers with a sample of students and professors at non-evangelical seminaries. Such research could inform not only the understanding of the role and efficacy of language studies at non-evangelical institutions, but it could also help to throw the results of this present study into relief.

4. A similar research design and methodology could be used to explore the role and efficacy of language studies in doctoral curricula.

5. A research study could be designed by researchers to compare MDiv curricula at institutions which do require language studies with MDiv curricula at seminaries that do not require language studies. Alongside the results of this present research, exploring rationales for removing language studies from MDiv curricula could be crucial information for faculty at seminaries who are considering revisions to MDiv language requirements.

6. A study could be designed to compare the experiences and outcomes of research

[17]John David Trentham's dissertation helped to frame the development of this section on future research. John David Trentham, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates: A Cross-Institutional Application of the Perry Scheme" (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 220-22.

doctoral students with those of professional students when biblical language coursework is required.

7. A longitudinal study could be designed to explore and follow up with MDiv students—such as several of those interviewed for this study—who currently hold a commitment to life-long study of Scripture in its original languages. How do students follow through on such commitments over time? Such a study could inform the value curriculum designers place on the role of seminary language studies and their conceptions about the efficacy of those studies.

8. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods study could be designed to follow up on ideas raised by this research.[18] First, a quantitative phase could be executed to identify pastors who currently use languages on a generative and regular basis in their ministries, the ways they use them, and the extent to which they use them. Second, qualitative semi-structured interviews could be conducted with those pastors in order to gain a more nuanced explanation of the role and efficacy of language studies in their ministries.

9. As illustrated in Figure 17, any number of studies could be designed to probe the role and efficacy of language studies which are delivered in an online format, or in a hybrid format which combines residential and digital delivery.[19] For this study, online learning was not mentioned in a single interview protocol but the topic came up in almost every interview: it was a pressing issue. Figure 17 graphically represents some of the factors that further research could involve.

10. Also as illustrated in Figure 17, a study could be designed to explore the role and efficacy of language software in language teaching. How can biblical language software be used with maximum benefit to student learning? Such research could be used to inform or establish protocols for effective use of language software, as well as classroom or even seminary-wide policy.

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[18]John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2014), 15-16.

[19]Books about the use of technology in education can be very accessible at times. See Joan Thormann and Isa Kaftal Zimmerman, *The Complete Step-by-Step Guide to Designing and Teaching Online Courses* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2012), 1; Lin and J. Michael Spector, eds., *The Sciences of Learning and Instructional Design: Constructive Articulation between Communities* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 1. Mindi Thompson, sitting president of the Association of Christian Educators named Faith-Based Online Learning Directors as another academic society that currently seeks to weave online learning and faith together. Mindi Thompson, email message to author, August 30, 2019. "Connect," Faith-Based Online Learning Directors, accessed September 5, 2019, http://www.distancelearningdirectors .org; "About Us," Association of Christian Distance Education, accessed September 5, 2019, www.accessed.org/about-us.

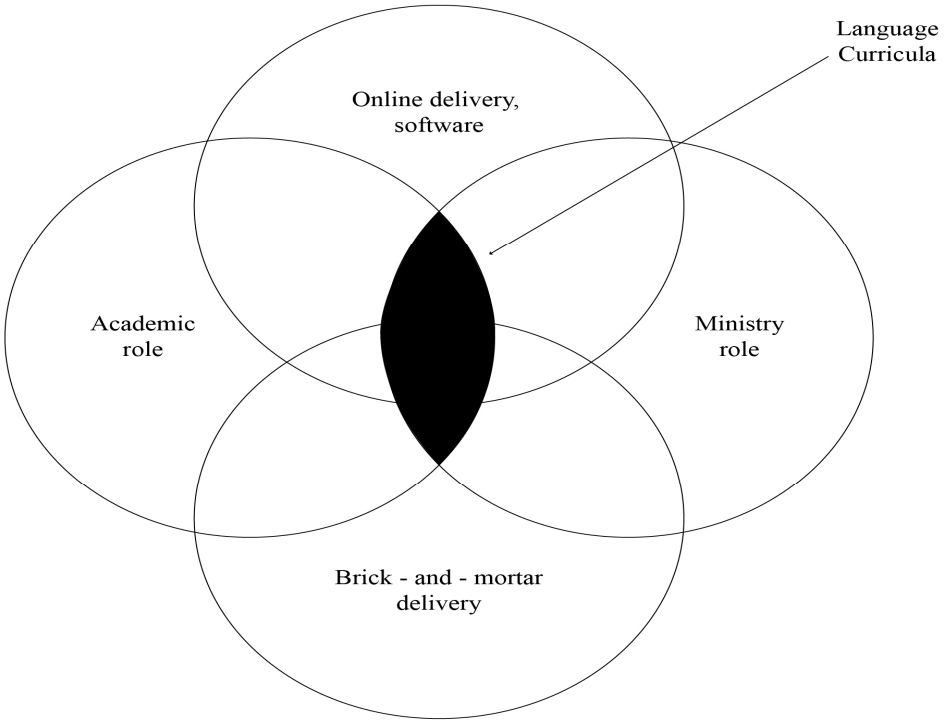

Figure 17. Digital learning and future research

Conclusions

At the outset of this project, the lack of precedent literature which deals with the subject of the role and efficacy of seminary language education was noted. And yet, as this research has shown, language studies play a significant role in MDiv studies, often occupying a large amount of space in a given MDiv curriculum. Is it appropriate to think that both seminary language faculty and students should benefit from a thorough assessment? Should not the matter be addressed explicitly, in print? The evident answer, at this point in the research study, is affirmative for more than one reason.

First, the study is helpful because it reveals, even as an initial investigation, the complexity of language studies at the participating seminaries. Student motivation, philosophy which is applicable to Christian educational practice, theology which informs the relationship between seminary language studies and church life, and best practices in teaching materials and learning, as well as the dynamics involved in curricular revision

which include the powerful influence of stakeholders, all of these factors combine to produce a product. Is that product worth the money and time it requires, when it comes down to the experiences of these seminarians and their teachers? Again, according to the results of this initial study, for these participants the answer is an affirmative.

Second, via a qualitative design, this study reveals a multifaceted analysis of perspectives from both students' and professors' experiences. At one extreme, students enroll in a seminary program specifically to study languages. These students are often planning to serve as pastors in a local church. A much smaller number are planning to pursue PhD work. Yet in both cases, language studies are of prime importance to those groups, as this study has revealed.

At another extreme, a small number of students felt that language studies were good and could benefit ministry, but they would have preferred a simple introduction to language software after one semester of Greek and one semester of Hebrew. Yet the majority of students fell somewhere between these two extremes, and tended to lean more towards seeing language studies as substantially valuable to their ministries. Not one student felt that language studies should be removed from seminary curricula altogether.

Professors showed clear passion for the use of languages in personal formation and practical ministry. For them, language studies wield not only academic value, but also value in form of powerful benefits for the local church. Language studies have missional value. Language studies clarify the message of Scripture, allowing one to dip beneath the surface of existing modern language translations.

Third, via an analysis of these seminaries' language requirements and their rationales for the role of languages in the classroom, the study revealed additional reasons to examine language programs in an explicit way. The variety of programs offered by these seminaries is frankly astounding. On one hand, via choosing electives or taking advantage of various MDiv concentrations seminaries have made available, students can often ratchet up or ratchet down their engagement with language studies. The student

participants often had customized their level of engagement with language studies as they determined was to the greatest benefit of their personal understanding of Scripture and ministry.

Of course, the message is clear: both professors and students pointed out that language studies in and of themselves is not a substitute for worship that results in a growing knowledge of Christ and the Gospel that is freely available to all people, without any sort of prerequisite. But most of these participants also agreed that if the opportunity arises, language studies can be a particularly exciting and rewarding exploration of the Bible's message.

In conclusion, as the study has shown, one of the most important avenues of inquiry related to language studies at these seminaries is simply the form of course delivery. This study also suggests that at these seminaries, advances in technology and the possibilities for digitally powered education, it would be a gross oversight to not discuss the opportunities and challenges of integrating technology into language education. In a more general way, participants made it clear that there are strengths and weaknesses of both online learning. Yet traditional brick-and-mortar delivery has strengths and weaknesses as well, and there is no consensus amongst these participants on any one best way to approach either delivery format, or even a combination or the two.

This study has attempted to place all of the above factors and issues on the table, connecting specific implications and applications of this present research with the precedent literature, addressing gaps in what has already been written. Ultimately, this project is only an initial exploration, and hopefully it will raise questions for both educators and their students as they consider language curricula at their respective seminaries and in their respective churches as the glorious story of the gospel unfolds.

APPENDIX 1

INSTITUTIONAL ELIGIBILITY FORM

This instrument is intended to provide a means to parse officially published data about language studies (official school websites and course catalogs), and to confirm that participating institutions meet selection criteria relevant to this study. Ultimately, it is an attempt to answer Research Question 2 and its two sub-questions.

1. Do any official school publications (websites, or course catalogs) establish that a given institution is accredited by the ATS?

2. Does any official school publication, such as a mission statement on a seminary's website, establish that a given institution is explicitly aligned with an "evangelical" orientation, as defined by Marsden?[1]

3. Does any official school publication explicitly express a commitment to an evangelical denomination or inter-/multidenominational community?

4. Does any official school publication, such as a course catalog or department website, explicitly state that biblical languages are required as a part of the MDiv curriculum or curricula? If so, what are those requirements, specifically? If biblical languages are not required, what is the explanation for that decision, if any such explanation appears in official institutional documents?

5. What is the explanation for the role of biblical languages in a given seminary's MDiv program(s), if one is explicitly offered in official institutional publications? If available or explicit, what theological or philosophical-educational rationales for language study as a part of MDiv curricula are expressed in seminary publications?

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[1]The term "evangelical" follows Marsden's definition in this project. Evangelicals believe in (1) the ultimate authority of Scripture following the Reformation's formulation of it; (2) the actual, historical nature of God's acts to make salvation possible, following the Biblical narrative; (3) salvation through faith in Christ alone; (4) an essential need for missionary work and evangelism worldwide; and (5) the value of personal spiritual transformation. George Marsden, "Introduction: The Evangelical Denomination," in *Evangelicalism and Modern America,* ed. George Marsden (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), ix-x.

APPENDIX 2

PARTICIPATION FORM

Instructions for Potential Participants:

Please review and complete Section 1, "Agreement to Participate" to confirm your willingness to participate in this study by checking the appropriate box and entering the requested information. In Section 2, please provide responses for each item, as applicable.

SECTION 1

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to explore the functions and effectiveness of biblical language studies in the MDiv curricula at several evangelical seminaries. This research is being conducted by Mark Crumbliss for the purposes of an EdD thesis. In this research, you will complete the form below and participate in a personal, recorded telephone interview. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time*.

By your completion of this form and participation in the personal interview, and checking the appropriate box below, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

[ ] I agree to participate.

[ ] I do not agree to participate.

Name:_____.

Email Address: _____.

Date: _____.

SECTION 2

Preferred Name: _____.

Telephone Number: _____.

Male/Female: _____.

Year of Birth: _____.

Name and location of your seminary: _____.

Ethnicity/Race (in your own words): _____.

FOR STUDENTS ONLY:
Are you currently enrolled in your last year of MDiv studies?:_____.

Have you graduated with an MDiv degree within the past year?: _____.

Did you study biblical languages as an undergraduate? If so, which language(s)? How many courses did you complete?:_____.

How many courses of graduate-level Greek and/or Hebrew (or other seminary language courses such as Aramaic or Syriac) have you taken so far?:_____.

On a scale of one to ten, ten being the most important, how would you rank the importance of biblical language studies to your work after graduation?: _____.

Do you consider yourself to be a "language person," or someone who is interested and perhaps gifted to work with languages? (Note: being a "language person" is not a requirement for participation in this study.): _____.

FOR FACULTY ONLY:
What is your current professional title(s)?: _____.

For the purposes of this research, I am looking for professors with (1) terminal degrees, (2) who have taught biblical languages as a central focus of their respective teaching loads, (3) for at least five years. Do you fit this categorization?:_____.

If applicable, please name which language courses you currently teach or have taught.: __

FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS (*For the purposes of this research, participation in the following activity is optional.*):

This study is not designed to "audit" the teaching and learning of biblical languages. Yet during the interview, a description of resources related to study of biblical languages or that enhance language studies—such as syllabi, books, workbooks, websites, software, flashcards—would help me to better understand the rationale behind language curriculum at your school. If and only if you feel comfortable doing so, emailing me a copy of one of your syllabi would address a world of information relevant to this study and perhaps even answer questions I have not thought to ask. It will also help me to "triangulate," the interview data, and thus improve the validity and reliability of my analysis.[1] *No syllabus or any other school related publications mentioned above*

[1]Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 11th ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2016), 260.

will be reproduced in full or used in the final presentation of this research in any way that would allow a reader to identify the source of those publications, respectively.

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

PROTOCOL 1: STUDENTS

Interviews were introduced via the following three paragraphs.

This is Mark Crumbliss, speaking with _____, who studies/has studied at _____. The date is _____, 2019.

For the purposes of this interview, I'm not necessarily looking for right or wrong answers, but just trying to "stick my toe in the water," or to carry out a preliminary investigation into the dynamics at play in seminary language curricula. It is possible that this study could lead to others, but we don't know that right now. So feel free to elaborate, to provide examples that illustrate your answers.

I have nine main questions (and possible follow up questions), so five to six minutes per question would be excellent. By the time we get to Question 9, if there is anything important I should know about your experience with learning languages that we haven't discussed yet, you will have time to talk about it then.

Research sub-question 3b: How do selected students understand or articulate the efficacy of biblical language study in terms of their personal goals for ministry, or motivation for studying—their personal formation—at seminary in a more general way?

Theology

1. Do seminary language studies contribute to your spiritual formation, or your growth as a Christian?[1] If so, how does that happen? (Probes: Do you feel language studies are simply an intellectual, cognitive exercise, or are they relevant to your life in some

[1]James Riley Estep Jr., "Toward a Theologically Informed Approach to Education," in *A Theology for Christian Education*, ed. James R. Estep Jr., Michael J. Anthony, and Gregg R. Allison (Nashville: B & H, 2008), 265.

greater way (such as spiritually or emotionally)? If so, how might that be? What do you feel you have to offer the church, or the world, as a result of your language studies that you did not previously have to offer?[2])

Curriculum

2. Considering the requirements for language studies in your program, are there requirements you regard as beneficial, as they currently stand? How are they beneficial? (Probes: Are there changes to language study curriculum or requirements that you would like to see in the future? If so, explain them to me. In terms of language studies at your institution, are there things about the curriculum as it stands that you would leave as they are? Why or why not?)

3. Describe the difference between your experience with Greek studies and your experience with Hebrew. (Probes: Did you have more than one teacher for your Greek studies? Was one language more interesting than another?)

Motivation

4. What do you value about language study that gives you motivation to study? (Probes: What is your motivation for language studies? Do you have personal interests in Hebrew and Greek, as well as plans to use them in future ministry? Are your motivation(s) a combination of the above, or do you have some other reason(s)? Are you confident you can achieve your personal goals?[3] Explain why you feel these goals are—or are not—within reach. Are you confident that you can achieve the required level of Hebrew or Greek proficiency for your program?[4] Why, or why not?)

5. On a scale of zero to ten, ten being the most important, and zero being not important at all, how would you rank Hebrew or Greek courses in terms of the role language study plays in your seminary studies, and ministry after graduation? Why? (Probes: Has your motivation or rationale for learning biblical languages changed as a result of your studies so far? (Do you, for example, have a greater desire to learn biblical languages than you did before the semester started, or vice versa?) If there has been a change, describe what happened to bring about that change.[5])

6. Do you feel your teacher and other students were supportive of you, or concerned for your well-being?[6] What was done to demonstrate that? (Probes: If and when you had a setback or difficulty—such as a low quiz grade, or difficulty with a particular point of grammar, or assignments from other courses competing for your attention—how

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[2]See Estep, "Toward a Theologically Informed Approach to Education," 275.

[3]See Zoltán Dörnyei and Istvan Otto, "Motivation in Action: A Process Model of L2 Motivation," *Working Papers in Applied Linguistics* 4 (1998): 53; Susan A. Ambrose et al., *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 69, 74.

[4]Young-Guo Cho, "L2 Learning Motivation and Its Relationship to Proficiency: A Causal Analysis of University Students' EIL Discourses," *English Teaching* 68, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 56-57; see Ambrose, et al., *How Learning Works*, 71.

[5]Dörnyei and Otto, "Motivation in Action," 43.

[6]See Sin Yi Tsang, "Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language in the Context of an American University: A Qualitative and Process-Oriented Study on De/Motivation at the Learning Situation Level" *Foreign Language Annals* 45, no. 1 (Spring 2012):134; Ambrose et al. *How Learning Works*, 79-80.

did you deal with it?[7] Is there anything your teacher or other students did to add to, or to alleviate those issues? Is there anything your teacher did which made learning more difficult than necessary?)

Research sub-question 3c: How do language professors and students demonstrate best practices for teaching and learning in specific seminary contexts?

Best Practices[8]

7. Briefly walk me through the titles of textbooks your teacher uses or recommends: are there things you like or dislike about those books? (Probes: Describe whatever other resources your teacher uses: handouts (personally developed by your teacher or sourced elsewhere), homework assignments, quiz and exam formats, language software or websites, or whatever other materials and assignments your teacher uses to help students learn.)

8. How do you study for class time, quizzes, and/or exams? Are there books; flashcards; computer software/websites; certain ways you drill yourself to master content; or other resources you use to study? (Probes: In other words, what works for you? How much time would you estimate you spend on Hebrew or Greek during a given week?)

Concluding Concerns

9. Are there any issues, or anything important about language studies at your seminary that I have not asked about yet? Would you like to make any important, additional comments about anything we have discussed?

PROTOCOL 2: LANGUAGE PROFESSORS

Interviews were introduced via the following three paragraphs.

This is Mark Crumbliss, speaking with _____, who teaches at _____. The date is _____, 2019.

For the purposes of this interview, I'm not necessarily looking for right or

[7]These questions overlap with questions concerning "Best Practices," in teaching and learning which immediately follow. See Zoltán Dörnyei and Ema Ushioda, *Teaching and Researching Motivation*, 2nd ed., Applied Linguistics in Action Series, ed. Christopher N. Candlin and David R. Hall (New York: Routledge, 2013), 103.

[8]In the "Participation Form," I made the following request:

> This study is not designed to "audit" the teaching and learning of biblical languages. Yet during the interview, a description resources related to study of biblical languages or that enhance language studies—such as syllabi, books, workbooks, websites, software, flashcards—would help me to better understand the rationale behind language curriculum at your school. If and only if you are able, or feel comfortable, emailing me a copy of one of your syllabi would address a world of information and perhaps even answer questions I have not thought to ask. It will also help me to "triangulate," the interview data, and thus improve the validity and reliability of my research. (Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 11th ed. [Boston: Pearson, 2016], 260)

If it was not possible, for any reason, to view a student's class syllabus, the protocol proceeded as written from this point, for this particular interview item.

wrong answers, but just trying to "stick my toe in the water," or to carry out a preliminary investigation into the dynamics at play in seminary language curricula. It's possible that this study could lead to others, but we don't know that yet, so feel free to elaborate, to provide examples that illustrate your answers.

I have eight main questions, and possible follow up questions, so five to six minutes per question should be plenty. Question 8 will allow space to discuss anything important about your experience with seminary language teaching and learning that you think I should know, if I haven't brought it up by that time.

Research sub-question 3a: How do specific teachers explain and understand the role of biblical language study within the curriculum of their respective schools?

Theology

1. Not all students may have the same abilities or calling, so do all seminary students need biblical language study? Why or why not? (Probes: What are the greatest potential contributions language studies may make to church life and its mission in the world?[9])

2. Is teaching Hebrew or Greek an act of discipleship?[10] If so, describe how teaching biblical languages manifests or plays out as discipleship. (Probes: The works of certain Christian philosophers and theologians overlap: they claim epistemology and discipleship involve holistic knowing, a transformation over time, not just fact accumulation.[11] If you agree, how does this transformation happen in your own language classroom, for example in your teaching, office hours, or mentoring otherwise?)

Philosophy

3. An entire MDiv curriculum is not delivered by one teacher, of course. Bear with me: so if an MDiv curriculum was a body, with a heart and legs, or a gasoline engine with pistons and belts, what part to biblical language studies play in the overall curriculum? What do language studies do that other parts of the curriculum are not doing? (Probes: Can you share specific stories or illustrations about the central importance or function Hebrew or Greek studies play in the overall curriculum of an MDiv degree at your seminary?)

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[9]See Estep, "Toward A Theologically Informed Approach to Education," 265, 268.

[10]Ibid., 271.

[11]Esther Lighthouse Meek, *Loving to Know: Introducing Covenant Epistemology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 132-3; Parker J. Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, 10th ann. ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 97; Mark R. Schwehn, *Exiles from Eden: Religion and the Academic Vocation in America* (New York: Oxford University Press), 44, 94.

4. In your opinion, what are the essential goals (or goal) of teaching Hebrew or Greek? (Probes: Are these goals explicitly stated in writing on school websites, in syllabi, or elsewhere? If not, is this reasoning implicit (i.e., there are courses required for a degree, but nothing more in the way of an explicit explanation is provided in writing)? In what ways do you feel students reach those goals?)

Motivation

5. How do you personally define student success with language study? (Probes: Are XYZ seminary's goals for students' biblical language studies typically achieved or realized by students? Can you share a student "success story?" Can you share a moment of shortcoming, a "failure," or a moment of difficulty regarding language studies at XYZ seminary?)

Curriculum

6. Jack Seymour notes that curriculum revision is an ongoing process.[12] Are there changes that have recently occurred with regard to MDiv language studies at your seminary? If so, on what basis are the changes made—how does the faculty evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum? (Probes: If applicable, how do you personally feel about recent changes? Are there changes to language study curriculum that you would like to see in the future? In terms of language studies as your institution, are there things about the curriculum as it stands that you would leave as they are? Why or why not? Do students typically achieve the language goals the seminary has for them? If desired outcomes reach beyond cognitive goals, how are students assessed by the seminary in those areas?)

Research sub-question 3c: How do the selected language professors and students demonstrate best practices for teaching and learning in specific seminary contexts?

Best Practices

7. This is no attempt to audit someone's teaching. It may be that each language teacher likes to put their own touch on things—and some linguists argue that could be a good thing—the point here is to uncover what is already working for you, in your context.[13] What is your primary textbook for each language course you teach, respectively? (Probes: Describe any language software you may recommend to students; handouts

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[12]Jack L. Seymour, "Best Practices in Master of Divinity Curriculum Revision: A Research Report," *Theological Education* 43, no. 1 (2007): 36.

[13]See Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 16, 352. In the "Participation Form," I made the following request:

> This study is not designed to "audit" the teaching and learning of biblical languages. Yet during the interview, a description resources related to study of biblical languages or that enhance language studies—such as syllabi, books, workbooks, websites, software, flashcards—would help me to better understand the rationale behind language curriculum at your school. If and only if you are able, or feel comfortable, emailing me a copy of one of your syllabi would address a world of information and perhaps even answer questions I have not thought to ask. It will also help me to "triangulate," the interview data, and thus improve the validity and reliability of my research. (Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 11th ed. [Boston: Pearson, 2016], 260)

If it was not possible, for any reason, to view a professor's syllabus the protocol would proceed as written from this point.

you use (personally developed or sourced elsewhere); homework assignments, quiz and exam formats, or whatever other materials and assignments you use to help students learn. In other words, what works for you? Are there materials or approaches to teaching that have been problematic for one reason or another? (For example, at times, certain textbooks or grammars contain confusing or incomplete treatments of certain points of grammar, or perhaps students, after instruction, did not respond as well as you had hoped to a particular quiz or homework exercise.) How do you respond, if those issues arise?)

Concluding Concerns

8. Are there any issues, or is there anything important about teaching language studies at your seminary that I have not asked about yet? (Probes: Is there anything I should know about teaching biblical languages in a general way, or any important, additional comments you would like to make?)

APPENDIX 4

INITIAL PARTICIPANT CONTACT: EMAIL OR TELEPHONE

This is a loose structure—not a script—which may be adapted to the needs of specific individuals. The point of this initial contact is to present the potential benefits and costs of participating in this research study, and to identify eligible participants.

Dear _____,

My name is Mark Crumbliss. I am working on my EdD thesis at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY. I realize that time is valuable, and it is no small matter to ask busy people to set aside an hour (at most) to participate in my doctoral thesis project.

It is my hope, however, that the potential benefits of this study would yet generate interest. I am researching the role(s) of biblical language studies in MDiv curricula at evangelical seminaries, as well as the efficacy of those studies. Are students seeing their personal goals realized, and are institutions seeing their goals for language studies realized, for example? Since, to my knowledge, there is very little written about those topics, my hope is that this study might illuminate relevant, current concerns about biblical language studies. Such vital concerns could include the issue of language studies when seminaries consider curriculum revision, or the role of language studies in the training of ministers, and by extension, the life of the church.

As a gesture of thanks, I will offer a $12 Amazon.com gift card to all participants. I will also commit to provide the results of the study to all who participate. "Participation" would involve a personal interview of no longer than one hour, which I will record over the telephone.

Whether or not you choose to participate, if you feel comfortable sharing the names or contact information of individuals who might be willing and able to do so, I offer you my deepest thanks. I am looking for students who are in their last year of MDiv studies, or who have graduated with a MDiv degree from your seminary within the last year. Having strong interests in languages—being a "language person"—is not required. I am also looking for language professors with terminal degrees, who have taught biblical languages as a central focus of their teaching load for at least five years. Please do not hesitate to ask me questions regarding this project for any reason. Again, thank you for your time! I look forward to hearing back from you for any reason.

Sincerely,

Mark Crumbliss

Email: mcrumbliss053@students.sbts.edu

Phone: (325) 280-9042

APPENDIX 5

PUBLICITY FLYER

EVERYONE KNOWS:

RTS is a special place for biblical language studies.

But would you like to share your personal experience?

(I will offer a $12 Amazon.com gift card to all participants, and $5 each time you refer me to someone who chooses to participate.)

WHO AM I?

I'm an EdD student at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, working on an EdD dissertation.

I'm looking for:

(1) former MDiv students who have graduated during the last twelve months; or

(2) MDiv students who are planning to graduate within the next twelve months; and

(3) professors who have taught biblical languages for at least five years.

Questions? Comments? No strings attached:

mcrumbliss053@students.sbts.edu

Figure A1. Publicity Flyer

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING THE ROLE AND EFFICACY OF
SEMINARY LANGUAGE CURRICULA

Mark Andrew Crumbliss, EdD
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019
Chair: Dr. John David Trentham

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the role(s) and efficacy of biblical language studies in evangelical MDiv curricula. Six language professors, and twenty-four students who were in their last year of studies or who had graduated within the last year from six purposefully selected institutions were participants. The study addressed three research questions. What categories emerge from a literature review that can provide a framework for language studies at selected seminaries? How are curricular priorities and outcomes expressed in official seminary publications, with regard to biblical languages and language proficiency? How do selected students and professors express their respective values and priorities regarding language studies? Data sources consisted of a literature review; official seminary publications such as syllabi and course catalogs; and thirty one-hour, semi-structured interviews. The results provide implications and applications for both seminary language studies and the fruits of biblical language studies in the local church.

Key Terms: seminary language curricula; discipleship; second language learning motivation; Greek; Hebrew; MDiv curricula.

VITA

Mark Andrew Crumbliss

EDUCATION

B.A., Washburn University, 2001
M.A., The University of Texas at San Antonio, 2004
M.A., Abilene Christian University, 2015

ORGANIZATIONS

The Evangelical Theological Society 2018-

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Part-Time ESL and General Equivalency Diploma Instructor, Even Start Program, Northside Independent School District, San Antonio, Texas 2004-2005
ESL Instructor, The Defense Language Institute, English Language Center 2006-2007
Linguist, Wycliffe Bible Translators and SIL International 2007-2009
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