Title of Project:
Exploring the Interface of Explicit and Implicit Second-Language
Knowledge: A Longitudinal Perspective

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TIRF Research Topic Investigated:
Language Assessment

Project Summary:
A central issue in SLA is understanding how L2 knowledge types (i.e., explicit and implicit) and L2 processing (i.e., grammar-focused and meaning-focused) relate. Do grammar-focused processing and explicit knowledge facilitate the development of implicit knowledge? This question is known as the interface issue. Despite extensive theorization, surprisingly little empirical work has been conducted. Lack of research may have resulted in part from methodological shortcomings; in particular, using valid measures of L2 knowledge and processing types and with the validity ensured, capturing the longitudinal nature of the interface question. By directly addressing these limitations, I propose to demystify the explicit-implicit interface by contributing to the field in three aspects: (1) examine the validity of L2 knowledge measures and investigate the development of knowledge types, (2) track the amount and types of L2 processing through a self-record mobile app and validate the reported data through a voice-recording device, and, (3) connect developmental changes in knowledge types and observed learning processes in a one-year longitudinal study. The data will be collected at three time points throughout 2019 from L2 speakers of English studying at an American university.

The results of this effort will contribute to language assessment directly by informing SLA researchers and teachers about the optimal measures for knowledge types and language use. Additionally, given the characteristics of the study sample, data on authentic L2 usage will benefit university administrators, international coordinators, and student advisors on how to enhance and enrich the international students' experience in an input-rich L2 immersion context.