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Reflection #3

Over the course of the semester, I have had to re-evaluate my learning style due to several assumptions about the German language that I had in 101, which were proven to be false in 102. One of these things is the rise of reflexive verbs. For instance, in 101, I knew that the verb “to shower” was duschen, and (without knowing how to use it) assumed that it would simply follow the same structure as others verbs (z.b. ‘Ich dusche’). However, since this is not the case, I have had to “abandon” how I previously thought about the grammar surrounding the verb, which was simply translating vocabulary from English, and instead actually understand how the verb reflexively “acts” upon an accusative object. Since this isn’t the case in English, I assumed that it also wouldn’t be the case in German, which is an assumption that I have had to actively try and overcome, when using reflexive verbs.

Additionally, during this course of this semester, I had to shift and change my own ideals of how I would learn the German language, in response to how the course itself taught it. This is one thing I liked more about 101 -- it was very much about learning the grammar progressively instead of trying to learn practical applications. This semester, I have had to adjust to the fact that the material is more about learning practical conversational skills, as opposed to just the grammar. I think that this complicates things unnecessarily, as it requires memorization of several different things at once, some of which may not be well integrated. For instance, in chapter 11, there was the overall theme of “Gesundheit”, and there were some instances in which the grammar did not fit directly into the into the theme of the “Gesundheit”, such as the reflexive verbs. This made it feel kind of cumbersome to read and rather awkward to work with, as it did not feel like a cohesive chapter.

One thing that I think really “connected” me to the outside world through my german speaking skills was my visit to Guglhupf and talking to some people that worked there in my (very broken) german. They seemed excited to see someone trying to learn their language, and though they had to slow down a lot for me to understand very well, it was still a pretty cool experience.

Finally, I think that learning German gives me a good ‘foil’ for which I can reflect my other (largely STEM) education off of. Often times, it can be boring to be stuck in only one mode of learning, and it can be hard to work through a long semester of this sort of work. However, German gives me something to look forward to that isn’t simply working through a problem set, or something similar.