

The Centre for English Language Communication (CELCC) held its Second International Symposium from 30 May–1 June 2007 at the Hilton Hotel, Singapore. This triennial event is the Centre's major effort to reach out to the English language teaching community the world over, by bringing together teachers and researchers from secondary schools, junior colleges and tertiary institutions from within Asia and beyond to share their professional knowledge and experiences.

The fine collection of papers in this volume represents the vast range of issues and practices related to the event's theme: **The English Language Teaching and Learning Landscape: Continuity, Innovation and Diversity**. Readers will find the papers varied in theoretical scope and rich in practical experience.

The English Language Teaching and Learning Landscape

Continuity,
Innovation and
Diversity

Invited papers by

- Chen-ching Li
- Ken Hyland
- Stephen Krashen
- Jun Liu
- Anne Pakir
- Ma. Luz C. Vilches

and several selected papers by authors deeply involved in English language teaching in Asia and other regions.

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The English Language Teaching and Learning Landscape: Continuity, Innovation and Diversity ● Wu et al.

*Selected papers from
the Second
CELCC Symposium for
English Language
Teachers*



The English Language Teaching and Learning Landscape

Continuity, Innovation and Diversity

Edited by: Wu Siew Mei
T. Ruanni F. Tupas
Chew Moh Leen
Maria Luisa C. Sadorra
Chitra Varapasad

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Centre for English Language Communication
National University of Singapore



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Foreword

The selection of papers in this issue makes up about one-third of the total number of papers presented at the second CELC International Symposium held at Hilton Singapore, 29th May to 1st June 2007. Together with the other two-thirds of presented papers, there was an extremely wide range of topics discussed at the symposium with this theme as its focus: *The English Language Teaching and Learning Landscape: Continuity, Innovation and Diversity*.

The modern day English language teaching and learning landscape is one of the most diverse of any language on earth. This diversity is in part evidenced by the range of participants from more than 22 countries who attended the symposium. Never before has there a more pressing need for English language training throughout the world. Indeed, globalization has made it almost imperative for professionals in almost every field to be competent speakers of English.

Besides diversity, there is the twin challenge of facilitating continuity and encouraging innovation in this dynamic stage of teaching and learning. As such, the choice of our symposium theme reflects one of our goals which was to provide an opportunity for each of the participants to reflect upon and discuss some of the key issues that language teaching professionals are facing today.

Some of these issues include:

- The challenges of engaging students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds;
- The challenges of preparing students to enter a multicultural and multi-faceted workforce;
- The increasing impact of technology on pedagogy; and,
- The policies driving trends in education.

It is hoped that this compilation of published papers documents some of the very important and pertinent issues presented at the symposium, thereby providing a rich and useful resource of ideas for the English language educator.

Wong Lian Aik

Director

Centre for English Language Communication

National University of Singapore

1

Free Reading in School: Three Hypotheses

■ Stephen Krashen
University of Southern California

ABSTRACT: *There is overwhelming evidence that self-selected recreational reading is the source of reading ability, writing style, much of vocabulary knowledge and spelling ability, and the ability to handle complex grammatical constructions. The evidence holds for first and second language acquisition, readers of all ages, and has been confirmed in many different situations. I will review this evidence and present three additional hypotheses related to reading: 1. The Effortless Reading Hypothesis: The best reading for language development is reading that readers understand with ease. 2. The Forgetting Hypothesis: Language acquisition occurs most efficiently when it is so interesting that readers are “lost in the book” and “forget” it is in another language. 3. The Unawareness of Acquisition Hypothesis states that readers will not be aware that they are improving while they are reading, but will only be aware of reading interesting books.*

Introduction

There is overwhelming evidence that self-selected recreational reading is the source of reading ability, writing style, much of vocabulary knowledge and spelling ability, and the ability to handle complex grammatical constructions. The evidence holds for first and second language acquisition, readers of all ages, and has been confirmed in many different situations.

In this paper, I will briefly review this evidence and then present three additional hypotheses related to reading:

1. The Effortless Reading Hypothesis: The best reading for language development is reading that readers understand with ease.
2. The Forgetting Hypothesis: Language acquisition occurs most efficiently when it is so interesting that readers are “lost in the book” and “forget” about form and even if the text is written in another language.
3. The Unawareness of Acquisition Hypothesis states that readers will not be aware that they are improving while they are reading, but will only be aware of reading interesting books.

These additional hypotheses should perhaps be considered “conjectures.” As I understand it, a conjecture and a hypothesis are the same thing: Neither is a claim of truth, and both require supporting evidence. But a conjecture has much less support. So far, however, the conjectures I will present are supported by some evidence, and there is no counterevidence. Research directed at finding

supporting evidence or evidence contrary to these hypotheses will advance the field. This means that they are “good” hypotheses or useful conjectures, right or wrong.

The Reading Hypothesis

The Reading Hypothesis is a sub-hypothesis of a more general hypothesis: The Comprehension Hypothesis (a.k.a. the Input Hypothesis). The Comprehension Hypothesis claims that we acquire language when we understand it, when we understand what people say to us, or when we understand what we read.

Evidence for the Comprehension Hypothesis includes studies showing that second and foreign language classes that contain more comprehensible input are more effective at both the beginning and intermediate levels (Krashen, 2003a). The evidence for the Comprehension Hypothesis also includes counterevidence to rival hypothesis, studies showing that strong versions of the skill-building and conscious learning approaches are incorrect, e.g., the complexity of the system to be consciously learned, lack of a relationship between quantity of language production and language acquisition, the inefficacy of error correction, etc. (Krashen, 2004; Truscott, 1996, 1998).

A number of short-term comparisons have been done that claim to compare the impact of grammar instruction and comprehensible input, and the results have been interpreted as support for grammar, or the Skill-Building hypothesis. Not so. The “comprehensible input” treatment in these studies has always been an impoverished version of comprehensible input, subjects in every study were experienced “learners” who valued conscious learning of language, and in all studies the conditions for the use of conscious learning were met. Nevertheless, in general, the impact of grammar study was surprisingly small (Krashen, 2003a; Truscott, 1998).

Evidence for the Reading Hypothesis includes studies showing that more reading is related to better proficiency in many aspects of literacy, for both first and second language acquisition.

For beginning literacy development in the first language, students in classes in which more real reading is done outperform those in classes in which less reading is done (Krashen, 2002a).

In both first and second language development, students who participate in classes that include in-school self-selected reading programs (known as sustained silent reading) typically outperform comparison students, especially when the duration of treatment is longer than an academic year (reviews include Krashen, 2001, 2003b, 2004, 2005).

The case for reading has been strengthened by a new wave of research from Asia, studies demonstrating the efficacy of in-school for elementary school children in Korea (Cho & Kim, 2004; Cho & Kim, 2005), college students in Japan (Mason & Krashen, 1997), and high school and college students in Taiwan (Lee, 2005; Liu, 2006; Smith, 2006).

Correlational studies also support the Comprehension Hypothesis (e.g., Lee, 2006; Witton-Davies, 2006; Gradman & Hanania, 1991; Constantino, Lee,

Cho, & Krashen, 1997): Those who reported doing more self-selected reading do better on a variety of measures of literacy, a result that holds when other possible confounds are controlled.

I regard case histories as extremely important in this area. Although they are not “experimental,” they are often scientifically valid, because in many cases there are few “threats to validity.” In the case of reading, there is no other possible source for the high level of literacy attained. I will mention just two cases here:

The novelist Richard Wright tells us, “I wanted to write and I did not even know the English language. I bought English grammars and found them dull. I felt I was getting a better sense of the language from novels than from grammars” (Wright, 1966, p. 275).

Neurosurgeon Ben Carson (Carson, 1990) was a poor student in the fifth grade, when his mother required him to check out two books of his own choice per week from the library. Carson chose books on animals, nature and science, and rapidly changed from a “horrible student” to an excellent student in science, eventually becoming “the fifth grade expert in anything of a scientific nature” (p. 37).

Carson credits reading with improving his reading comprehension and vocabulary, which affected all his academic work. He tells us that he became “the best student in math when we did story problems” (p. 38).

Reading also improved his spelling: “I kept reading all through summer, and by the time I began sixth grade I had learned to spell a lot of words without conscious memorization” (p. 39). By the time he entered seventh grade, “I was at the top of the class” (p. 39).

We turn now to the three hypotheses that are the focus of this paper.

The Effortless Reading Hypothesis

The Effortless Reading Hypothesis: The best reading for language development is reading that readers understand with ease.

This hypothesis claims that “grim determination” is not the way we grow in literacy. It is not necessary or even helpful to work one’s way through “demanding” and difficult texts. Rather, the kind of reading that is optimal for literacy development is the kind many of us engage in everyday, and the kind that many of us were devoted to as teenagers—pleasure reading, reading because we wanted to.

There is some evidence supporting this hypothesis: As noted above, those who do more self-selected reading show superior growth in literacy, assuming that texts readers select on their own are not always demanding texts.

Also supporting the claim that reading should not be effortful is Laufer (1992), who reported that for optimal vocabulary development, at least 95% of the words in a text need to be known, which suggests that optimal acquisition requires a high level of comprehension.

The i+1 misunderstanding

A misreading of my own writings (or lack of clarity on the part of the writer) may lead to the conclusions opposite to those of the Effortless Reading Hypothesis. Briefly, “i+1” derives from the Natural Order hypothesis (Krashen, 1981). If it is true that we acquired aspects of language in a predictable order, that some items are acquired before others, let us represent the most recent item (e.g., a rule of grammar) by the arbitrary letter “i” and the “next” item the acquirer is ready to acquire by “i+1”. (This is, of course, an oversimplification; there are probably parallel streams of acquisition taking place at the same time for different aspects of language, and the order of acquisition is not strictly linear.)

The i+1 concept has been misinterpreted as meaning that teachers and materials writers must make sure that all input contains i+1. This, of course, guarantees that all input will be nearly incomprehensible, and not very interesting. In Krashen (1981), I argued that even if this were possible, even if we knew the order of acquisition for all aspects of language, this is not necessary: Given enough comprehensible input, i+1 is automatically present in the input. We need not program it in. Input need not be “finely tuned” to the level of the acquirer.

Some of the evidence for this view comes from research on child language development: Parents and other caretakers do not focus on specific points of language when talking to children, but first language acquisition proceeds beautifully in nearly every case nevertheless. Roger Brown, after reviewing research on how caretakers talk to children, has this advice in answer to the question, “How can a concerned mother facilitate her child’s learning of language?”:

“Believe that your child can understand more than he or she can say, and seek, above all, to communicate. To understand and be understood. To keep your minds fixed on the same target. In doing that, you will, without thinking about it, make 100 or maybe 1000 alterations in your speech and action. Do not try to practice them as such. There is no set of rules of how to talk to a child that can even approach what you unconsciously know. If you concentrate on communicating, everything else will follow” (Brown, 1977, p. 26).

The same, I suggest, is true for all language acquisition and for the development of literacy. Comprehensible input, which includes comprehensible text, has everything the acquirer needs, with natural and optimal repetition and recycling of what the acquirer is ready to acquire.

The Forgetting Hypothesis

The Forgetting Hypothesis: Language acquisition occurs most efficiently when we are so interested in the message that we pay no attention to form and even “forget” it is in another language.

This hypothesis follows from the Comprehension Hypothesis and from the Effortless Reading Hypothesis: It is only possible to be absorbed in the text if reading is comprehensible and effortless.

The Forgetting Hypothesis requires that the message be not only interesting,

but *compelling*, which focuses all attention on the message.

The Forgetting Hypothesis is influenced by the concept of “flow,” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Flow is the state people reach when they are deeply but effortlessly involved in an activity. In flow, the concerns of everyday life and even the sense of self disappear—our sense of time is altered and nothing but the activity itself seems to matter. Research done all over the world has shown that flow is easily recognized by members of widely different cultures and groups. For example, rock climbers experience flow when climbing (Massimini, Csikszentmihalyi, & Della Fave, 1992), and members of Japanese motorcycle gangs experience flow when riding (Sato, 1992).

“Forgetting” and flow occur in reading when readers are “lost in a book,” when they are aware only of the story or the message in the text. Csikszentmihalyi (1990), in fact, reports that reading “is currently perhaps the most often mentioned flow activity in the world” (p. 117).

Nell (1988) is clearly discussing a similar concept in his book, *Lost in a Book*, referring to the trance state that readers attain: “Among the mysteries of reading, the greatest is certainly its power to absorb the reader completely and effortlessly and, on occasion, to change his or her state of consciousness through entrancement” (p. 74). The ability of a book to cause this to happen is what readers value: “... although Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* (1954) is a relatively difficult book, many readers prefer it to easier ones because of its great power to entrance” (p. 146).

Atwell (2007) refers to this state as “the reading zone” and notes that all of her seventh and eighth graders (12 and 13 year olds) recognized it, and most (three quarters) agreed that it felt like a “private internal movie, but better” (p. 21).

Reports of pleasure readers should be familiar to all readers of this paper, readers who tell us that reading can take them into another world. Nick, one of Atwell’s students, describes this vividly:

“... you see what’s happening in your head, like a movie screen. You care about the characters and you think about what you would do at every point where they make a decision. You block out the sounds of the outside world. Eventually, it doesn’t even feel like you’re reading. You don’t seem to be actually reading the words as much as it’s just happening ... you don’t want to stop reading” (p. 21).

Sometimes, being in the reading zone can be, at least temporarily, a relief: A reader in Italy said that when he reads “I immediately immerse myself in the reading and the problems I usually worry about disappear” (Massimini et al., 1992, p. 68). A dedicated reader interviewed by Nell (1988) tells us that “reading removes me ... from the ... irritations of living ... for the few hours a day I read ‘trash’, I escape the cares of those around me, as well as escaping my own cares and dissatisfactions ...” (p. 240).

It is unlikely that readers are consciously focused on the details of the language when they are in this state and, I suggest, in the case of bilinguals, unlikely that they are even consciously focused on what language they are reading. As Nick noted, “you don’t seem to be actually reading the words as

much as it is just happening ...". According to the Forgetting Hypothesis, it is when this happens that language acquisition and literacy development occur. This is the complete opposite of the focus on form movement, and various hypotheses that maintain that some kind of conscious "noticing" is necessary for language acquisition to occur (see Truscott, 1998, for arguments against the noticing hypothesis for language acquisition).

The Unawareness of Acquisition Hypothesis

The Unawareness of Acquisition Hypothesis states that readers will not be aware that they are improving while they are reading, but will only be aware of reading interesting books.

I suspect that those who "forget" they are reading in another language are also unaware that they are acquiring. Thus:

Forgetting > Unawareness of Acquisition

Since Effortless Reading is a prerequisite for being absorbed in the text, and not being consciously aware of form or the language, we now have the following:

Effortless Reading > Forgetting > Unawareness of Acquisition

Evidence for the Unawareness of Acquisition Hypothesis includes cases in which (1) acquirers are "surprised" to discover that they had acquired something they did not know they had acquired and (2) were aware of their competence but did not know where it came from.

A recent example of (2) is the case of Sophia (Lin, Shin, & Krashen, 2007). Sophia is a high school student who came to the US from Taiwan with her family when she was in sixth grade. Her high school reading test scores showed a strange pattern: During the academic year, they declined, but over the summer, they increased; see Table 1.

The answer to this mystery was that Sophia was a dedicated summer pleasure reader, reading about 50 books during each summer. She had, however, little time for pleasure reading during the academic year. Sophia's reading was not a deliberate strategy for improving her English. She did it for pleasure. The discovery of the pattern of her exam scores occurred later, after she had been a summer reader for several years.

Cohen (1997) attended an English-language medium school in her native Turkey, beginning at age 12. Cohen reports that after only two months, she started to read in English, "as many books in English as I could get hold of.

Table 1: Sophia's reading test scores (percentiles)

Grade	Decline: school year	Summer gain
8	29	51
9	21	14
10	21	no data

I had a rich, ready made library of English books at home ... I became a member of the local British Council's library and occasionally purchased English books in bookstores ... By the first year of middle school I had become an avid reader of English."

Her reading, however, led to an "unpleasant incident" in middle school:

"I had a new English teacher who assigned us two compositions for homework. She returned them to me ungraded, furious. She wanted to know who had helped me write them. They were my personal work. I had not even used the dictionary. She would not believe me. She pointed at a few underlined sentences and some vocabulary and asked me how I knew them; they were well beyond the level of the class. I had not even participated much in class. I was devastated. There and then and many years later I could not explain how I knew them. I just did."

Conclusion

These hypotheses claim that grim determination and struggle are not part of the language development process; that there is no need for the delayed gratification that is core to skill-building. In fact, the hypotheses presented here claim that pain and struggle are an indication that language acquisition is not taking place (although conscious language learning might be).

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2

Understanding Writing: Exploring Texts, Writers and Readers

■ Ken Hyland

Institute of Education, University of London

ABSTRACT: *This paper explores the main approaches to teaching and researching writing. Making a broad distinction between theories concerned with texts, with writers and with readers, I will show what each approach offers and neglects and what each means for teachers. The categorisation implies no rigid divisions, and, in fact the approaches respond to, critique, and draw on each other in a variety of ways. I believe, however, this offers a useful way of comparing and evaluating the research each approach has produced and the pedagogic practices they have generated.*

Introduction

Writing has been a central topic in applied linguistics for over half a century and is a central area of teaching and research in most languages. Its complex, multifaceted nature seems to constantly evade adequate description and explanation, however, and many forms of inquiry have been summoned to help clarify both how writing works and how it should best be taught. An important factor is, of course, the overarching significance of writing in all our lives, its roles in social, professional and academic contexts, and the importance it has in determining our life chances. Writing is central to our personal experience and social identities, and we are often evaluated by our control of it. The various purposes of writing, then, the increased complexity of its contexts of use, and the diverse backgrounds and needs of those wishing to learn it, all push the study of writing into wider frameworks of analysis and understanding.

In this paper I want to offer a brief survey of these frameworks and explore the main approaches to teaching and researching writing, focusing on three main orientations (Hyland, 2002). Each focus assumes a different idea about what writing is and implies different ways of teaching it:

- The first approach concentrates on the products of writing by examining *texts*.
- The second focuses on the writer and the *processes* used to create texts.
- The third approach emphasises the role that *readers* play in writing, showing how writers think about an audience in creating texts.

These three approaches have become blurred as teachers and researchers

have drawn from each and combined them, to both learn more about writing and to provide better teaching and learning methods. In any classroom, then, a teacher may draw on a combination of these. But I think it is helpful to separate them to see clearly what we are doing when we make teaching decisions. We need to know the theories, assumptions and research which support our teaching practices.

Text-oriented research and teaching

First, text-oriented approaches consider writing as an outcome, a noun rather than a verb, viewing writing as the words on a page or screen, and here we see texts either as *objects* or as *discourse*.

Texts as objects

First of all, seeing texts as objects means understanding writing as the application of rules. Writing is a ‘thing’ independent of particular contexts, writers, or readers—and learning to become a good writer is largely a matter of knowing grammar. So this view sees texts as arrangements of words, clauses, and sentences, and its exponents believe that students can be taught to say exactly what they mean by learning how to put these together effectively. In the writing classroom teachers emphasise *language structures*, often in these four stages (Hyland, 2003):

1. *Familiarisation*: learners study a text to understand its grammar and vocabulary;
2. *Controlled writing*: then they manipulate fixed patterns, often from substitution tables;
3. *Guided writing*: then they imitate model texts—usually filling in gaps, completing texts, creating topic sentences, or writing parallel texts;
4. *Free writing*: learners use the patterns they have developed to write an essay, letter, etc.

But while this has been a major classroom approach for many years, it draws on the now discredited belief that meaning is contained in the message, and that we transfer ideas from one mind to another through language. It assumes that a text says everything that needs to be said with no conflicts of interpretations, no reader positions, and no different understandings, because we all see things in the same way. But accuracy is just one feature of good writing and does not on its own facilitate communication. Even the most explicitly written contracts and legal documents can result in fierce disputes of interpretation. So our goal as writing teachers can never be just training students in accuracy because all texts include what writers’ assume their readers will know, and how they will use the text. The writer’s problem is not to make everything explicit, but to make it explicit for particular readers, balancing what needs to be said against what can be assumed.

Texts as discourse

A second perspective sees texts as *discourse*—the way we use language to communicate, to achieve purposes in particular situations. Here the writer is seen as having certain goals and intentions and the ways we write are resources to accomplish these. Teachers working with writing in this way seek to identify how texts actually work as communication, regarding forms of language as located in social action. A key idea here is that of *genre*, which is a term for grouping texts together. We know immediately, for example, whether a text is a recipe, a joke or a love letter and we can respond to it and write a similar one if we need to. We all have a repertoire of these responses we can call on to communicate in familiar situations, and we learn new ones as we need them.

Genre reminds us that when we write we follow conventions for organising messages because we want our reader to recognise our purpose. Genre approaches describe the stages which help writers to set out their thoughts in ways readers can easily follow, encouraging us to look for organisational patterns and salient features. So, looking at texts as discourse can tell us a lot about how we create meanings: what writers are trying to achieve when writing and how they do it.

Genres encourage us to look for organisational patterns, and we find them in even the most apparently personal and expressive kind of writing. In an analysis of the acknowledgments in 240 PhD and MA dissertations written by Hong Kong speakers of English, for example, I found that students used the structure shown in Figure 1.

As we can see, the acknowledgement structure consists of a main Thanking Move sandwiched between optional Reflecting and Announcing moves. So first the writer offers a brief introspection on his or her research experience. Then there is the Thanking Move where credit is given to individuals and institutions for help with the dissertation, and this can consist of up to 4 steps. First, a

Figure 1: The structure of dissertation acknowledgements

Move	Example
1. Reflecting Move	The most rewarding achievement in my life, as I approach middle age, is the completion of my doctoral dissertation.
2. Thanking Move	
2.1 Presenting participants	During the time of writing I received support and help from many people.
2.2 Thanks for academic help	I am profoundly indebted to my supervisor, Dr. Robert Chau who assisted me in each step to complete the thesis.
2.3 Thanks for resources	I am grateful to The Epsom Foundation whose research travel grant made the field work possible and to the library staff who tracked down elusive texts for me.
2.4 Thanks for moral support	Finally, thanks goes to wife who has been an important source of emotional support.
3. Announcing Move	However, despite all this help, I am the only person responsible for errors in the thesis.

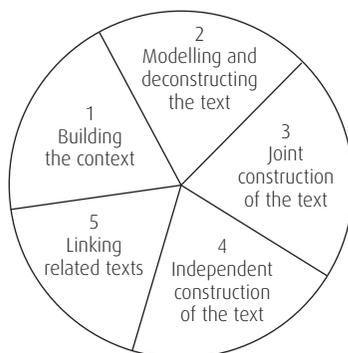
sentence introducing those to be thanked, followed by thanks for academic help. This was the only step that occurred in every single text. Supervisors were always mentioned, and always before anyone else, but sometimes other academics appeared here too. Next, there is thanks for providing resources such as clerical, technical & financial assistance, and then thanks for moral support from family and friends for encouragement, friendship, sympathy, etc., and this occurred in two thirds of all texts. The final Announcing Move was uncommon, but here writers accept responsibility to show that the thesis is theirs and not the work of all the people they have thanked.

In the classroom genre teaching means attending to grammar, but this is not the old disembodied grammar of the writing-as-object approach but a resource for producing texts. A knowledge of grammar shifts writing from the implicit and hidden to the conscious and explicit to allow students to effectively manipulate language (Hyland, 2004). In writing classes this means getting students to notice, reflect on, and then use the conventions to help them produce well-formed and appropriate texts. One approach widely used in Australia is the teaching-learning cycle (Figure 2).

The cycle helps us plan classroom activities by showing genre learning as a series of linked stages which scaffold, or support, learners towards understanding texts. The key stages are:

1. First understanding the purpose of the genre and the settings where it is used: So, how it fits into target academic situations. Who writes it, with whom, who for, why, etc? What is the relationship between the writer and reader? What degree of formality is involved? This might involve presenting the context through films, guest speakers, simulations, role plays or case studies to bring the context to life.
2. The second stage involves modelling the genre and analysing it to reveal its stages and key features (what are the main tenses, themes, vocabulary, and so on). Possible activities here are getting students to sequence, re-arrange and label text stages, asking them to re-organise scrambled paragraphs or re-write unfinished ones, etc.

Figure 2: The teaching learning cycle

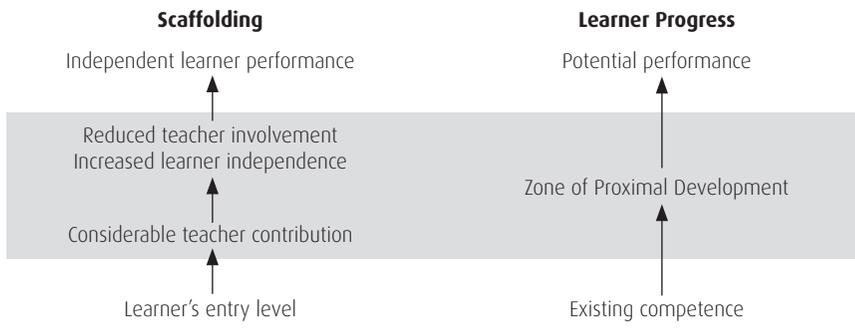


3. The third stage involves the joint construction of the genre with students, either in groups or individually, supporting students in their writing as they collect information through library or internet research and interviews, as they create a parallel text following a given model or as they work in small groups to construct texts for presentation to the whole class.
4. Fourth is independent writing, with students working alone or in groups while monitored by the teacher. Possible activities are outlining and drafting a text based on pre-writing activities, rewriting a text for another purpose by changing the genre from an essay into a news article or notes to a report, or revising a draft in response to others' comments.
5. Finally, the teacher relates what has been learnt to other genres and contexts. This can be done by showing how a genre fits into a chain of genres to achieve a purpose such as the interview which follows a job advert, application letter, etc., or comparing genres in the same context.

Each stage therefore has a different purpose and so draws on different classroom activities. The main features of the cycle are that students can enter it at any stage depending on what they know about the genre, and genres can be recycled at more advanced levels of expression. Perhaps more importantly, it provides scaffolded learning for students. As I show in Figure 3, the kind of scaffolding provided by the cycle supports students through what Vygotsky called 'the zone of proximal development', or the gap between student's current and potential performance. As we move round the circle, direct teacher instruction is reduced and students gradually get more confidence and learn to write the genre on their own. Their autonomy increases as they gain greater control over the genre.

Genre teaching has been criticised for stifling creativity by imposing models on students. Obviously teachers might teach genres as recipes so students get the idea that they just need to pour content into ready made moulds. But there is no reason why providing students with an understanding of discourse should be any more prescriptive than providing them with a description of parts of a sentence. The key point is that genres do constrain us. Once we accept that our goals are best achieved by, say, writing a postcard or an essay, then we will write

Figure 3: Teacher-learner collaboration (based on Feez, 1998, p. 27)



within certain expected patterns. The genre does not ‘dictate’ that we write in a certain way nor determine what we write; it enables choices to be made to create meaning. Genre theories suggest that a teacher who understands how texts are typically structured, understood, and used is in a better position to intervene successfully in the writing development of his or her students.

Writer-oriented research and teaching

The second broad approach focuses on the writer, rather than the text. Interest here is on what good writers do when they write so that these methods can be taught to L2 students. Most teachers are familiar with process writing techniques and make use of brainstorming, peer and teacher feedback, multiple drafts, delaying corrections until the end, and so on. Writing is seen as a process through which writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to create meaning. It is more of a problem-solving activity than an act of communication—how people approach a writing task as the solution to a series of problems. Essentially, process theorists explain writing using the tools and models of cognitive psychology and Artificial Intelligence. In the model there is a memory, Central Processing Unit, problem-solving programs, and flow charts. The flow chart in Figure 4 is well known to teachers and shows that writers create texts by jumping between these stages.

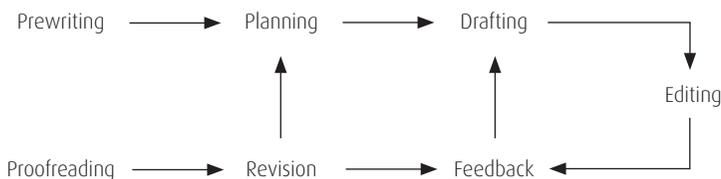
Process approaches tell us that writing is about discovering and formulating ideas as we create personal meanings. The flow chart shows us that:

- writers have goals and plan extensively;
- writing is constantly revised, often even before any text has been produced;
- planning, drafting, revising, and editing are recursive and potentially simultaneous;
- plans and text are constantly evaluated by the writer in a feedback loop.

For some teachers the model helps explain the difficulties their L2 students sometimes have because of the writing task and their lack of topic knowledge and we cannot deny that the quantity and impact of the research into the writing process has been enormous. This advises teachers to:

- set pre-writing activities to generate ideas about content and structure
- encourage brainstorming and outlining
- give students a variety of challenging writing tasks
- require multiple drafts

Figure 4: A flow chart of the writing process



- give feedback on drafts and facilitate peer response
- delay surface corrections until the final editing.

Writer-oriented approaches are influenced by cognitive psychology rather than applied linguistics, emphasizing what people think about when they write rather than the language they need to do it. For me this creates some serious problems for teaching writing (Hyland, 2003).

First of all, by over-emphasising psychological factors it neglects the importance of how context influences writing. Process tends to represent writing as a decontextualised skill as it focuses on the writer as an isolated individual struggling to express personal meanings. There is little understanding of the ways language is used in particular domains or what it means to communicate in writing. In fact, we do not just write, we write for a purpose in a particular context, and this involves variation in the ways we use language, not universal rules.

Second, this is a discovery-based approach which does not make the language students need explicit when they need it. Feedback is withheld until towards the end of the process and even then teachers are often concerned about much intervention. Students are not taught the language structures of the genre they are writing but are expected to discover them in the process of writing itself or through the teacher's feedback on drafts. This might be sufficient for L1 students, but L2 writers find themselves in an invisible curriculum as Delpit (1988, p. 287) points out:

Adherents to process approaches to writing create situations in which students ultimately find themselves held accountable for knowing a set of rules about which no one has ever directly informed them. Teachers do students no service to suggest, even implicitly, that 'product' is not important. They will be judged on their product regardless of the process they utilized to achieve it. And that product, based as it is on the specific codes of a particular culture, is more readily produced when the directives of how to produce it are made explicit.

Third, it assumes that making the processes of expert writers explicit will make novices better writers. But not all writing is the same; it does not always depend on an ability to use universal, context-independent revision and editing practices. Exam writing does not involve multi-drafting and revision for instance, and academic and professional writing is often collaborative and time constrained. Different kinds of writing involve different skills.

Finally, process models disempower teachers. This is a model of learning based on personal freedom, self-expression and learner responsibility, all of which might be stifled by too much teacher intervention. This reduces us to well-meaning bystanders who just assign tasks and give feedback. Because language and text organisation tend to be tacked on to the end of the process as "editing," rather than the central resources for constructing meanings, students are given no way of seeing how different texts are written for particular purposes and audience. So while a process approach will help novice writers to become more effective at generating texts, this cannot help them understand what their readers expect to find in those texts.

Reader-oriented research and teaching

Writer-oriented research sees context as the site of writing, where the writer is, what he or she is thinking of, and so on, but a final approach expands the idea of context beyond the local writing situation to the reader's context and what writers do to address the reader. When we write we choose our words to connect with others and present our ideas in ways that make most sense to them. We try and draw readers in, to influence, persuade, inform or entertain them by a text that sees the world in similar ways to them, and we do this by using the words, structures and kinds of argument they will accept and understand.

So a reader-oriented view of writing emphasises the *interaction* between writers and readers: The process of writing involves creating a text that the writer assumes the reader will recognise and expect. And the process of reading involves drawing on assumptions about what the writer is trying to do. Hoey (2001) says this is like dancers following each other's steps, each building sense from a text by anticipating what the other is likely to do.

It is the unfamiliarity of these expectations that often makes writing in a foreign language so difficult. What is seen as logical, engaging, relevant or well-organised in writing, and what counts as evidence, irony, conciseness and coherence, are likely to differ across cultures. Some cultures favour deductive forms of writing, setting out the main point then adding support, while others prefer an inductive approach, getting to the point eventually; some are more formal than others, some more impersonal. Culture is not the only explanation of course—we cannot simply read off the ways students are likely to write on the basis of assumed cultural preferences or vice versa—we cannot, for example, identify a Singaporean writer by his or her linguistic choices in English. But it is clear there are different ways of organising ideas and structuring arguments in different languages and this can have implications for teachers.

Research suggests, for instance, that compared with many languages, texts in English tend to be more explicit about structure and purposes with constant previewing and reviewing of material, to be less tolerant of digressions, and to use more sentence connectors (such as *therefore*, *in addition*, and *however*). For Clyne (1987) this is because English makes the writer rather than the reader responsible for clarity and this is very different from German, Korean, Chinese, and Japanese where the reader is expected to dig out the meaning. The writer compliments the reader by not spelling everything out and the text is more complex with less explicit signalling, but in English the onus is on the writer to set things out so they can be easily understood. So by looking at large numbers of samples, we can see the ways that texts are typically expressed by particular groups based on their usual ways of relating to readers.

Considering readers means looking at the ways writing is used by social groups and the concept of a *discourse community* is important here as a way of joining writers, texts and readers together. Discourse communities have been defined in different ways, so that Swales (1990), for instance, sees them as having collective goals, while Johns (1997) suggests they have common interests, rather than goals.

Discourse community continues to be a problematic idea, often laying

too much stress on what people share rather than the disputes and differences that occur in all communities. People have different commitments, stakes and statuses in a community and these are not accounted for, nor is it clear how 'local' such communities are. Are all writing teachers a community? All teachers? Members of a university department, a discipline, or just a specialism? But discourse community has been very influential in researching and teaching writing, particularly in EAP and ESP, showing us how writing works in different disciplines and why, for example, the kinds of essays we need to teach physics students look very different from those needed by students in history.

For teachers this means that different disciplines value different kinds of argument and set different writing tasks.

- In the social sciences, for instance, synthesising information from multiple sources is important, while in science, describing procedures, defining objects, and planning solutions are required.
- In post-graduate programmes, engineers give priority to describing charts, while business studies faculty require students to compare ideas and take a position.
- In undergraduate classes, lab reports are common in chemistry, program documentation in computer science, article surveys in maths, and project reports in social sciences.

A reader-oriented approach, therefore, suggests that instead of basing teaching on our impressions of writing, we need to study texts carefully and look for what features are used to engage different readers, helping them to understand that there are different patterns for different contexts and genres. I will mention just three ways which have potential for achieving these goals.

Genre portfolios

It is important that students study a number of text examples to encourage reflection on similarities and differences. Johns (1997) advocates using 'genre portfolios' which require students to write a range of genres and then collect them together in a folder for assessment. Figure 5 shows a mixed-genre portfolio for secondary school students in Singapore.

Essentially, the purpose of portfolios is to get a more accurate picture of students' writing, what they can do and how they can vary their language for particular purposes and readers. But they have a consciousness-raising function by getting students to think about similarities and differences between genres as learners can be asked to write a reflection on the texts and on what they learnt.

Comparative tasks

A second approach is to give students comparative tasks. These are excellent devices for raising students awareness of language features and how they change with readers. For instance, comparisons can be made between:

- How a particular feature is used in writing a genre in English with how students use it in their L1, encouraging them to notice and reflect on similarities and differences

Figure 5: A genre portfolio with reflective questions

An argumentative essay

Why did you organise the essay in this way? What phrases or parts of the essay do you particularly like? Are you satisfied with this? Why or why not?

A research-based library project

(All notes, drafts and materials leading to the final paper)

What difficulties did you encounter writing this? What did you learn from writing it?

A summary

Why did you select this particular summary? How is it organised? Why is it organised like this?

What are the basic elements of all the summaries you have written?

A writer's choice

What is this? When did you write it? Why did you choose it? What does it say about you?

An overall reflection of the portfolio

(A letter to the teacher integrating the entries)

Figure 6: An audience awareness prompt for a letter of adjustment

A	B	C	D
What do I know about the topic?	What does my reader already know about it?	What does my reader not know?	What is my reader's attitude likely to be?
Customer bought some biscuits.	As for A There was something hard in one of them.	What the company will probably do about it, e.g., apologise, refund the price	Customer is probably very annoyed. She will expect compensation.

- Compare the advice they find on a feature in language textbooks with actual target texts. Perhaps looking at what they say about using personal pronouns or hedges and then seeing how expert writers use them in the target genres.
- Compare how a feature like boosters or 'you pronouns' varies across two genres.

Audience analysis

Finally, students can be encouraged to think about who their readers are and what they need from a text. White & Ardnt (1991) in Figure 6 suggest a simple checklist to sensitize students to the importance of attending to shared knowledge with an example response to a letter of complaint.

Conclusion

I have tried to introduce and critique the major frameworks that are used to look at writing and at the same time to argue that writing is not just words on a page or the activity of isolated individuals creating personal meanings. It is *always* a social practice, influenced by cultural and institutional contexts. What

this means for writing teachers is that we need to become researchers of the texts our students will need and the contexts in which they are likely to need them. And then, through our classroom activities, to make the features of these texts as explicit as we possibly can.

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English as a Lingua Franca: Negotiating Singapore's English Language Education

■ Anne Pakir

National University of Singapore

ABSTRACT: *English as a lingua franca, however we define the term, has become a communicative tool of immense political, ideological, and economic power.*

—Braj B. Kachru, 1996, p. 910

Introduction

Several discussions on English as a lingua franca have taken place in the early years of the 21st century (Canagarajah, 2006; Jenkins, 2006; Modiano, 2005; Pakir, 2001; Seidlhofer, 2004), within a decade of Kachru's (1996) seminal article on 'English as lingua franca'. The English as Lingua Franca (ELF) movement in Europe discernable at the turn of the century and the World Englishes (WE) paradigm originating first in the US in the 1980s and gaining currency in Kachru's Outer and Expanding Circles of English, have developed distinct theoretical models of 'lingua franca' with not too dissimilar pedagogical and educational implications. This paper explores research in WE and ELF and looks at how 'lingua franca' as a theoretical concept applied to the sociolinguistic realities of English use in Singapore may assist us in negotiating Singapore's English language education. If linguists, language teachers, and second language acquisition teachers in Singapore are already familiar with traditional ELT pedagogy for English-knowing bilinguals (Pakir, 1992, 2000), this discussion on the implications of WE/ELF research for English language education in Singapore may make unfamiliar such well-established practices. Standard English and the language standards debate as well as role modeling by native versus non-native teachers will be re-examined. Altogether, the mobility and portability of English and its changing functions, values and meanings in localized contexts create hybrids and mixed varieties, some desired and some less so, posing challenges to language education and pedagogy, especially in the context of teaching English in Singapore.

The CELC 2007 symposium theme of 'continuity, innovation and diversity' certainly reflects the way English is being used and taught today, with two opposing forces at work affecting its development: conservation and innovation (Seidlhofer, Breiteneder, & Pitzl, 2006, p. 6). Continuity implies conservation

of the status quo in our English Language Teaching (ELT) practices, while diversity suggests innovation and change of that status quo. In many ways, we have to constantly seek the fine balance between conservation and innovation in our various approaches to the English language and in the ELT profession, especially when the English language teaching and learning landscape has been altered dramatically.

My topic is that of English as a *lingua franca*, “a communicative tool of immense power” (as we are reminded by Kachru, 1996). The discussion of what it is meant by the term ‘*lingua franca*’, what is represented as ‘*lingua franca*’ and what the scholarly debates are about English as a *lingua franca* will take up half of the paper here. The other half of the paper attempts to relate these issues to the negotiation of Singapore’s English language education in an era when English has become an international *lingua franca* as well as a national *lingua franca* for Singaporeans. My paper will analyze the foci and concerns of researchers in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America, as well as teachers in BANA (Holliday, 1994) countries, representing the group of British, Australian, and North American ESL practitioners. What does ‘English as a *lingua franca*’ imply—in terms of cultural and pedagogical development—and how does one teach English as a *lingua franca*? It is hoped that this paper will help to raise questions rather than offer definitive answers to a very complex emergent phenomenon, that of the character and traits of English as *Lingua Franca* or English as a *Lingua Franca* in the 21st century.

Going beyond the politics and the economics of English as a *lingua franca*, and perhaps addressing only the ideological and educational aspects, I pose three questions. The first revolves around the current paradigms of teaching and learning English and asks whether they are sufficient for today’s world. Do we need to radically re-think, re-formulate and re-examine our assumptions about what we do as researchers and practitioners in the field of teaching English? A second question is: what can the current controversies among scholars working in different paradigms tell us about international English language education? The third and final question is: how can we apply the answers to specific contexts, such as those found in the Expanding Circle of English (ECE, e.g., China, Korea, Japan, Indonesia), the Outer Circle of English (OCE, e.g., the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Nigeria, Zimbabwe), and the Inner Circle of English (ICE, e.g., the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand)?

In pursuit of answers, we need to examine theory and research in the paradigms of English as an International Language (EIL)—which I shall equate in this paper to International English (IE)—and those of WE and ELF. Discourses surrounding these three concepts will highlight some differences as well as their cultural and pedagogical implications. A close examination of English as a *lingua franca* in Singapore is also necessary. My particular focus is on the theory, research and pedagogy arising in the new contexts of using English as a World Language, even if it is assumed that all of us—language teachers and practitioners—have used, are using, and will continue using—much of the established works and findings by BANA researchers in the Inner Circle of English. The BANA axis of influence in English language teaching

and methodology is certainly accepted as reality in the Outer and Expanding Circles, but it might be useful to look at emerging paradigms or movements for teaching English in the 21st century.

With a focus on English as a lingua franca in the world and particularly as an international and intra-national lingua franca in Singapore, my aims are to consider the implications of the IE, WE, and ELF positions on the English language teaching and learning landscape and create connections between the discourses taking place in various domains of IE, WE, and ELF.

Theory and research in IE, WE and ELF: Paradigms and definitions

This section on the theory and research in different paradigms begins with the notion that there are currently three paradigms in the study of English as a lingua franca for the world. The first is International English (IE) as discussed within Inner Circle of English and BANA communities and directing the current dominant ELT pedagogies. Trudgill and Hannah's (1995, p. 1) definition (updated in 2002) is generally accepted to represent IE.

International English (IE), inter alia, standard English, is:

... the variety of the English language which is normally employed in writing and normally spoken by 'educated' speakers of the language. It is also, of course, the variety of English that students as Foreign or Second Language (EFL/ESL) are taught when receiving formal instruction.

The second is World Englishes (WE), a label that is today accepted in the literature and adopted in all the three circles of English but especially within Outer Circle English countries. But there exist some subtle distinctions to this label. As Bolton (2004, p. 367) notes, the term "World Englishes" functions generally as "an umbrella label" for all varieties of English world wide (World English and international Englishes) but usually refers to "new Englishes" (institutionalized ESL varieties, or nativized and indigenized varieties). However, within the discipline of applied linguistics, "World Englishes" refers particularly to "the wide-ranging approach to the study of the English language worldwide particularly associated with Braj B. Kachru and other scholars working in a 'world Englishes paradigm' " (Bolton, 2004, p. 367). The nativization of English in transplanted soil is a major linguistic claim of the adherents to this paradigm.

At AILA 2005 in Wisconsin-Madison, there was a special panel on *The Assessment of World Englishes* convened "to bring together researchers from different areas of applied linguistics and language assessment to consider the implications of the WE and IE positions on English language testing/assessment." It was a timely featured symposium since the linguistic capital of English as a world language in a globalizing and IT-driven world has increased. The commodification of the English language has its parallel in the commodification of English language testing. There was a lively and rigorous debate on what it means to "test in English" today but BANA adherents still held dear to their cherished beliefs in pedagogy and testing.

The third and newly emerging paradigm (earlier labeled a 'movement') is

that of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) as discussed in the Expanding Circle of English, with research and discussions currently led by European researchers such as Seidlhofer (2004) and Jenkins (2006). Citing Firth for the definition of ELF in its purest form, Seidlhofer believes that their ELF paradigm treats English as:

‘a contact language’ between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication. (Firth as cited in Seidlhofer, 2004, p. 211)

From my perspective, there is the established IE paradigm versus emerging and evolving paradigms (WE/ELF), displaying very effectively the “old kid” versus “new kids” on the block syndrome. Being the oldest established and most widely accepted model, IE took a long time before admitting WE perspectives in discussions or even recognizing WE as a viable approach to studying English in the world. WE in the 1980s (led by Kachru who went on to establish the international refereed journal, *World Englishes*, with co-editor, Larry Smith), had to explain and establish itself as a new and emerging alternative to teaching and researching English as a language in the world. It was part of the differentiation and gaining recognition process that ELF in early 2000 and currently is undergoing.

Views of the global spread of English and their implications for culture and development as well as pedagogical implications have been tabulated by Pennycook (2002, p. 222). Although he did not categorize them into two sets of views as seen from the IE paradigm or the WE paradigm, I have done so (with apologies) and added on a third set of views, from the ELF perspective.

The first set of three clearly demonstrates an IE and/or BANA point of view; see Table 1.

A fourth view of the global spread of English listed by Pennycook is that of Imperialism (Phillipson, 1992), with the danger of homogenization, destruction of other cultures and languages and where the pedagogical panacea would lie in focusing on language rights, instruction in mother tongues, protectionism. But I have omitted this, since it is not directly relevant to the discussion. The three views—colonial celebratory, modernization, and laissez-faire liberalism—suggest that the world’s users of English desire and demand IE, the most effective form of this ‘communicative tool of immense power’. Against the current backdrop of globalization and economic development in

Table 1: ICE, IE and BANA points-of-view (apologies to Pennycook, 2002)

View of the global spread of English	Implications for culture and development	Pedagogical implications
Colonial-celebratory	English an inherently useful language	Teach English to those who can appreciate it
Modernisation	English a crucial tool for modernization	Teach English to modernize the world
Laissez-faire liberalism	English a functional tool for pragmatic purposes	Business as usual: give people what they want

metropolitan centers and urbanized sectors in the 21st century, the assumption is that ICE (BANA) countries would provide leadership in ‘teaching English’ (the IE kind) and ‘giving people what they want.’

However, an alternative set of views of the global spread of English is that found within the WE paradigm: linguistic hybridity and postcolonial performativity. These are views that seem to be readily appreciated by OCE speaking countries and their researchers; see Table 2.

The WE group of scholars influenced by the Kachruvian view of the pluricentricity of English over three main blocs of English users in the world has had to point out the limitations of the perspectives of those in the Inner Circle who espoused strongly ENL practices and approaches to the teaching of English (as ESL/EFL). Within WE, a strongly argued new role for English is that of a re-configurer of multiple cultures and identities, leading to world Englishes, each of which potentially carries an emergent status as a glocal language (Pakir, 1997). We will return to a discussion of the rise of glocal languages in the Outer Circle of English later.

The scholars working in the ELF paradigm and starting about 20 years later after the emergence of WE studies are beginning to look at English differently again; see Table 3.

Much of the debate within the newer camps—and indeed even of the earliest camp, the Inner Circle—centers on their interpretation of the role of English as a lingua franca. So, it might benefit us to examine the approaches, the champions, the objectives, and the research and practice within each of the three paradigms, as organized in Tables 4, 5 and 6. The questions to be asked include the following: Are these competing or complementary paradigms? Do we, against the 21st century English Language teaching and learning landscape, draw upon an eclectic use of the pedagogical implications, for instance?

Table 2: OCE and WE points-of-view (apologies to Pennycook, 2002)

View of the global spread of English	Implications for culture and development	Pedagogical implications
Linguistic hybridity in OCE	Language and cultures change and adapt	World Englishes, multiple standards, assume change
Postcolonial performativity in OCE	Cultural politics of change, language, knowledge and difference	Critical language education for struggle, appropriability

Table 3: ELF view of the global spread of English

View of the global spread of English	Implications for culture and development	Pedagogical implications
Modern day connectivity in ECE	English as a language of communication in ECE: no lingua culture from ICE (IE-ENL)	Languages and cultures in ECE develop in their own right: Pluricentric Englishes can be taught but with EFL core

In the IE paradigm (see Table 4), the focus is on language proficiency, learner deficiencies (and teaching accent reduction, for example) aided by institutional or professional organizations such as the Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and the International Association for the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL). English is usually seen to be a ‘Foreign Language’ to the learners.

The WE paradigm offers working principles from an ELT/ESL perspective as seen in Table 5, with international organizations such as the International Association for World Englishes (IAWE) and specialized graduate schools such as the College of World Englishes at Chukyo University in Japan.

In the WE paradigm, features of new Englishes (such as phonological, syntactic, lexical) are often codified with some attention also to supra-features as found in discourse analysis, genre analysis and pragmatics studies. The legitimization process for these new Englishes include exploring sociolinguistic realities, ideological underpinnings of learning English, and cultural dimensions of its use.

In the emerging ELF paradigm that has yet to establish itself wholly as a viable alternative to IE and WE, the focus so far has been on Expanding Circle users of English who use English with one another; see Table 6.

WE and ELF are similar in that they have four common working axioms: emphasizing the pluricentricity of English, seeking variety recognition, accepting that language changes and adapts itself to new environments, and highlighting the discourse strategies of English-knowing bilinguals.

WE and ELF differ in that while WE includes all users of English in the three circles, ELF does not, choosing instead to focus on ECE users, who have no language in common because of their first other languages and thus choose English as the default language.

Table 4: The IE paradigmatic axioms

Approach	Exponents	Objectives	Research and Practice
(ELT/EFL) Focus: Language Bodies: TESOL, IATEFL	Prator/Quirk	To teach established varieties of English (British Standard or American Standard)	BANA-based curricula, methodology, materials, testing

Table 5: The WE paradigmatic axioms

Approach	Exponents	Objectives	Research and Practice
(ELT/ESL-EFL) Focus: Sociolinguistic realities Bodies: IAWE, College of World Englishes	Kachru (1982, 1983, 1986, 1996, etc.); Smith (1981, 1987); Lowenberg (1984); Pakir (1994, 1997); Bautista (1997)	To promote the pluricentricity of English and the ‘bilingual creativity’ of outer-circle English-knowing bilinguals	Mainly description and codification of new Englishes and the gaining of recognition as an emergent paradigm, through the process of legitimization

Table 6: The ELF paradigmatic axioms

Approach	Exponents	Objectives	Research and Practice
(ELT/EFL) Focus: Connectivity and communication minus the linguacultural aspects of IE Bodies: IAWE, College of World Englishes	House (1999); Seidlhofer (2001, 2004, 2006); Jenkins (2002, 2006); Breiteneder (2005)	To promote a new concept of English as a contact language, the chosen foreign language of communication “for groups of English speakers having different first language backgrounds”	Definitions and parameter setting Description and codification Phonology Lexico-grammar Distinctive features of ELF Supra-features e.g., pragmatics

Table 7: Quadrant analysis

<p>Q1</p> <p>NS → ← NS (Inner Circle to ICE) NS- → ← NNS (Inner Circle to OCE, ECE)</p> <p>IE: monocentricity of English deficit linguistics standard of ideology (compliance) colonial celebratory</p>	<p>Q4</p> <p>NS → ← NS NS- → ← NNS NNS → ← NNS (All 3 circles)</p> <p>WE: pluricentricity in English liberation linguistics identity ideology (contestation) modern celebratory</p>
<p>Q2</p> <p>NNS → ← NNS (Expanding Circle) EFL/EFL</p> <p>ELF: ‘Contact’ nature of English</p>	<p>Q3</p> <p>NNS → ← NNS (Outer Circle to OCE, ECE) ESL/EFL</p> <p>WE: ‘Indigenised’ nature of English</p>

Owing to the transient and incipient nature of the interactions in English, users in ECE have no stake in the indigenization or identity marking processes of users in the OCE where English is used in greater depth and over a larger range of functions. The emergence of new creative literature and new canons is an assumption in WE that ELF does not make.

Thus, in the three paradigms—although the language components of phonetics and phonology, syntax and semantics, and pragmatics are very much commonalities in the teaching and learning landscape—the polarities are different. IE is drawn towards a standard ideology; WE focuses on the importance of sociolinguistic realities, and the ELF concern is with connectivity in English but minus the lingua-cultural material that comes with the language.

In a Quadrant Analysis, we can recapitulate the main points of the foregoing discussion; see Table 7.

Quadrant 1 representing the IE position has an NS starting point: native speakers (however defined) using English to communicate with other native speakers and with non-native speakers. The monocentricity, or at most, duocentricity of English, is paramount. A number of scholars have documented

the colonial-celebratory position that “trumpets the benefits of English” (Pennycook, 2002, p. 218; also Phillipson, 1992) based on a long tradition of ‘glorifying the English language’. In the great Quirk-Kachru debate of the early 1990s, Kachru labeled Quirk’s approach as deficit linguistics because the latter did not see the merit of teaching other than standard English to those who in Quirk’s words, ‘paid good money to learn the language’. The standard language ideology in Q1 demands a compliant response—in teaching, learning, and testing.

Quadrant 2, on the other hand, along with Quadrant 4, represents the WE position of how a language of wider communication changes and adapts. WE has at its core, the tenet that English is pluricentric with many new Englishes showing hybrid forms as a result of a modern celebration of the English language—as a lingua franca with multiple identities, as one medium with multiple voices, and a multiplicity of canons. This approach espoused by Kachru was labeled as liberation linguistics by Quirk. An identity ideology demands a contesting response in teaching, learning and testing.

Q3, capturing the newest paradigm to emerge in the study of English as a lingua franca, focuses on ECE users trying to connect in the contact language English. As an evolving paradigm, ELF can be predicted to run two courses, one closer to the IE position of compliance in Q1 (establishing new standard forms for ELF interactions) or the other closer to the WE contesting position of language change and adaptation. With a focus on this second possibility, scholars like Modiano (2005) and Canagarajah (2006) have recently emphasized the negotiation of the local in English as a lingua franca.

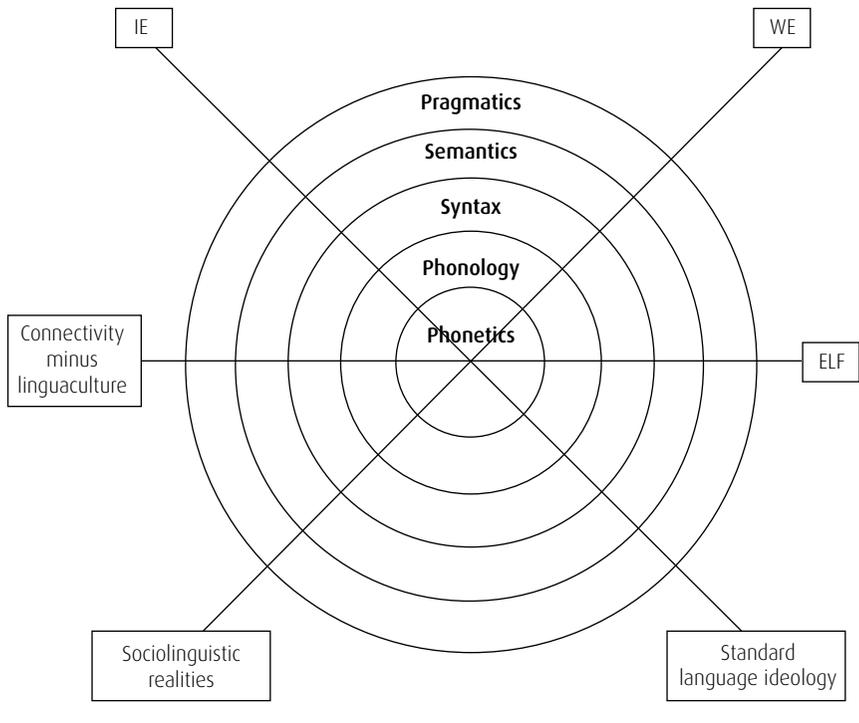
In other words, as demonstrated in Figure 1, going through the same layers of phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics, the three paradigms are pulling towards quite different ends: in the case of IE, towards a standard language ideology, in WE towards sociolinguistic realities, and in the case of ELF, towards connectivity in English minus any lingua-cultural dimensions.

I come now—quite late—to the third section of my presentation which focuses on English as a lingua franca in Singapore, a country that clearly demonstrates a case of English-knowing bilingualism over an entire population and one that is becoming an ascendant English-knowing bilingual community. The issues in English language teaching and learning in Singapore are then examined, *vis-à-vis* a focus on the strong standard language ideology that pervades the teaching of English (ala the IE framework) and begging the question of teacher modeling in Singapore classrooms.

If linguists, language teachers, and second language acquisition teachers in Singapore are already familiar with traditional ELT pedagogy for English-knowing bilinguals (Pakir, 1992, 2000), this discussion on the implications of WE/ELF research for English language education in Singapore may make unfamiliar well-established practices.

A full decade ago, David Graddol (1997, p. 33) posited a view of two models of English as a lingua franca (as cited in Pakir, 2001, p. 85). There was the traditional import-export model and the post-modern/globalised model. One major implication for the first model was that ‘key intermediaries

Figure 1: English as a lingua franca in Singapore: International and national



(negotiators/interpreters) with English language skills' provided the interface with local language speakers. This model hints at a static clearly bounded situation where a standard—or at most two—standards of English existed, and the key intermediaries had to be given training in it/them. In the second model, all (or most) team members need English language skills. The second sees language and culture in terms of flow: communication flow and counter-flow, producing a tension between the global and the local. This tension between the local and the global resolves itself, in the emergence of glocal English, one that is internationally oriented, but locally appropriate. Global yet local, Glocal English can be viewed as an international as well as national lingua franca.

Being a country within the Outer Circle, and keeping in view all of the cultural and pedagogical implications and paradigms described earlier, Singapore has a crucial role to play in manifesting to the rest of the world that English can be negotiated for language education. It can be open to the approaches offered by the IE and ELF paradigms, but as Kachru would ask: does IE or ELF provide any interesting insight for our better understanding of the contexts of institutionalized World Englishes?

Kachru (1996, p. 911) reminds us repeatedly that:

The functions of English in diverse sociocultural, political, educational contexts, and types of identities with the language, demand a shift in the study of the

diffusion and impact of English. The shift entails reconsideration of theoretical and methodological approaches and due consideration of sociolinguistic realities and attitudes appropriate to all the dimensions of the uses of English.

Earlier, I alluded to the possibility of English playing a dual role of English as an international lingua franca (especially for the Outer Circle) and as a national lingua franca (especially in the Outer Circle). This has happened for Singapore, with the attendant implications for its English language teaching and learning landscape. Four decades of instilling English-knowing bilingualism in Singapore have resulted in the rise of a new phenomenon that of an ascendant English-knowing bilingual community drawing from its local values and multilingual identities. An ascendant bilingual as defined by Li (2000) is “someone whose ability to function in a second language is developing due to increased use.” If we go beyond the individual and look at their society, we begin to see that a whole community can shift over to ascendancy in English-knowingness, functioning more and more in the second language, but because of their collective association with their other languages and cultures, the issue of identity will remain a recurrent theme. Ascendant English-knowing bilingual communities offer a good site to study the emergence of what I have termed ‘glocal English’.

When English becomes ‘glocal’, the discourses are meant for the English speakers all over the globe, as well as the English speakers within the speaker’s locus or site. An example of such a ‘glocal’ English can be found in the short verse entitled, *A Poem Not Too Obiang*. Quoted in Pakir (2003, pp. 81-82), this short piece by Jason Leow, published in *Journeys: Words, Home and Nation, An Anthology of Singapore Poetry* carries a meaning potential within and far beyond the shores of Singapore:

A poem not too obiang
From fiddlesticks and By Jove
I pick my words to find
Alamak
Stirring spicily on my tongue–
Like the first bite
Of green chillies that sends
Tentative excitement
Popping out of their seeds
Why should I not drink
Teh tarik and discuss
Lee Tzu Pheng
(without putting them in italics)
among friends who read but
Tread on the trappings of blind
Milton and Shakepearean worship?

Like the prata man’s
Flips and flaps of the dough
Taking shape with each dose
Of local flavour,
I look for my place

In a Singaporean life.
My place in the sun
Is certainly not too LC
For some others' meringue pies
And afternoon tea.

The issue of identity resonates in speakers of English who use English as a national lingua franca as well as an international one. The next few examples also demonstrate the desire to express a local identity albeit through the medium of English, a kind of colloquial English, used as the one type of national lingua franca to signal solidarity, familiarity and rapport. In the first, a snippet of an overheard conversation was reproduced for my undergraduate class:

"You wanna go Singapore Swing is it? Say so lah"

I asked my students whether that was acceptable undergraduate English speech. Oh yes, said one of them, otherwise she would have had to say 'If you want to go to the Singapore Swing (party), why don't you say so?' But, all of them then responded that such a formal utterance would have prompted disbelief, concern or even distancing in the circle of friends. Typical comments following such an utterance would be 'What's your problem?' or 'What's wrong', or a humorous 'Don't say until like that!' If Singlish is seen as the intranational lingua franca in Singapore, its adoption, especially among the youth of Singapore, as a marker of identity, should be fully recognized by teachers, even while they try to impart IE forms of English in the school system.

Teacher modeling, however, is another issue. Where English is used as a national lingua franca at the same time as it is used as the international lingua franca, there are several implications for ELT and Learning. Teacher models are best found in those who are highly proficient in the language, but at the same time, excellently prepared to teach the language. In the list of attributes or features under the rubric of 'excellent teacher preparation' is the dimension of heightened awareness of the complicated sociolinguistic realities that English encapsulates today.

Some tentative conclusions

Returning to the questions posed at the beginning, I offer some very tentative conclusions. In question 1, we asked: Are current paradigms sufficient for today's world? My tentative answer is "Perhaps not." But, there is enough material within those paradigms to set us thinking through our roles as teacher-practitioners and teacher-scholars in an era of English as a lingua franca." The second question asked, "What do the current controversies tell us about international English language education?" For me, the answer is obvious: not much more than we did not know before. But, we can recognize that ELF is a wide open field for investigation and we should not be deterred by the open semantics besetting it and the many definitions and descriptions offered. With question 3, it was asked: "With English established fully as a lingua franca for the world, how can we find answers to ELF in the Singapore context and perhaps other Outer Circle contexts?" My answer to this question is to "always seek to

check our everyday assumptions about what we do when we teach language/s". One of our everyday assumptions as teachers and researchers is best checked by the wise words of Joshua Fishman in 1968 (p. 1):

Languages do not really exist except as part of a matrix of language varieties, language behaviors and behaviors towards language.

Fishman's quotation harks back to earlier scholars who established earlier on that when we speak of languages, we are referring not to those entities but to the speakers of those languages.

In sum, English as a lingua franca has raised some serious issues of who teaches what to whom, why, when, where, how, and why. In the negotiation of English language education against the backdrop of the universal presence of English in an interconnected world, the emphasis on linguistic and cultural hybridity and a critical approach to language education cannot be stated often enough. As Modiano (as cited by Canagarajah, 2006, p. 197) points out:

Retaining our indigenous cultures and languages(s) while reaping the benefits of large-scale integration via a language of wider communication is the challenge many of us will not doubt have to come to terms with in the years to come.

Notes

1. The author is grateful to CELC NUS for the opportunity to present this paper at its Second International Symposium. It gave me an opportunity to revisit some of the ideas that I have developed over a decade or more on the issue of English language education in Singapore.
2. A version of this paper has been accepted for publication elsewhere.

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4

Teaching for Meaning in the English Classroom

■ Ma. Luz C. Vilches
Ateneo de Manila University

ABSTRACT: *Today, chalk-and-talk instruction is rendered old fashioned vis-à-vis multimedia communication methods. Teachers who have not caught up with the trend can feel defeated and helpless. While multimedia instruction is a welcome change, it can, however, only enhance teaching but not substitute teacher presence in classroom work. In the end, achieving learning is not a question of technology use but a question of meaningfulness. The challenge for teachers, thus, is to look into creative ways of enhancing learner knowledge using available resources within their reach. This paper explores ways of 'teaching for meaning' in English language and literature classes using material from the experience of implementing the student-centered approach at Ateneo de Manila University. It describes teaching procedures and activity designs. It also discusses how these procedures and activities foster learning outcomes as illustrated further by samples of learner output. The paper concludes with some implications of these ideas for teacher development.*

Introduction

If English language teachers were to list three among their most important concerns in the classroom, students' lack of involvement would probably be one of these. In many Asian classrooms where the teaching-learning atmosphere is commonly influenced by a cultural orientation that regards the teacher as an authority figure, highly esteemed for expert knowledge, students may be described as passive listeners rather than active partners in a discussion. It is no wonder, perhaps, that such types of students do not seem to take to interactive language classes quite easily (Hiep, 2007).

Whether learner involvement is culturally determined or not, it still is an important issue in language learning that teachers in any ELT classroom continue to address. In the wake of what seems to be an increasingly technologically-savvy world, the often embedded suggestion to increase learner interest in classroom work is the use of multi-media communication methods (Kabilan & Vethamani, 2007). Teachers who have not caught up with the trend can feel defeated and helpless if they do not wake up to the reality that, while using multimedia and internet communication technology in instruction is a welcome change, it can only enhance teaching but not substitute teacher presence in classroom work. As Graddol (2006, p. 79) puts it: "...the success of eLearning depends less on gee-whizz technology and more on how human relationships are managed;

less on marketing hype, and more on learning how traditional pedagogical values can be adapted in the new context". The challenge for teachers, thus, is to look into creative ways of enhancing learner knowledge using available resources within their reach. In the end, achieving learning is a question much less of technology use than of meaningfulness.

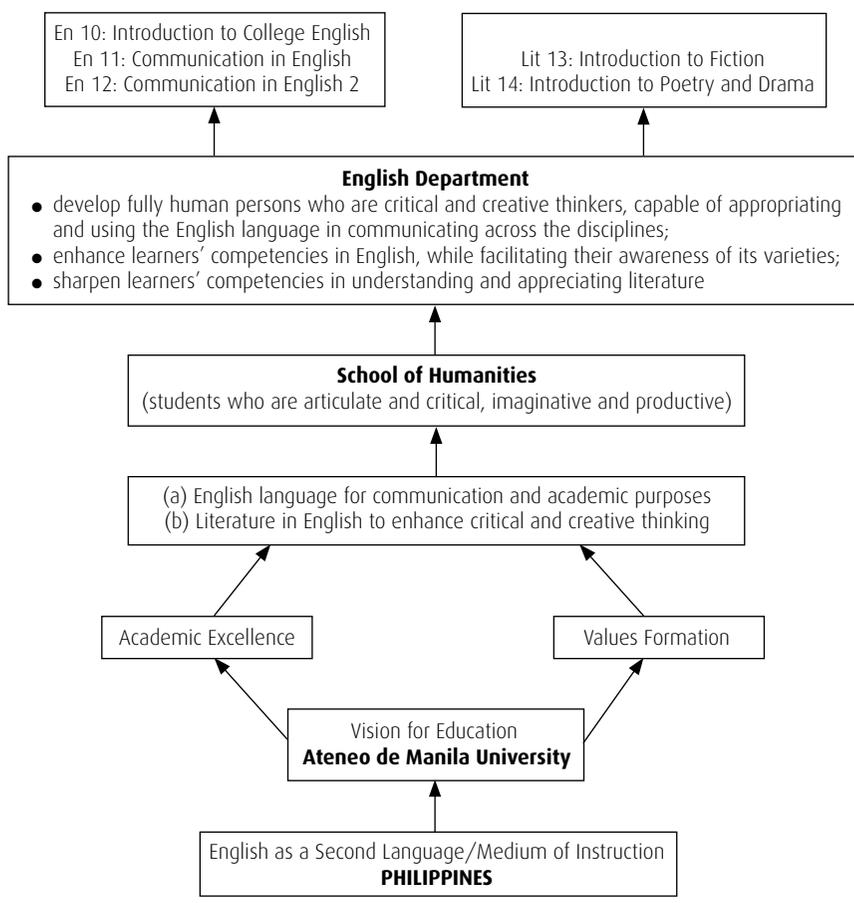
In the literature, teaching for meaning has been expressed in a variety of ways, the earliest form being Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Since it was introduced in the early 1980s, CLT has continued to challenge language teachers to depart from their inordinate focus on form and, instead, design activities that encourage learners to use language for communication purposes (Littlewood, 1981; Nunan, 1989; Lee & Van Patten, 2003). Later developments along this thinking have given rise to Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) which makes communicative tasks determine the choice of language focus appropriate for the achievement of the communication purpose (Littlewood, 2003; Willis & Willis, 2001; Ellis, 2003). In Project-based Language Learning Education (Beckett & Miller, 2006), such tasks can take the form of projects which are meant to help learners recycle knowledge and skills that they already know. Attention to meaning is also integral to teaching approaches that foreground the use of English beyond the language classroom. For example, in situations where English is used as a medium of instruction, English Across the Curriculum¹ (Behrens & Rosen, 1997) indicates a challenge for the teacher to help learners gain insights and articulate ideas as they engage in other disciplines using English. Later developments in this approach have been found in Content-based Instruction (CBI) which advocates the use, for example, of science and mathematics concepts as the content of language instruction (Kasper, Babbitt, et al., 1999), and in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) which highlights the integration of language and content in instruction (<http://www.dil.nl/>, accessed 23 August 2007).

These major developments in language teaching share key characteristics and principles. First, they all focus on the learner as the crucial element in the learning process. The aim is to engage the learner by, first of all, tapping his/her experiential knowledge in activities that are cognitively challenging and affectively involving. Second, the learning process begins with solving a problem and is achieved through negotiated meaning and experience within a specific communication context. Third, the language used in these activities bears resemblance to the way language is used in the real world involving any of the four macro skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Fourth, in the teaching-learning classroom dynamics, even if the focus is the learner and the learning processes, the teacher is left with the big role of facilitating the achievement of the learning goal.

Described in a general way, teaching for meaning as singled out in the earlier discussion, paints an ideal picture of 'what should be.' This paper aims to show how contextual factors inform interpretation of principles and shape decisions in the implementation of procedures. It illustrates these processes

¹ Or sometimes referred to as Writing/Reading Across the Curriculum.

Figure 1: Context of ELT in Ateneo de Manila



using material from Ateneo de Manila University's (AdMU) experience of implementing a student-centered approach to ELT at tertiary level in the Loyola Schools.² First, it describes the specific teaching-learning context (see Figure 1). Then, it discusses teaching procedures and activity designs as well as factors that have influenced learning outcomes. In conclusion, this paper explores the implications of these ideas for teacher development.

The Place of English

Ateneo de Manila University is located in the Philippines where English, introduced at the beginning of the 20th century by the American colonizers, has continued to gain prominence in people's lives and culture. As provided for in the 1987 Philippine Constitutions, English enjoys the status of an

² AdMU's Loyola Schools is the seat of undergraduate and graduate programs within the academic disciplines.

official language of communication and instruction together with the national language, Filipino. It is a language widely used in major domains (Bernardo, 2004), for example, government, the media, the courts of justice, the church, and the schools. Now that English is a global language (Crystal, 1997; Graddol, 1997, 2006), competence in it has become an essential component of success for any country that wants to be globally competitive. In the Philippines, this realization has pushed the panic buttons of government and industry sectors and created the urgency for educational reforms that focus on the improvement of English language competence among students to prepare them for jobs in the global market. The government has made a forceful mandate for schools to use English as the primary medium of instruction and specifies that “the percentage of time allotment for learning areas conducted in the English language is expected to be not less than seventy percent (70%) of the total time allotment for all learning areas in [sic] the secondary level” (Presidential Executive Order No. 210, promulgated in 2003).

This wider context of English used as a second language in the Philippines is the main basis for the development of the English language programs at AdMU. In addition, the university operates within a framework which sees its two-pronged role in the education of the youth: development of academic excellence and values formation. This vision for education is contained in the university’s humanities-based core curriculum, which is two-thirds of the students’ total course work and is shared by all. It is meant to harness students’ potential for leadership in the service of the society at large. The School of Humanities (SOH), the home school of the English Department, also echoes these sentiments in its vision statement which articulates provision for the “holistic formation of students who are articulate and critical, imaginative and productive, ... rooted in their own culture, yet open to other cultures, proactive in the global environment, and strongly committed to faith and justice” (School of Humanities Vision Statement). The English Department has adopted these ideas but added a more proactive stance to the use of English: “appropriating and using the English language in communicating across the disciplines; enhance learners’ competencies in English, while facilitating their awareness of its varieties” (Department of English Vision Statement).

This description of institutional context highlights the humanistic orientation that informs the AdMU courses including English. A strong emphasis on the enhancement of learners’ critical and creative faculties permeates this orientation. One feature which is articulated at the English Department level is the recognition of the development of English beyond the inner circle (Kachru, 1997, 2005; Tupas, 2004) which is an important influence on teachers’ decision-making related to choices of material and approaches to students’ language output. The view of developing students who are capable of appropriating the English language resonates with Carrington’s (1988 as cited in Burns, 2005) assertion: “An international language is not a possession of a specific group. It is public property. It is not the vehicle of a single culture. It becomes the vehicle of any culture to which a user applies it” (p. 2). Closer to home, one Filipino poet in English proudly and categorically declares: “The English language is ours.

We have colonized it too” (Abad as quoted in Tupas, 2004, p. 51). This attitude implies that as regards the question, ‘Which English?’ the answer does not point towards standards of English per se as gauged by native speaker English use; rather, on purposive use of English in different communication contexts. In AdMU, this is the unspoken line of thinking about the use of English, which, in turn, sets the direction for how it should be taught.

Learners and the English courses

English in use is delineated in the core curriculum more specifically as (a) English language for communication and academic purposes and (b) Literature in English to enhance critical and creative thinking. Offered to all first year students, these English courses are tailor-made for them at designated levels of English competency: Basic, Regular, Merit. Grouping the students homogeneously is an interpretation of one of the principles of student-centered learning approach to teaching—that is, begin where the students are at!

Every year, roughly 15 thousand high school graduates apply to AdMU, among whom around 4,000 pass the entrance test, and from these, approximately 2,000 are admitted. Based on university records,³ the typical profile of the AdMU freshman indicates an almost equal ratio between male (49.6%) and female (50.4%) ages 17–18. Most of the students are from Metro Manila (82%); the rest are from places outside of Manila, 1% of these from overseas. In terms of support for their education, 87.7% are funded by their parents and 12.3% are on scholarship grants; 90% of students in the latter category are financial aid scholars.

This profile shows that AdMU students are among those who can be considered ‘cream of the crop’ in talents and abilities, ready for the intellectual challenge of university life. Most students are from middle class families; a good number come from the upper strata of society. The bright but financially unable to support themselves gain support from scholarships provided by donor agencies or raised by the university itself. This discrepancy in students’ socio-economic status has challenged teachers to take a critical look at the content and method of their lessons in order to foster awareness of relevant issues that inform understanding of social realities around them.

As earlier mentioned, for purposes of efficient English language and literature instruction, the AdMU freshman students are classified into three groups according to their level of English competency.⁴ Among the three, as shown in Table 1, the mainstream category is the Regular group, comprising 70% of the students: with good enough skills for a start but need to improve the quality of their reading and writing, especially. The Basic group is 25% of the entire freshman population while the Merit group is the top 5%. Students at the Basic level need improvement in all areas of English communication skills. The Merit group is at the opposite extreme. Students at this level are

³ All information here has been provided by the AdMU Office of Admission and Aid, School Year 2006–2007 records.

⁴ This classification is based on the results of the English component of the students’ Ateneo College Entrance Test (ACET) scores.

Table 1: English language ability profile of AdMU freshmen

Category	Areas of achievement at entry level	Areas for improvement at entry level
Basic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fluent in informal conversation ● Basic writing skills ● Basic reading skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All areas of English communication skills ● Control of grammar especially in writing ● Vocabulary enrichment
Regular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fluent speakers of English ● Consciously applies grammar rules in written communication ● Basic composition descriptive/narrative writing skills ● Developed reading skills/love for reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intensive reading skills for academic purposes ● More careful grammar use in speech ● Better organization and development of ideas
Merit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Highly fluent users of English ● Monitor accuracy ● Manipulate language creatively in developing ideas in essays ● Rich vocabulary ● Wide readers ● Skillful and insightful writers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Awareness of register and tone (style) ● Fine-tuning argumentative skills ● Develop intensive reading for research purposes

generally disposed challenging tasks. They are generally independent-minded and artistically inclined; often advanced in outlook and hard-driven but also full of attitude! A few seem unmotivated, although talented and good-natured; content with a passing mark, they prefer to follow the line of least resistance.

As outlined in Table 2, each group follows a curriculum that best responds to specific needs. Regular students begin with a quick review of communication skills and gradually build on these at a steady pace. Basic students go through an introductory course that allows them to strengthen their foundation skills before they engage in more complex tasks. Merit students take an advanced writing course that provides them with the opportunity to test their potential for critical and creative thinking at increasing levels of complexity.

Student-centered learning

These courses are taught using a student-centered learning approach that matches with the intentions of the core curriculum relative to the outcomes of instruction. The Loyola Schools booklet, *Elements of Student Centered Learning* (2001), explains and illustrates the approach with examples of best practice from AdMU teachers across the disciplines. Salient to the understanding of student-centered learning is its purpose, articulated as follows:

In the context of the ...Core Curriculum, [student-centered learning] refers to ...teaching and learning methodologies that will help our students develop the attitude, the resourcefulness and the skills necessary for them to become lifelong, strategic, and motivated learners, eager and able to learn outside the classroom...with an ability for independent inquiry and a sense of responsibility for their own learning (p. 2).

Table 2: The AdMU English courses

Level	Curriculum	The Courses
Basic	18 units En 10 En 11 En 12 Lit 13 Lit 14	En 10: Intro to English (words, grammar, sentences, paragraphs paragraphs, description, narration, oral fluency, reading skills and comprehension—note-taking, outlining, summarizing, paraphrasing)
Regular	(12 units) Developmental courses En 11 En 12 Lit 13 Lit 14	En 11; En 12: Com in English 1 & 2 (feature writing, exposition, logical/critical thinking, analytical and argumentative essays, reflection papers, the research process and writing up, oral presentation) Lit 13: Intro to Fiction; Lit 14: Intro to Poetry and Drama (forms, conventions, modes, ways of reading literature, creative presentation of interpretations)
Merit	(12 units) Advanced courses En 12 En 101 Lit 13 Lit 14	En 12: Com in English 2 (analytical and argumentative essays, the research process and writing up, oral presentation) En 101: Advanced Expository Writing (more complex research and creative projects) Lit 13: Intro to Fiction; Lit 14: Intro to Poetry and Drama (forms, conventions, modes, ways of reading literature, creative presentation of interpretations)

As points for information and discussion at the orientation of new teachers, these ideas have become a strong basis for lesson planning, materials design, and task preparations. The English Department has chosen to use task-based language teaching (TBLT) as a specific way of implementing the student-centered learning approach. This kind of TBLT is a development from the Integrating Language Work (ILW) framework, first used as a materials design model in Hutchinson & Waters (1987) and then modified as a lesson planning model in Waters & Vilches (1998) and Lorenzo (1998). Used as the latter, this approach recommends that a lesson be designed with a specific communicative task that students can accomplish. The task determines the lesson's input and content focus (to generate ideas that become the topic of communication) as well as its language focus (to help students articulate this topic accurately and fluently). Here, tasks—which are characterized as life-like and meaning-based—are differentiated from language exercises whose main aim is language practice in varying degrees. Littlewood (2003) delineates these differences using a form-meaning continuum as illustrated in Table 3 which shows that only structured and authentic communication can be strictly referred to as tasks.

The tasks in the AdMU English language courses range from simple to complex, based on the following text types or genres: print ads, posters, brochures, exhibit guides, feature articles compiled in magazine form, eyewitness reports, memoirs and/or autobiographical essays, review articles, position papers, argumentative research papers, conference papers with an oral presentation component, and reflection papers. While teachers are expected to make students achieve the learning goals through these tasks, they are also given

Table 3: Littlewood’s form-to-meaning continuum

Focus on Form ←		→ Focus on Meaning		
Non-communicative learning	Pre-communicative practice	Communicative language practice	Structured communication	Authentic communication
Focusing on the structures of language, how they are formed and what they mean—e.g., through exercises, ‘discovery’ and awareness-raising activities	Practising language with some attention to meaning but not communicating new messages to others—e.g., ‘question-and-answer’ practice	Practising language in a context where it communicates new information—e.g., information gap activities or personalised questions	Using language to communicate in situations which elicit pre-learnt language but with some unpredictability—e.g., structured role-play and simple problem-solving	Using language to communicate in situations where the meanings are unpredictable—e.g., creative role-play, more complex problem solving and discussion
Exercises ←		→ Tasks		

a free hand in designing the specifics of each task—taking into consideration student’s language readiness, their interests, the need to make them critical and creative thinkers, and the like. How all these come together may be gleaned from a description of how such tasks have been implemented.

Sample task procedures and output: English language courses

Sample task 1: A poster essay

Life-like and meaningful tasks have a specific communication context. For the Poster Essay task in an En 10 (Basic English) class⁵, it was the following: “The Youth Council in your neighborhood has launched a poster contest project that will raise awareness of issues that people in society often take for granted. In groups, you have decided to participate in this contest.” To help students systematize their immediate preparations for this task, the teacher gave specific instructions:

- Draw up a list of issues that people in society often take for granted and choose one that your group will agree to work on.
- Discuss and decide on the following:
 - the AUDIENCE for your poster
 - the STATEMENT you want to highlight.
 - the VISUAL ELEMENT that will go with the statement.
- Design the poster that will create the impact you intend to make.

One group in this class produced a poster on the issue of trash disposal, perhaps because the activity coincided with the Loyola Schools’ enforcement of trash segregation on campus at that time. The text reads: “Segregate, coz your trash smells on our path not in your hut!” It is not apparent what the poster is really trying to say but the group’s explanation provides an important

⁵ En 10, Section E-16, School Year 2004–2005

context. They revealed that discussions of the issue undoubtedly increased their awareness of the ill effects of improper trash disposal, about which they wanted their poster to convey. They, however, got carried away by this intention resulting in the poster's inability to show a clear match between the action it urged viewers to do ('segregate') and the reason for doing so ('coz your trash smells on our path, not in your hut'). Interestingly, despite the imperfect output, the group felt that they had achieved a lot from doing a task that engaged their experience and challenged their ability to apply stylistic techniques learned (e.g., parallelism) in the formulation of a catchy statement.

To arrive at this stage of poster making, the class followed a lesson plan which included a discussion of input on social issues that influence modern life: global warming, gender relationships, political strife, natural calamities, terrorist activities, etc. Depicting these topics, the input came in various forms: cartoons, photographs, and short newspaper articles. Whole class or group discussions generated and expanded students' understanding of key ideas in the input. Such activities prepared them for the content of the communicative task. The language focus, on the other hand, was about word denotation/connotation, formal and informal language, figurative language, and emphatic/persuasive language structure. Activities stemming from these topics included exercises in using abstract vs. concrete words; general vs. specific words; exploring multiple meanings of words used in various discourse contexts; rewriting formal into informal language (and vice versa) and exploring effects of these; proper positioning of adjectives and adverbs for discourse to yield desired effects.

Sample task 2: The feature article

Writing a feature article, a genre often found in weekend magazines of Philippine English broadsheets, is the first major task in En 11. Its learning objective is to develop students' keen and critical observation skills. It allows them to recycle their ability to describe reality in concrete and specific words as they perceive it, using illustration and example and comparing and contrasting details. It also trains them to develop a framework⁶ from which they view reality so that their essays do not end up as a mere enumeration of details but as insightful viewpoints. The final product is a collection of group members' feature articles put together in a magazine with a theme and format of their choice.

To fulfill this task, students in groups are assigned places to visit—places where teenagers from middle class families used to shopping malls dare not go otherwise. My En 11 class⁷ visited Quiapo⁸, Baclaran⁹, Divisoria¹⁰, Binondo¹¹,

⁶ Three of these are introduced to students: social (beliefs, trends, codes of behavior—e.g., how society regards the gender issue); historical (patterns of events influencing behavior—e.g., people power revolution); psychological (personal experiences in childhood that affect how individuals see things in their adult life). See Hunt, 1994 for details.

⁷ En 11, Section E-25, School Year 2004–2006.

⁸ A bustling place famous for its 16th century Church in which and around which people from all walks of life converge: business men and women, students, professionals, faith healers, herbalists, palm-readers, fortune tellers, street vendors, and the like.

⁹ Another busy and crowded place where commerce and religiosity converge; famous for its church packed with people during novena masses to our Lady of Perpetual Help; also famous as a commercial area of low-cost merchandise.

and Luneta Park¹². The students worked around a specific task context:

The Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Tourism, has commissioned young Filipino writers to write essays for a magazine that features famous places in the Philippines. The magazine is intended for Filipinos born abroad and have never visited the Philippines. The idea is to let them experience parts of the Philippines from the point of view of Filipino youth (Ateneans) of their age.

When students are engaged in the tasks, they get engrossed in generating and clarifying meanings; they sometimes forget the writing conventions that they have been required to observe. Hence, before my students submitted their first draft, I posted self-check questions to prepare them for their peer review:

- Do all my examples contribute to one impression or do they point to a different direction and so blur the impression? Which examples seem most to the point? Which seem farthest from the point?
- Are my examples graphic? Do they give a sense of 'being there,' seeing with my own eyes and hearing with my own ears, etc.? Which examples are most lively, which ones are not?
- Do I know more about the place now than before I closely observed it? What do I think my ultimate readers are likely to learn from this essay?
- Have I made the right choice of words, sentence sense, punctuation, spelling? What about my grammar and sentence structures?
- What techniques are suitable to begin and end my essay interestingly?

Doing the feature article task was a great experience for my students. Working in groups made the activity fun and absorbing because it also created an opportunity for bonding. Students who lived sheltered lives in posh villages and who were used to chauffer-driven cars had mixed feelings, at first, about the visit to the assigned places. On the one hand, the thought of riding a public transport (e.g., the jeepney) in an unfamiliar environment provoked anxiety. On the other hand, they were thrilled about this adventure in the company of friends. The essays that came out of this activity were filled with awareness about a new realization of the places they visited. One of those who wrote about Quiapo had the following opening paragraph for her essay:

Because of what I've heard from many people, I have always had the impression that Quiapo was nothing more than a busy parcel of land in Manila, engulfed in smog and inhabited by crude people who cared nothing less than earning money. I proved myself wrong a week ago, as I witnessed the everyday life in Quiapo. Despite the stench of streets, and the aggravating pollution problem, Quiapo is still worth a visit because it exhibits the enticing side of Filipino ingenuity, helpfulness, and religiosity (student from the En 11-E 25 class).

As a culminating activity for this task, the groups presented the highlights of their work to the entire class—all eager to outsmart each other in a friendly

¹⁰ A huge one-stop rough-and-ready shopping area with a wide range of choices for goods at half the price of what can be found in the malls.

¹¹ Chinatown.

¹² Facing Manila Bay, it is the favorite hang out of the masses; where the National Hero, Jose Rizal, was shot during the Spanish Colonization; famous for the Jose Rizal monument.

competition. While they affirmed each other for a ‘job well done,’ they were also open to feedback on how they could further improve their work.

Sample task 3: The review

Writing a review is a culminating task for the application of critical thinking skills preliminary to the argumentative essay task. While the classes may begin with book/essay review, the teachers can also choose other topics: coffee shops, restaurants, art exhibits, concerts, advertisements, and other aspects of popular culture familiar to students. The review is meant to help them take a critical look at what is familiar so that they and others can make informed decisions about these.

Some students in an En 12 class¹³ reviewed the nikewomen.com advertisement (<http://www.myspace.com/nikewomen>—accessed 20 August 2007). First, they identified the following elements: no storyline, no setting, no specific character; focus on images, text and the slogan ‘Just Do It.’ They also recognized the target market to be of two kinds: the athletic women and those “who will never achieve the ‘perfect body’ no matter how hard they work-out” (from the students in En 12 Section S 08). Their analysis showed that the advertisement celebrates women who have athletic bodies—not the typical ones distinguished in fashion magazines. Each advertisement page presents a picture of a specific area of a woman’s body (thunder thighs, hairy legs, inelegant shoulders, bony knees, huge butt) considered problematic according to ‘supermodel’ standards of beauty. But they recognized how the advertisement “noticed these body parts in [sic] a whole new different level” (students in En 12 Section S 08). One of the advertisement pages contains the following text, for example:

I HAVE
THUNDER THIGHS.
AND THAT’S A COMPLIMENT
BECAUSE THEY ARE STRONG
AND TONED
AND MUSCULAR
AND THOUGH THEY ARE UNWELCOME
IN THE PETITE SECTION
THEY ARE CHEERED ON IN MARATHONS
FIFTY YEARS FROM NOW
I’LL BOUNCE A GRANDCHILD ON MY THUNDER THIGHS
AND THEN I’LL GO OUT FOR A RUN

JUST DO IT. (<http://www.myspace.com/nikewomen>—accessed 20 August 2007)

The students called attention to the fact that where most advertisements featuring women are often meant to entice men, nikewomen.com makes a difference; it “serve[s] to topple the so-called ‘Barbie generation’ and put the Real Woman on the pedestal” (students in En 12 Section S 08).

Clearly, the students’ choice of subject matter reflected their interest in gender issues. The assertion about women empowerment is not new but the

¹³ En 12, Section S 08, School Year 2006–2007

students showed how the nikewomen.com advertisement has given a fresh take on the issue. In this class, the teacher noted the students' enthusiasm in exploring advertisements or any genre that had a visual and graphic component. They admitted to learning more about concepts using such medium.

Sample task procedures and output: Literature in English

In AdMU, the study of literature introduces fiction, poetry, and drama and new/emerging literary forms in contemporary times (e.g., science fiction, metafiction, fabulation, magic realism, etc.). These are first explored in relation to their literary elements and conventions and seen within social, cultural and historical contexts. Generally, reading courses, Lit 13 and Lit 14 begin with activities that entice students to read, and when they have done the reading, discussion in whole class or group work can stimulate critical and imaginative thinking. The latter is reinforced in post-reading activities that personalize students' approach to literary texts, for example, by rewriting the ending of a story, graphically illustrating a playwright's stage directions, writing a dialogue based on the dramatic situation in a poem.

In my Lit 13 class,¹⁴ one post reading activity for William Faulkner's story "A Rose for Emily" was writing an epitaph on Emily's tombstone. I was curious to know how well the students had a grasp of Emily's character. One wrote about Emily as:

A puzzle unresolved,
A mystery untold,
A legend to behold... (from Lit 13, Section 27)

In the same class, I asked students to adapt sections of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" into a radio play. One group chose to interpret the task as a TV news interview feature on DMV News Live. Below is how the script begins:

Newscaster: Good afternoon. This is Marc Manalastas of DMV News Live, the every hour news advisory bringing you the latest news in town. For today's advisory, a so-called Angel was sighted at the Pelayo residence of the Coastal village last Tuesday evening. We have Marga Sarmiento to report on more details on this issue. Come in Marga.

Field Reporter 1: I'm reporting live in front of the Pelayo residence where an unusual creature, a very old man with enormous wings, said to be an angel is locked up with the hens in the wire chicken coop.

[Camera focus on old man with enormous wings, the place is crowded and noisy; many people are pushing and pulling each other trying to take a glimpse of the so-called "angel."]

With us here are Pelayo and his wife, Elisenda, the first people who saw the angel. Pelayo, what is [sic] your first reaction when you saw the angel?

Pelayo: I was shocked and afraid. When I first saw the angel, I thought he came to take our new born baby away from us. (From Lit 13, Section 27)

¹⁴ Lit 13, Section 27, School Year 2004–2005

Another challenge to imaginative thinking is creative projects. Students, for example, compile their personal anthology of poetry or story; adapt poems and stories for children; and make a poster to convey their reactions to literary texts. In a Merit class¹⁵ a couple of students collaborated in turning Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" into a children's pop up book, complete with colorful illustrations. On the outside back cover, the illustrators explain their beliefs and intentions:

Anna Aranas and Genevieve Pardilla loved storybooks as children. To them, storybooks are magical because they have that special power to transport our imaginations to different places at different times.

This was their inspiration in interpreting and illustrating William Wordsworth's popular poem, I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD. Through this book, they aim to introduce the wonderful world of poetry to young children. After all, poetry is not just meant for adults, but for children of all ages. Through this book, children will learn to appreciate poetry not necessarily for their figurative meaning, but for their vivid descriptions and literal and creative structures as well. (from Merit Class, Section 4).

Often the most popular creative project is staging a play—usually an adaptation from a story or poem but others have taken up the challenge to write original scripts. Doing stage plays is a huge undertaking involving the entire class; everyone plays a role in the play production. Depending on their level of confidence, some students sell tickets to the general public and invite faculty members to be their guests in the show. It is a common practice among them to use proceeds from the show to contribute to their favorite charity in projects launched by student organization. Stage plays often reveal pleasant surprises about students' abilities that do not ordinarily show in class discussions. Sometimes, these are occasions for the quiet and the insecure to harness their potential among friends where, away from the teacher, they feel free to be themselves without judgment.

At the end of the day, what do students get from all these activities? Not so much the ability to memorize what the literature says about literary conventions as the experience of doing literature and engaging in life with a longer term effect on them beyond the freshman literature classrooms. Here is an example from one student's testimony.

Lit 13 has also motivated me to write or even just conceptualize stories that are inspired by my own emotions. ... I never thought that people like O-lan from Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth* could radiate such hurt and sacrifice into the young life that I have right now through simple words like "And to that one you gave my two pearls!" Shylock from *The Merchant of Venice* has given me more empathy towards my enemies when he whispered into my ear "If you prick us, do we not bleed?" And never have I been more moved by desperation and longing when Connie Escobar of *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* cried "Bear me again different" into my heart (Lit 13, Section E 15).

¹⁵ Merit class, Section 4, School Year 2006–2007

Threshing out some implications

From the preceding discussion of the sample tasks, a few ideas can be gleaned. First, whether the tasks are linguistic- or literary-oriented, in the process of accomplishing these, students are 'forced' to develop their critical and creative thinking skills. The development of these skills, therefore, is embedded in the task processes. Second, although what I described were sample tasks only, they gave an idea of how teachers can be creative in designing tasks that attune students to relevant issues which, in turn, urge them to communicate in English in meaningful ways. Third, teaching for meaning is not just confined to setting up tasks. It involves an entire attitude towards learning and teaching which culminates in the design and execution of tasks. It influences teaching strategy decisions, choice of teaching material, management of teacher-student interaction both in and outside the classroom, approach to feedback on work output, and teacher disposition especially in crisis situations. Fourth, teaching for meaning can only be realized if this orientation is shared by the institution as reflected in its educational vision. In other words, ownership of values is an important consideration. The classroom that does not find any institutional support for this approach will be unable to sustain the potential gains that it can offer.

What are some implications of these ideas for teacher development? While it is evident that in student-centered task-based approach to teaching English, the students take the lead in transforming information into knowledge, the teacher's role, far from being diminished, has increased in complexity and magnitude. More than just providing input, the teacher now needs to facilitate the learning processes, taking into consideration students' and institutional contexts that can influence diverse learning outcomes. The teacher, therefore, is constantly faced with the challenge to improve personally and professionally on an on-going basis. Since there is no one sure teacher development formula that works for all, every teacher and every educational institution is, thus, called to think out of the usual box once in a while.

I would now like to turn to the AdMU experience in relation to teacher development issues in support of the vision for meaningful student learning. The expectation in this environment is for the teacher to be the first learner. What should consist that learning? Knowledge of the teaching context (the educational sub-culture) would definitely be one. In AdMU, teachers go through a series of orientation workshops that gradually familiarize them with the university's educational philosophy and goals. Faculty manuals and student handbooks that show application of these ideas and ideals are also made available to them.

Student-centered and task-based teaching skills are another area for teacher development. In AdMU's English Department, certain structures have been set up to attend to this need. Teaching skills workshops are regularly scheduled every year. They include topics such as teaching critical thinking, managing group work, integrating language work, making grammar work more creative, techniques in teaching the novel, poetry, and drama. To help teachers sustain their learning from these workshops and find support in the practice and

companionship of others, they are organized into support clusters. They meet to share best practices, exchange ideas about classroom management techniques, or discuss standards of grading compositions. Honing teaching skills does not happen overnight, but teachers' classroom practice can facilitate it especially if monitoring structures are also in place other than self-monitoring. For example, the cycle of classroom observations, student evaluation, and feedback, practiced in many schools, can provide valuable opportunities for reflective practice.

The last content area of teacher development has to do with developing and nurturing desirable qualities and attitudes that impact teaching. This is not an easy area to develop because it is linked with personality and character disposition. In AdMU, *cura personalis* (personal care) is a desired value for teachers. The practice of regular student consultations has become a natural structure for the development of *cura personalis*. In the English classes, students are also encouraged to keep a journal which teachers regularly collect so that they can respond to students' thinking, feeling, reactions, and concerns. It becomes a venue for dialogue between students and teachers and a natural way of getting to know each other better.

Such teacher support initiatives are not a hundred per cent success stories, of course. Different personalities and needs call for different forms of intervention. What is important is not to lose track of the vision. The rest will follow, maybe slowly, but at least in the right direction.

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5

Furthering Student Potential through Instructor Motivation in the Integration of EFL Skills

■ Chen-ching Li
Shih Hsin University

ABSTRACT: *In the age of globalization, efficient communication in English has become an indispensable task for all. Educating foreign learners of English and helping them to build their English communication skills, however, are a daunting task. To tackle this educational undertaking, I propose that successful English education in schools of all levels should start from instructor motivation in the holistic integration of EFL skills, as well as innovation in delivering successful teaching. Motivation from the instructor will help students to release their potential and further develop their language skills through pragmatic tasks in a near-immersion environment. Proactive engagement from the instructor, serving to both encourage and further challenge the student, should be applied simultaneous to training in reading, listening, speaking, writing and translation. Having made progress in the five language skills with the help of the instructor, the student can then advance to the next level, where he can read on his own to further develop productive skills. By repeating this cycle of challenge and positive reinforcement, both instructor and student will be able to build substantial EFL skills. The findings in this study are based on my experience of teaching of English writing and speaking to college level students in Taiwan. In subsequent discussions, theoretical perspectives on EFL writing and speaking will be reviewed, with models in the teaching of the five language skills provided. I will also use examples from content-based and Internet-facilitated EFL writing and speaking classes to demonstrate the application of the reading-writing interface in relation to students' interactive learning of English.*

Introduction

In the wake of globalization, efficient intranational and international communication in English has become an indispensable task for all. Educating foreign learners of English and helping them to build their English communication skills, however, are a daunting task. There is a general consensus that the teaching of English as a foreign language in non-English speaking Asian countries still has ample room for improvement and exploration. This view was made public at a number of professional gatherings: the Third Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Education Ministerial Meeting (Santiago, Chile) in 2004, the Increasing Creativity and Innovation in English Language

Education Workshop at the East-West Center (Honolulu) in 2001, and the 2005 and 2006 English Teaching Association (ETA) International Symposia in Taipei, Taiwan, to mention a few.

To tackle this educational undertaking for efficient global communication in the twenty-first century, I propose that successful English education in schools of all levels should start from instructor motivation in the holistic integration of skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Motivated instructors will better be able to help students release their potential and further develop their language skills through pragmatic tasks in a near-immersion environment. Furthermore, proactive engagement from the instructor, serving to both encourage and further challenge the student, should be applied simultaneous to training in reading, listening speaking and writing. Having made progress in the five language skills of listening, reading, writing, speaking and translation with the help of a motivated instructor, the student can then advance to the next level, where he can read on his own to further develop productive skills. By repeating this cycle of challenge and positive reinforcement, both instructor and student will be able to build substantial EFL skills, thus creating a cycle of positive motivation.

The findings in this paper are based on my experience of teaching of English writing and speaking to college level students and in-service English teachers in Taiwan. In subsequent discussions, theoretical perspectives on teacher motivation, and in particular, second language (L2) instructor motivation, will be reviewed, with models of teacher motivation and factors that affect motivation in language instructors outlined. I will also use recent data from student performance in Taiwan and other Asian countries to illustrate the correlation between instructor motivation and students' learning of English as a foreign language in Asian contexts.

Literature review: Teacher motivation

The issue of teacher motivation, and in particular, language teacher motivation, has been explored by a number of authors in recent decades.

Dörnyei (2001b) discusses key aspects of teacher motivation, and sets up a model which divides the concept into intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. According to Dörnyei (2001b, p. 158), intrinsic motivation includes the educational process itself and the subject matter, whereas extrinsic motivation (Dörnyei, 2001b, pp. 160-162) includes school-based micro-level factors and system/societal-based macro-level factors that affect teacher motivation.

In addition, Dörnyei discusses the temporal dimension of teacher motivation, which addresses the motivation to choose teaching as a career (Dörnyei, 2001b, pp. 162-163), and potential negative influences on teacher motivation, which include factors such as stress, restricted autonomy, insufficient self-efficacy, lack of intellectual challenge, and inadequate career structure.

Teacher motivation in the context of teachers of second language is also treated in Dörnyei (2001b), and is further explored in Pennington (1995), Doyle & Kim (1998), and Kubanyiova (2006).

Survey studies of TESOL teachers in the U.S. conducted by Pennington and Riley (in Pennington, 1995) show that teachers in the field of English language teaching were most satisfied with the moral values and social services aspect of the profession, and least satisfied with advancement opportunities and compensation, suggesting that intrinsic motivation was the main motivational force for teachers, whereas external motivation, especially in the systemic-societal aspect, was weak. The general trend was confirmed in a repeat survey conducted among Chinese bilingual high school teachers in Hong Kong (in Pennington, 1995).

Interview studies of Korean and American teachers of English by Kim & Doyle (1998) confirm that intrinsic motivation is the main reason language teachers choose the profession, but that teachers share the sentiment that their love of the subject matter and the profession is taken advantage of by school administrators, resulting in unfavorable employment and advancement conditions. Their study also mentions lack of autonomy, the use of standardized tests, and other curriculum-related pressures which lead to dissatisfaction.

Dörnyei (2001b, p. 175) further explores the relationship between teacher motivation and student motivation, citing a "Pygmalion effect", in which high teacher expectation positively affects student performance. This sentiment is echoed in Csikszentmihalyi (1997, p. 78), who argues that the most effective teachers are not necessarily the most powerful or most intelligent ones, but are instead the ones who "love what they are doing, who show their dedication and their passion that there is nothing else on earth they would rather be doing". Similarly, Bain (2004), in his popular work *What the Best College Teachers Do*, writes that:

We found that highly successful teachers have developed a series of attitudes, conceptions, and practices that reflect well some key insights that have emerged from the scholarship on motivation (Bain, 2001, p. 32).

Kubanyiova (2006, p. 1) offers similar insights from a psychological perspective, stressing the affective factor in learning:

The quality of learning engagement in the classroom does not depend on students' cognitive abilities alone, but is also influenced by complex motivational and affective factors. Extensive research in the fields of L2 motivation and educational psychology has generated two important premises: first, the classroom environment is powerful in activating motivational beliefs of the students (Pintrich, Marx, & Boyle, 1993), which, in turn, affect their learning outcomes and second, teachers play a crucial role in creating motivating learning environments by employing a number of conscious and proactive motivational strategies (see Brophy, 2004; Dörnyei, 2001a) and thus engaging in what Dörnyei (2006) terms a "motivational teaching practice"

In a Chinese context, Gao, Zhao, & Cheng (2007) show through a study of motivation in university students in the People's Republic of China that three factors in particular were instrumental in boosting student motivation and altering student self-identity: (1) intrinsic interest in English learning is correlated with productive and additive changes in self-identity; (2) individual

development is correlated with self-confidence changes; and (3) and social responsibility is correlated with productive and split changes in self-identity.

The aforementioned studies provide a framework from which to view the issue of teacher motivation and its constituent factors. In the next section, some best practices of EFL instructor motivation are proposed, taking account of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Best practices of EFL instructor motivation

Three categories of best practices in EFL instructor motivation, drawn from the experiences of English language teachers in Taiwan and categorized according to theoretical frameworks introduced in the previous section are proposed, which can be used to empower EFL instructors so that they may cope with the challenge of EFL education in both secondary and post-secondary levels of schooling. These practices may also serve to upgrade the quality of the EFL teaching profession, which has been the focus of a number of professional conferences in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), including the Third APEC Education Ministerial Meeting (Santiago, Chile) in 2004, the Increasing Creativity and Innovation in English Language Education workshop at the East-West Center (Honolulu) in 2001, and the 2005 and 2006 ETA International Symposia in Taipei, Taiwan. The three categories of best practices are as follows:

- a. Thorough Mastery of the Target Language
- b. Extrinsic Motivation for EFL Teachers
- c. Effective Application of Internet Technology

Thorough mastery of the target language

An EFL instructor needs to possess language competence in order to inspire students' enthusiasm for learning. A good understanding of English language structure is essential, including the phonetic qualities of English sounds, English phonological structure, English morphological structure, English syntactic structure, English language pragmatic conventions, and the structure of discourse in English conversations. Only when versed in the full spectrum of linguistic knowledge of English will EFL instructors be competent in the delivery of the five language arts of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation. When possessing a positive motivation for mastering linguistics and English language structure, EFL instructors tend to translate their linguistic knowledge into a renewed enthusiasm for teaching. As Murray (in Chan, 2004, p. 4) writes, "enthusiasm is associated with both course success and motivation for further study."

When motivated to rekindle their competence in EFL instruction, instructors will then be able to motivate students by, as Chan (2004, p. 3) points out, "communicating clearly, setting tasks that encourage active engagement with the materials, and displaying enthusiasm for the subject matter."

On the other hand, failure at complete mastery of the target language will cause students to lose their faith in their instructors, and eventually nullify the

learning outcome, thereby creating a stagnated or delayed expected learning efficiency in the students in the EFL instruction programs. Many English language teachers in Taiwan (and perhaps in other countries also) are intimidated by the prospect of conducting EFL teaching activities because of insufficient mastery of English or lack of skills for communication.

Extrinsic motivation for EFL teachers

In order to encourage EFL instructors to maintain and advance their English language skills, in-service training or short term summer courses abroad, such as those provided by the Ministries of Education of Taiwan, Korea, and Japan to qualified instructors, should be implemented on a regular basis.

Other policies have been implemented in Malaysia, Thailand, Chile and Hong Kong to enhance instructor motivation. APEC Human Resources Development (HRD) Education Network (2004) reports that Malaysia has raised salaries for EFL instructors by 5%, and is now using English to teach Math and Sciences.

In Thailand, where TOEFL scores fall below the Asian average, the government has established a set of "English teacher standard and competency indicators" in cooperation with ThaiTESOL.

In Chile, scholarship preference is given to students applying to enter the English teaching profession, in the hope that these future EFL teachers will be equipped with positive motivation for teaching English as a foreign language.

In Hong Kong, English-proficient teachers are given opportunities to qualify to teach special English courses of their own choosing.

In Taiwan, university faculty members engaged in teaching non-language courses in English are offered extra pay in the amount of 5% to 10% of the regular salary, and the government is encouraging programs taught exclusively in English, similar to practices in Malaysia. Such are examples of extrinsic motivation, or in the terminology of Dörnyei (2001b, p. 160), the "social contextual influences" that affect English language instructor motivation in the Asia Pacific region.

Aside from the aforementioned financial incentives for EFL instructors, the practice of "faculty development", whereby instructors are provided with assistance in teaching effectiveness and professional development, is another means of boosting extrinsic motivation in teachers. Programs included in the "faculty development" being practiced in the vast majority of institutions of higher learning in North America and their counterparts in some Asian countries, such as workshops on teaching strategy and instruction in the use of new technology, help EFL instructors to be equipped with the technological and academic know-how of efficient teaching. In this manner, EFL instructors' extrinsic motivation can be enhanced on a large scale.

Effective application of Internet technology

Internet technology makes it easier to access information. Easier access to new information inspires constant self-improvement in EFL instructors. Moreover,

Internet technology makes the upgrade of language competence more “fun”.

Furthermore, not only does information technology provide convenience and efficiency of instruction, it makes for more effective communication with students. EFL instructors can use the Internet to assist and counsel students through e-mail, instant messaging, blogs, and other formats. However, all these activities can only be successfully supplemented if and only if EFL instructors are equipped with positive intrinsic motivation for teaching. In turn, effective application of information technology will readily enhance the relationship between teacher motivation and student motivation.

Conclusion and expectations

It has been said in Taiwan that the declining English proficiency of both high school and college students in the past decade can be attributed to either weakening motivation or lack of competence on the part of English language instructors. Studies have shown that EFL instructors with positive motivation for learning and teaching will enable their students to become positive in learning, and thus perform well in all types of English-related activities, and consequently score better scores in the competitive nationwide college entrance examination (Li, 2007; 2005).

To solve this problem, instructor motivation in the integration of EFL Skills is the key. What has been proposed in this paper is a synthesis of the many factors affecting teacher motivation proposed in the literature for use in an Asian context, which offers a pragmatic take on the issue. The measures proposed: thorough mastery of the target language, extrinsic motivation for EFL teachers, and effective application of Internet technology are representative of best practices in teacher motivation in Asia Pacific.

All in all, it takes confidence and enthusiasm to promote instructor motivation at all levels. Dörnyei’s (2001b) description of intrinsic motivation is reminiscent of a buddhist passage from *Platform Sultra of the Sixth Patriarch*:

When the mind is motivated dharma is born,
whereas when the mind is extinguished dharma ceases to be.

The *Platform Sultra* is a Buddhist teaching underlying psychoanalysis of the “mind”. The quoted passage teaches that a pursuance of the truth can be gloriously productive based on the genuine motivation generated from the intrinsic “mind”; on the contrary, the search for the truth can be nullified if there is not any motivation existing internally. This passage can be employed to account for the importance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in EFL instructors in the era of high-tech and information technology of today.

Like teacher, like student. EFL instructors should motivate themselves to be fully proficient in EFL skills, and also possess love and compassion, before they embark on the enlightening profession of educating the next generation.

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6

Launching a New Model of Language Teaching in China: The Case of Shantou University

■ Jun Liu
Shantou University

ABSTRACT: *This paper reports two studies that show evidence of the effects of the English Enhancement Program at Shantou University in a four-year period. Since its inception, the English Language Center at Shantou University has undertaken both curricular and co-curricular innovations by focusing on improving students' overall communicative competence. Innovative classroom teaching methods coupled with extensive student-run activities outside classrooms have enabled STU students ample opportunities to use English in writing and speaking. In particular, the students are encouraged to use English and improve their English communication skills by learning from one another. Both studies demonstrate that through this English Enhancement Program students have made remarkable progress in their aural and oral communication skills throughout their entire four-year study at STU.*

Introduction

In 2002, The National Writing Project at University of California, Berkeley was commissioned by the Li Ka Shing Foundation to determine the feasibility of establishing English as the medium of instruction at Shantou University within the stated five-year goal and to make recommendations regarding the accomplishment of this goal as well as the strengthening of the teaching and learning of the English language. After a weeklong study consisting of interviews, observations, document analysis, information gathering, and verification, the Project experts identified four major barriers and risks: academic design and instruction; examination system; organizational development; and capacity and facility support and development. They also formulated suggestions for changes and improvement in each of these identified areas.

In following the recommendations of the National Writing Project at University of California, Berkeley, Shantou University initiated the English Enhancement Program in the fall of 2002 and subsequently established the English Language Center, a year later, in the fall of 2003. As an integral part of the English Enhancement Program at Shantou University, the English Language Center's (ELC) mission is focused on increasing the competitiveness of our university students' English proficiency to an international level while

simultaneously creating a model that directly contributes to both the English teaching and learning reforms throughout China. The ELC believes that a high-level of communicative competence (i.e., grammatical, pragmatic, discourse, and strategic competence) is the ultimate goal for all of our students. Along with this strongly held belief, we subscribe to the following: teaching innovation that is informed by research; developing students' critical thinking strategies; and stressing learner autonomy. All of the preceding points of concentration should be cultivated and nurtured within a setting established specifically for the utilization of the ELC program, a combination of directed classroom study and extra- and co-curricular activities.

To this end, we have developed a new curriculum that places all students according to their overall English proficiency and individual abilities, thus maximizing and personalizing their learning experience through specifically developed placement tests. Furthermore, through a comprehensive needs analysis of English language learning difficulties and the accompanying attitudes of our Shantou University students conducted during the fall of 2003, two areas of weakness were identified as significant among our students: Listening and Speaking (their Aural and Oral skills). Subsequently, the ELC designed, developed, and adopted numerous English language use opportunities campus-wide. Included in these activities: English Corner, English Lounge, Creative Expression Club, Shantou Beat, Conversation Series, Faculty Lecture Series, Film Series, Reading Club, Poetry Club, Spelling Bee, and the multi-phased English Festival consisting of Intercollegiate Speech Contest, Intercollegiate Singing Contest and Variety Show. All of these listed functions and activities greatly enhanced and expanded our students' aural and oral English communicative skills throughout every facet of their lives at Shantou University.

Two studies

During the past four years (2002–2006), the ELC has designed, initiated, and internally conducted an ongoing, aggressive, and extensive project: a pre-testing/post-testing study, first establishing the guiding criteria and now continuing the project as an integral part of the ELC. In June 2003, all first-year students sat specific placement tests that accurately measured their listening, reading, language use, and writing skills that were present during their first academic year. Using the same testing instruments, these same students again sat a series of tests, the post-test being administered just prior to their graduation during the recent summer, 2006. Additionally, the testing process was enhanced through the implementation of an actual, orally produced English speaking test, designed and added to the post-test in order to more completely and accurately assess the graduating STU students' English speaking skills, which the English Language Center has focused on since fall 2003.

The Medical College of Shantou University was singled out as a comparison group, to be compared against the other seven colleges on the main campus, specifically because of the obvious reason that the Medical College, as an independent sub-campus of STU, conducted their English program in terms

of curriculum, textbooks, and teaching methods, quite unlike that of the ELC program. Because of this, the Medical College of STU had not participated in the pre-test. However, in order to establish a base line data for comparison, we used the English scores from the college entrance examinations of all students from both the Medical College and the other seven colleges on the main campus. This was decided upon primarily due to the high correlation ($r = 0.536$, $p < .001$) between the pre-test and the English scores within the college entrance examination that, subsequently, resulted in a separate correlation study (see the following scatter plot in Figure 1).

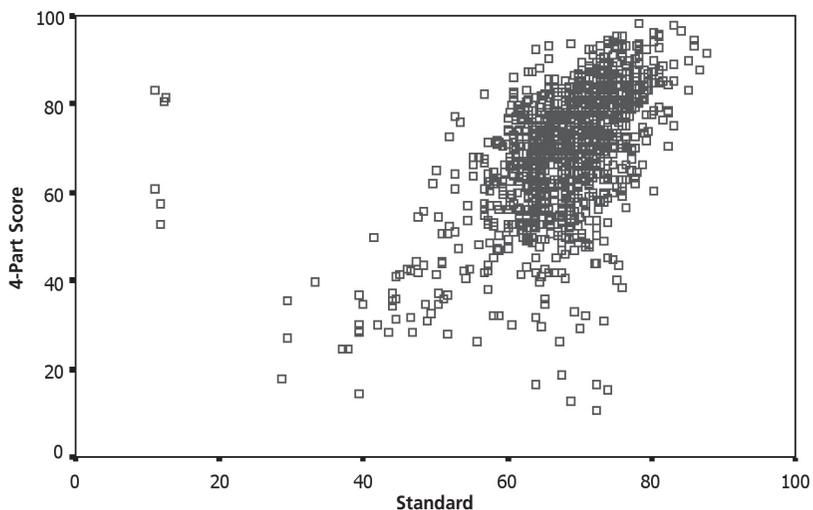
The results were generated from two separate and distinct comparisons: One being the comparison between the Medical College and the seven colleges on the main campus of STU, by using the English entrance examination scores as the specified entry data against the post-test data (Study I); and the second being the comparison among the seven colleges on the main campus through the utilization of the same-instrument for the pre-test/post-test scores (Study II).

Results of Study I: Comparison between students from the Medical College and the seven colleges of the main campus

For the first pre-test/post-test comparison between the Medical College and the seven colleges at the main campus location, there is a total database of 1042 students. There were only 823 usable subjects with an additional 219 subjects being discarded as non-usable data sets due to:

1. Sixty-eight having incomplete data from the English entrance examination scores;
2. The use of different standards and requirements on the English entrance

Figure 1: Scatter plot between English entrance exam & placement test scores of Grade 2002



examination for 108 students from provinces other than Guangdong; and
 3. Forty-three subjects who were not members of Grade 2002 (Class of 2006).

As illustrated in Figure 2, there are observed differences between the enrollment requirements for students in the Medical College versus the other seven colleges on the main campus. It is clear that the Medical College has the highest requirement for enrollment with an average score of 681. Conversely, the Art and Design College has the lowest enrollment requirement with the average score of 587. An ANOVA yielded a significant F value within colleges, $F(7, 815) = 71.19, p < .001$. Post hoc tests showed significant differences between Medical College and the other seven colleges, with the former outperforming.

As seen in Figure 3, the average English scores in the college entrance examination were more or less the same between the Medical College (68.92) and the Engineering (68.91), Science (68.41), Journalism (71.33), and Business Colleges (69.66). Post hoc tests showed statistical differences between the Medical College and the Liberal Arts, with the former outperforming the latter, $p < .001$. Additionally, this same test substantiated significant difference between Medical College and the Art and Design College, with the former outperforming the latter in the overall English scores of college entrance examination, $p < .001$.

As shown in Figure 4, the average post-test score of the Medical College is 73.42. This is significantly lower than the Journalism (80.97), Business (77.92), and Law Colleges (76.91). An ANOVA revealed significant differences

Figure 2: Mean college entrance examination scores between the Medical College of STU and the other seven colleges at Shantou University in July of 2002

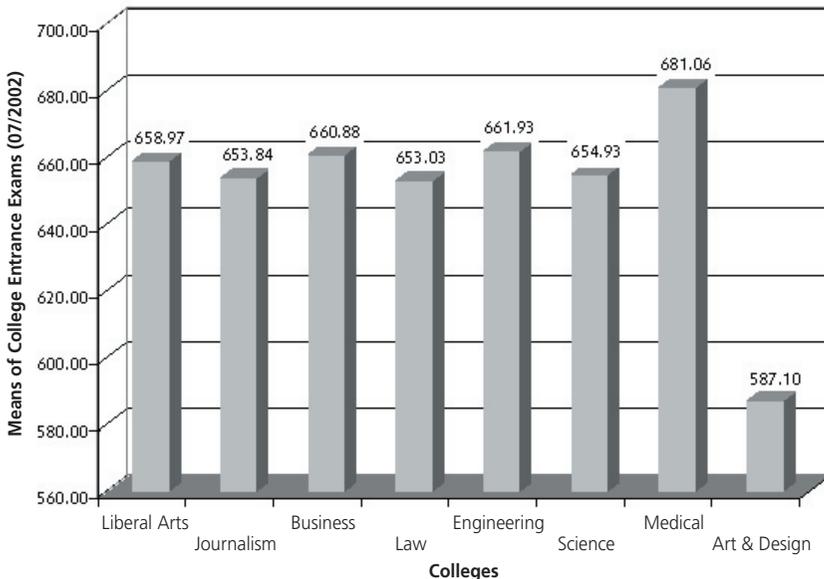


Figure 3: Mean college entrance examination English scores between the Medical College of STU and the other seven colleges at Shantou University in July of 2002

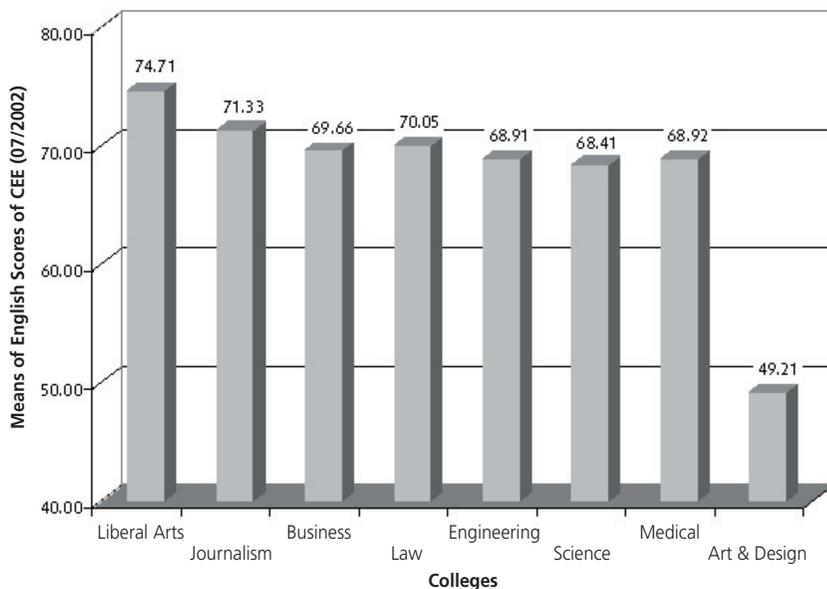
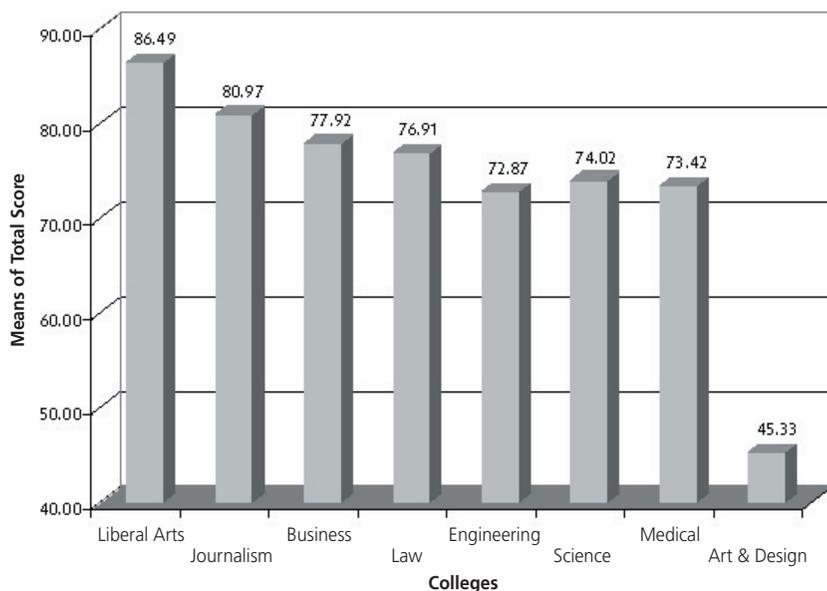


Figure 4: Mean total scores of the post-test between the Medical College of STU and the other seven colleges at Shantou University in June of 2006



among colleges, $F(1, 815) = 69.8, p < .001$. Post hoc tests showed that statistical differences between the Medical College and the Liberal Arts, with the latter outperforming the former after a four-year English study, $p < .001$. Nevertheless, it is markedly higher than the Art and Design College (post hoc LCD, $p < .001$).

Figure 5 illustrates that the average listening skills score (one of the two important oral communication skills) among students from the Medical College is significantly lower than that of the Liberal Arts (post hoc LCD, $p < .001$), Journalism (post hoc LCD, $p < .05$), and Business Colleges (post hoc LCD, $p < .05$) and significantly higher than the scores of the Art and Design College (post hoc LCD $p < .001$).

With respect to listening skills, it can be inferred that students from the Medical College began at a comparable level to their counterparts from Journalism and Business in 2002 but lagged behind these two colleges in the 2006 scores. Further, it can be gathered from these data that the English Enhancement Program has been substantially more beneficial for students in the Journalism and Business Colleges when comparing them to students in the Medical College over a four-year span, not to mention the extremely positive results demonstrated by the students of the Liberal Arts College.

The salient feature of Figure 6 (the speaking test results in the post-test) is the highly significant difference shown between the Medical College and all the other colleges $F(1,815) = 37.45, p < .001$. Post hoc tests showed highly statistical differences between the Medical College and the other six colleges

Figure 5: Mean listening comprehension scores of post-test between the Medical College of STU and the other seven colleges at Shantou University in June of 2006

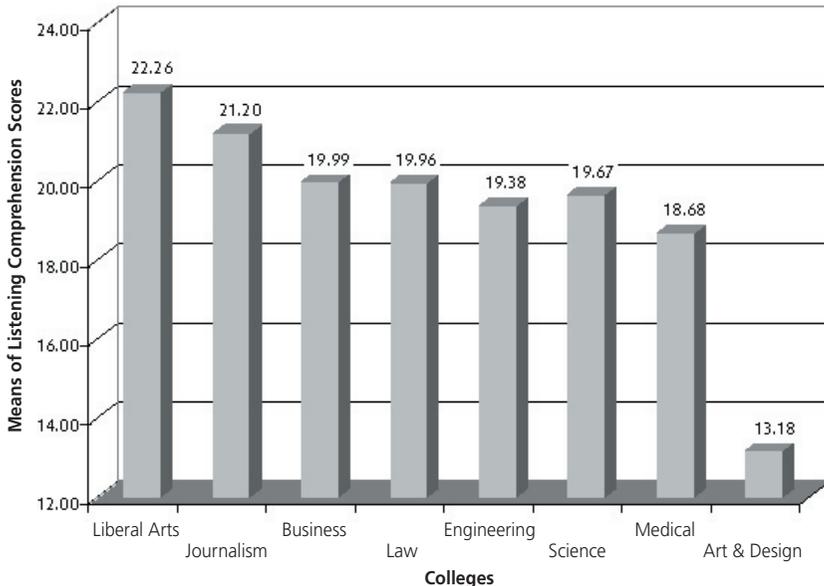
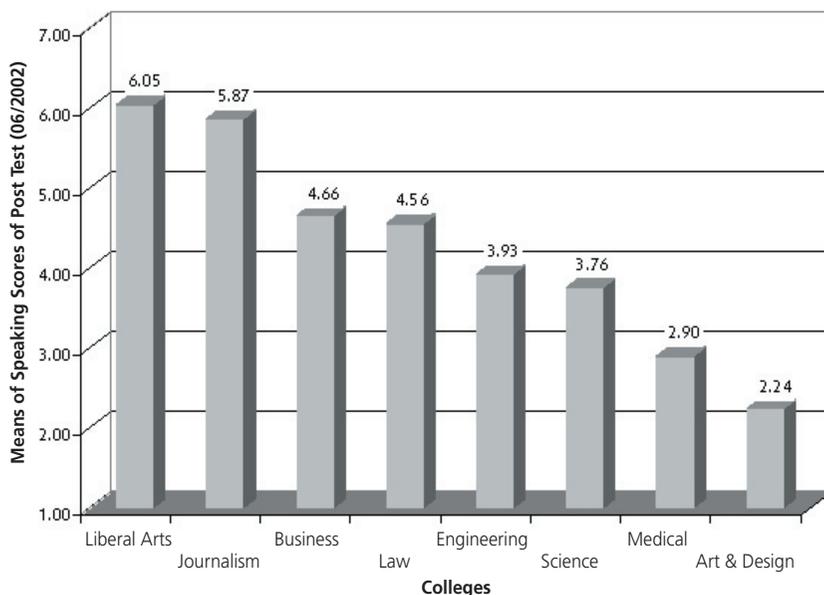


Figure 6: Mean speaking scores of the post-test between the Medical College of STU and the other seven colleges at Shantou University in June of 2006

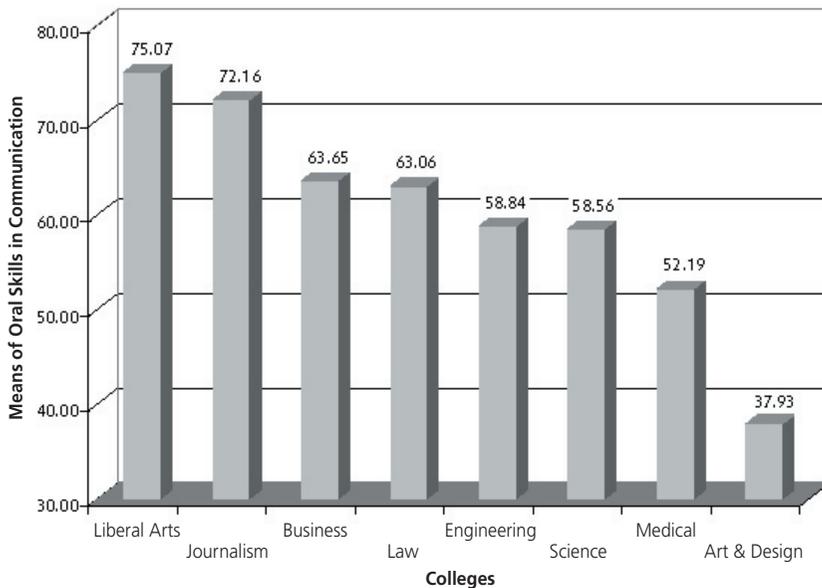


(with the exception of the Art and Design College), with the latter (six colleges) outperforming the Medical Colleges, $p < .001$. Additionally, this same test substantiated significant difference between Medical College and the Art and Design College, with the former outperforming the latter, $p < .05$. It is relevant to note that the biggest improvement for Arts and Design students is the speaking as the differentiation between Medical and Art is the smallest in the above figure.

Therefore, this is conclusive evidence which demonstrates that the English Enhancement Program has dramatically improved the speaking ability of the majority of the student population on the main campus of Shantou University.

When combining speaking and listening scores (aural and oral), Figure 7 provides further evidence of the contrast between the Medical College and the other colleges which have higher mean scores than Medical College (with the exception of the Art and Design College). Post hoc tests showed highly statistical differences between the Medical College and the other six colleges, with the latter (six colleges) outperforming the Medical Colleges in oral communication skills, $p < .001$. Additionally, this same test substantiated a significant difference between the Medical College and the Art and Design College, with the former outperforming the latter, $p < .001$.

Figure 7: Mean scores of oral communication skills (including listening and speaking skills) between the Medical College of STU and the other seven colleges at Shantou University in June of 2006



The results of Study II: Pre-test/post-test comparison of students from the seven colleges on the STU main campus

Study II analyzes data using the same pre-test/post-test instruments (excluding 143 students from the Medical College and discarding 53 incomplete data sets), providing a comparison of students from the seven colleges on the main campus, approximately 1085 subjects who took the post-test leaving a remainder of 1032 usable subjects.

Figure 8 demonstrates that all the students from the seven colleges on the main STU campus have made significant progress, $t(1031) = -14.578$, $p < .001$, in their overall English Proficiency during their past four years of study. Students from the Journalism and Liberal Arts Colleges experienced the highest relative gains (highly significant) while those from other colleges, including those from the Art and Design College, also demonstrated steady progress.

However, in order to understand the relative gains in specific skill areas (e.g., listening, reading, language use, and writing), the ELC also performed skill-specific statistical analysis demonstrated in Figures 9, 10, and 11 and Paired Samples t-Test between pre-test and post-test which showed that there are highly statistical significances among all skills: Overall skills, $t(1031) = -14.537$, $p < .001$; Listening skills, $t(1031) = -7.036$, $p < .001$; Reading skills, $t(1031) = -5.580$, $p < .001$; Language use, $t(1031) = -18.797$, $p < .001$; Writing skills, $t(1031) = -5.673$, $p < .001$. All of these data indicated that through four-year English study implemented by the English Enhancement Program, all the students from seven colleges on the main campus have made considerable progress

Figure 8: Mean comparison between pre-test and post-test scores of seven colleges

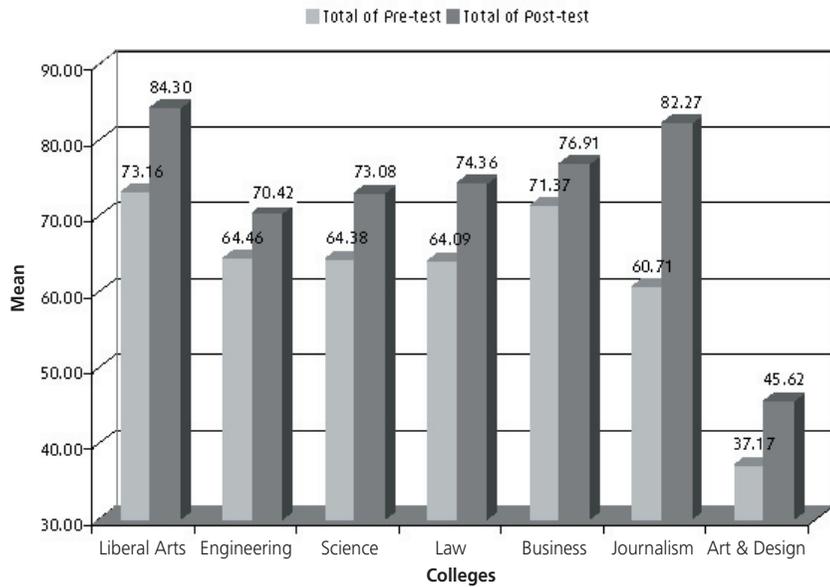
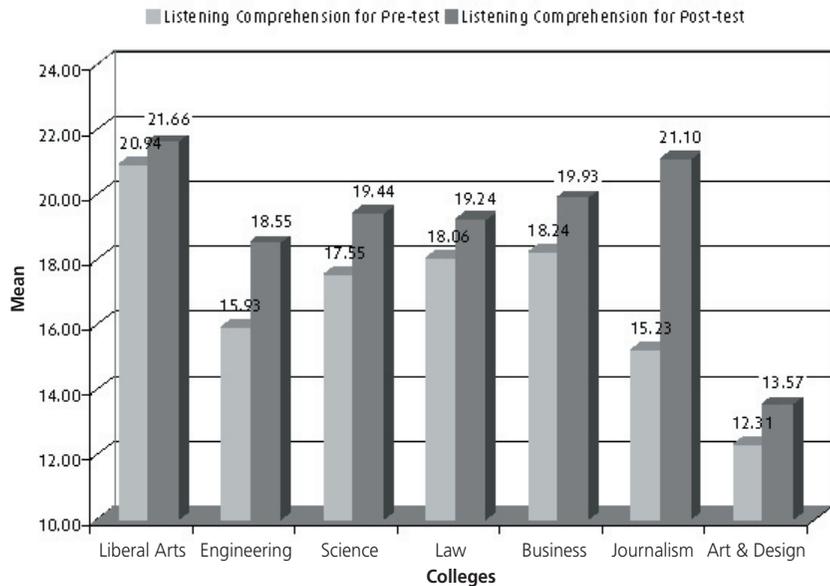


Figure 9: Relative gains in listening



among all skills to the various extent based on their differential entry English proficiencies. It proves that the English Enhancement Program functions well at Shantou University.

Figure 10: Relative gains in reading comprehension

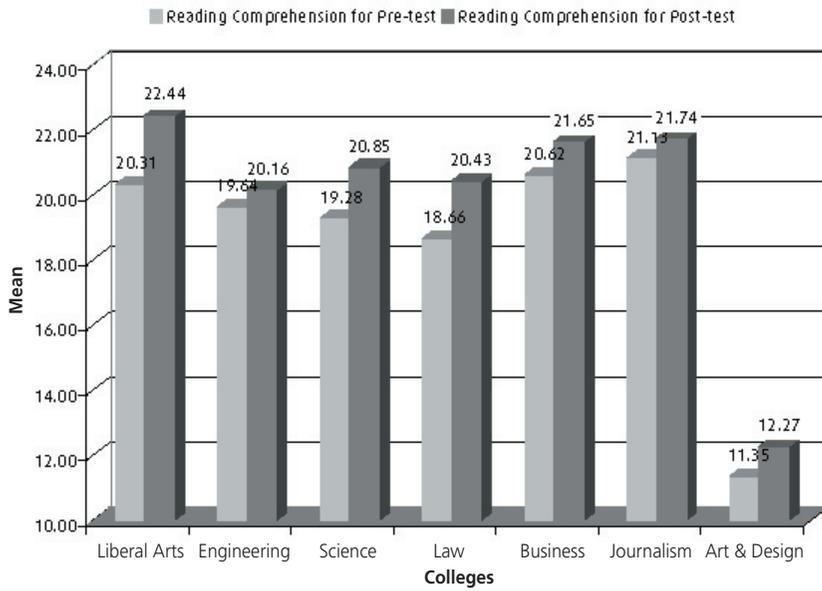


Figure 11: Relative gains in language use

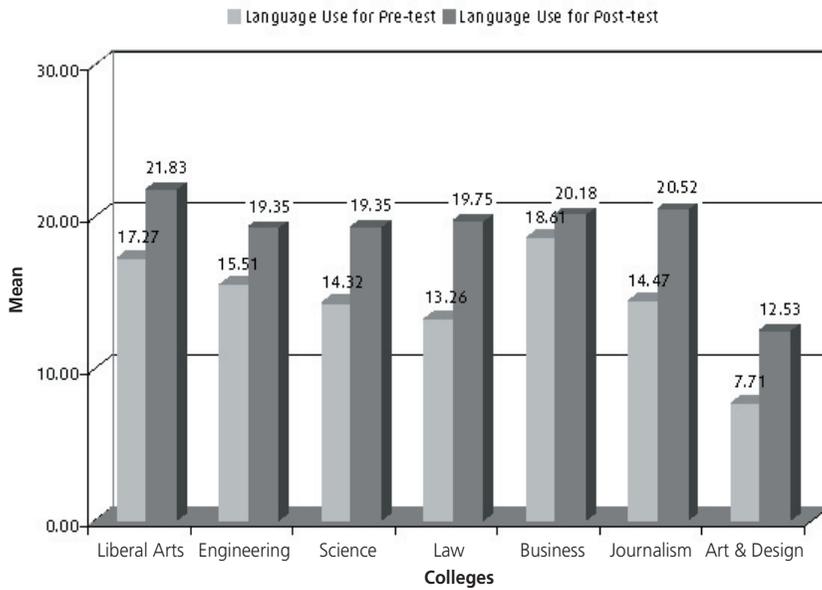
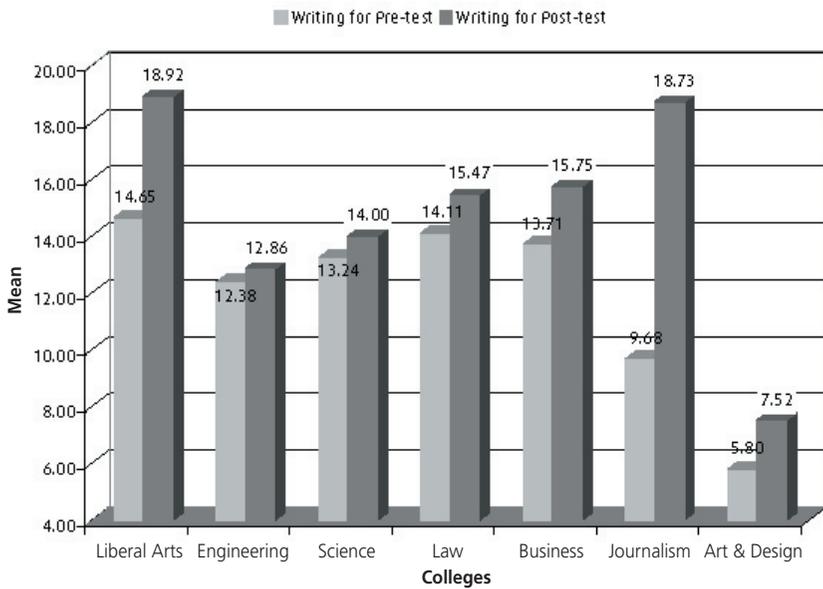


Figure 12: Relative gains in writing



Conclusion

Both Study I and Study II, as described above, illustrate with hard statistical evidence that the English Enhancement Program at STU's main campus has accomplished its goal. This student population has made steady progress within all skill areas over the past four years. In particular, students of all six colleges (except for students in the Art and Design College, which has a much lower than average college enrollment requirement) have made remarkable progress in their aural and oral communication skills throughout their entire four-year study at STU. This—improving students' oral communicative competence—was exactly the main objective set forth by the English Enhancement Program from its inception. These irrefutable data prove that the English Enhancement Program at STU has steadily increased the competitiveness of the STU students' English Proficiency in general, and oral communication skills in particular.

Acknowledgment

The author would like to express gratitude to LKSF for the strong support for the EEP Program, and all ELC faculty for their dedication over the last several years. In particular, I would like to thank Peter Xiao for his strong leadership as Associate Director of ELC, and Shirley Gao for her great assistance in data analysis. Last but not least, I would like to thank the Medical School at STU for their generosity in providing the data that made the comparison possible.



Using the Toulmin Approach in Teaching Argumentative Writing

■ Wu Siew Mei & Peggie Chan
National University of Singapore

ABSTRACT: *The aim of this paper is to demonstrate an approach to the teaching of argumentative writing through the use of aspects of Toulmin's (1958) framework as a platform at different phases of the writing process. In this paper, the term argumentation mainly includes texts where the writer takes a position on certain issues and develops that position persuasively by substantiating and negotiating the ideas with rhetorically appropriate support. The close relationship between thinking and writing is a link that has been examined closely by various research work. Teaching thinking through writing is of utmost importance—Piaget highlights education's important goal as "[forming] minds which can be critical, can verify, and not accept everything they are offered". From the practitioner's point of view, the need to provide a concrete platform to initiate the thinking and writing processes involved in argumentation poses a challenge as the complexity of and interaction between the two stages are not organized in a linear fashion. The Toulmin framework and its use in the analysis of novice and expert arguments have been studied, for instance, by Crammond (1996). This paper draws on methodologies akin to such studies but extends it by demonstrating the use of the model as a scaffold for writing processes beyond the analysis of written texts. More specifically, with the Toulmin model as the central focus, the paper traces the formulation and development of appropriate issues and problems, the development of survey tools to verify problems identified, and the development of rhetorically robust problem-solution texts. Essentially, the paper reports mainly on the usefulness of aspects of the model in various stages of the writing of an argumentative piece.*

Introduction

The teaching of thinking skills through writing is a challenging one and one of the factors that contribute to its difficulty is the lack of a clear definition of what it is to teach thinking. A related issue is the thinking-writing connection and how thinking can be taught through writing. One way to teach thinking is to use the problem-solution approach as a platform for the design of course syllabus. This approach is ideal for mature learners as practitioners of thinking syllabi increasingly see it as very pertinent in today's world of learning where we want to challenge learners to acquire knowledge not just by learning and/or acquiring facts but by doing. Pedagogically speaking, problem solving is an excellent alternative to exercises, work-world documents and traditional modes

of work routinely set for learners to complete or accomplish. In this paper, problem solving refers to “activities that are intended to accomplish two goals: to improve how students think and to link school-learned knowledge with everyday contexts outside of school” (Lochhead & Zeitsman, 2001, p. 54).

Problem solving brings thinking-writing together as it “entails the appropriate application of knowledge in a specific situation” (p. 54) [and] unless those confronting a question perceive it as a problem, they will not be interested in solving it” (Lochhead & Zeitsman, 2001, p. 55).

To develop good problem solvers, students need to be taught cognitive strategies. This is based on research which studied how students became better readers and writers. The solution with reading and writing is the same solution as that with thinking: teach them strategies such as comprehending a problem, devising a plan, monitoring whether the plan worked, etc. (Pressley & Harris, 2001, pp. 466-469).

Debate on the issue of best practices in teaching thinking and writing is prevalent and practitioners grapple with what the content of thinking-writing courses should be, as well as the activities to promote such skills. As such, this paper discusses the writers’ experience with a similar set of problems and how the use of the Toulmin model in teaching argumentative writing presented immense opportunities to learners who imbibe directly and indirectly critical thinking (CT) skills while learning to write argumentative discourse. It begins with the background to the module called Critical Thinking and Writing (CTW), and moves on to describe the content skills, and teaching approaches in the module. It then discusses the use of the Toulmin model in teaching learners to write an argumentative piece (the position paper) that is based on survey research. It concludes with a summary of the potential of the pedagogical approach and the inherent problems.

Critical Thinking and Writing module (CTW)

In CTW, the scaffolding or support provided in teaching students to write an argumentative piece is in the form of the Toulmin model which teaches students to build an argument using its most elemental components: thesis/conclusion and reasons/premises, with all its concomitant parts such as assumptions, counterargument, concession and refutation.

CTW is one offered to first year Engineering undergraduates. The primary objective of the course was as follows:

“ to foster the critical thinking, reading and writing skills which engineering students need to be successful in the university and in the engineering profession. Learners are taught the fundamentals of analyzing written ideas/arguments of others and they simultaneously practise writing approaches typical of the academic and professional settings: exposition, evaluation, analysis, argumentation and research”. (CELC Handbook 2005-2006)

The course objectives clearly show the fusion between writing and thinking: a delicate and difficult-to-achieve teaching and learning situation. The content of the writing course is a delicate but clever fusion of theme, thinking skills

and sub-skills, and writing skills needed for engineers-to-be to succeed in the jobs they undertake in their profession. To this end, the following strands were interwoven:

- a. Theme, issues, questions and problems (forming the content-like areas)
- b. Writing assignments: Critique and position paper (forming the written documents that are required to be produced by students), in addition to an oral assignment in the form of an oral defence
- c. Evaluation, analysis, argumentation (forming the thinking skills and sub-skills)

Each semester, students are given a theme to work on to produce the position paper assignment within a topic such as the misuse of technology and its effects on society. They work out a research question using parts of the argument structure: thesis or main claim, reasons, assumptions and evidence. The assignment is completed in the way a problem needs to be solved. Students are expected to analyse the problem they chose to identify, in order to recommend solutions to it. The advantage of setting up the assignment thus, is that it puts learners squarely in the seat of “problem solver”. In the words of researchers of problem solving and its integral link with thinking, such a task takes cognizance of the issue of “ownership”, and recognizes that “unless those confronting a question perceive it as a problem, they will not be interested in solving it” (Lochhead & Zietsman, 2001, p. 55). Teaching approaches include the use of lectures, tutorials, writing workshops and conferences to facilitate students in the research and writing processes.

As might be imagined, both processes are by no means easy for students. To begin with, students not only have to solve the problem related to the theme set but a host of other difficulties as well, amongst which are grappling with research (including differentiating fact from opinion, sieving through the myriad of documents available from many sources on the topic), contending with the writing involved (including knowing how to fit information into the position paper format, and using counterarguments to anticipate reader’s objections, using research findings suitably and persuasively), and using a survey questionnaire to gather evidence to back the claim. This latter difficulty will next be elaborated on, to show the use of the Toulmin approach in helping students conceptualise the survey questions, and in this way, teach indirectly pertinent higher order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis and argumentation.

Prior to embarking on this assignment, students complete another assignment that requires them to use the Toulmin approach. They learn the components of the model to write a critique on a writer’s argument on a controversial issue such as genetically modified food or global warming. The rationale of both assignments is simply this. With the critique, students learn to dissect the parts of a writer’s argument, with the intention of engaging a writer on his premises or reasons in asserting a conclusion, in addition to commenting on elements of an argument like counter-arguments, fallacies and the use of examples. As for the position paper, it is meant to put students in the seat of a writer of a particular stand, which needs to be supported by evidence or proof, which they have to look for in primary and secondary research. It is

hoped that once they learn to critique a writer, they would know what it takes to construct an argument. Generally, the Toulmin model has been found useful for students in the following ways.

Firstly, they use it to clarify parts of their argument in building up the position paper—students first start with a claim they hope to be able to prove; they then provide and analyse reasons offered for the claim, gather evidence to offer in support of the proposed reasons, and in the process also consider the reader’s potential objections to the position taken, so that they might provide logical refutations in response. Secondly, as the following section will illustrate, the model provides a link between the argument of the position taken and the research instrument used to gather evidence—the survey. Thirdly, using the Toulmin model to structure a paper makes sense for a course that sets out to teach both thinking and writing, as from the start students focus on the argument, not the completion of the writing piece, nor the format of a document. Students learn to craft meaning, focusing on logic and sense relationships that are anchored on reason, validity of assumptions, refutation, concession, and other pertinent elements of an argument. They build connections between parts of an argument.

One area of difficulty: Composing survey for the position paper

One of the most daunting problems students face is the design of a survey for the writing of the position paper. A quick observation of the sample questionnaire, provided in Appendix A, shows that it suffers from three main areas of lack: firstly, the questions do not ascertain or address the validity of the issue. Also, they do not explain the questions designed to investigate the causes of the problem at hand and finally, the questions do not probe into respondents’ perceptions of what good solutions to the problem might be. Without tapping into all these areas of investigation, it is not likely that students will gather sufficient data from the survey to substantiate different arguments developed in their paper.

Aspects of the Toulmin model is are used to demonstrate the connection between the position paper and the survey questions. These terms in the Toulmin model are made clear with short textual illustrations:

- Claim: a conclusion whose merit we are seeking to establish
- Data/grounds: the facts we appeal to as a foundation for the claim
- Warrant: a general statement, which acts as a bridge spanning the claim and the data and makes the argument reasonable

Example:

- Joseph is a Singaporean (Claim)
- He was born in Ang Mo Kio (Grounds)
- Ang Mo Kio is part of Singapore (Warrant 1)
- People born in parts of Singapore qualify as Singaporeans (Warrant 2)

Furthermore, these terms are mapped into parts of the position paper and the survey to show their interrelations; see Table 1.

Table 1: The position paper and elements of the Toulmin model

Parts of the Position Paper	Elements of the Toulmin Model
Background information; issue and position	Claim and grounds for making claim. Survey: Gather grounds to justify validity of position taken and the background outlined.
Causes	Grounds to explain further why you think this problematic situation is happening. Survey: Gather evidence/grounds to explain and support sub-arguments made in main claim. Explore assumptions and warrants.
Recommendation	Grounds to propose certain solutions to improve the undesirable situation. Survey: Gather grounds to support recommended measures.

Appendix A presents a sample survey by a group of students. As can be seen, sample questions reflect a lack of clarity on what the group wanted to ascertain from the survey questions. The main strategy used was basically to help students see that the elements in the Toulmin model can be used to shape their survey questions and position paper as well. For instance, one main area of lack was the students' inability to differentiate between the topic and an issue that they have to argue for in the position paper. The topic was couched as "To what extent is the government..." As such, reference to the claim in the Toulmin model helped to clarify what the group really wanted to argue for with regards to the homosexual community. In the process of negotiation, the group was led to see that possible positions to argue for could be statements like these:

- The government is shaping our perceptions of homosexuals towards certain directions and that is not desirable.
- The government is shaping our perceptions of homosexuals towards a negative direction and that is not ideal for the health of the society.

With a clearer claim in focus, it is easier to help the group towards the development of relevant survey questions as reference is made to the Toulmin model again. A claim is akin to a hypothesis that one wants to test empirically. One therefore needs to gather evidence/grounds for the claim made. As such, one needs to verify through the survey, specific aspects of the claim argued for. The following statements are sub-claims that may need to be verified:

- The government is shaping our perceptions of homosexuals towards a negative direction and
- that is not ideal for the health of the society

To illustrate the process of relating the claim to the survey, we will focus on the first statement which in itself postulates that i) There is a conscious effort to do so and ii) its effect can be felt. A possible question to be developed for the verification of this sub-claim could be as follows:

If you have encountered any of these activities/events/information disseminated that relate to the issue of Aids and homosexuality, tick against them. Indicate

the frequency which you have encountered them.

- Campaigns frequently/periodically/occasionally
- Advertisements frequently/periodically/occasionally
- Activity 3 frequently/periodically/occasionally
- Activity 4 frequently/periodically/occasionally

Responses to such questions could then be used in the introductory portions of the position paper to authenticate the issue to be argued for with survey evidence. For instance, "As indicated frequently by the survey, XX% of respondents have encountered at least two instances of such an effort and YYY% indicated that such communicative effort happened frequently." This would then set the scene for further development of ideas using secondary resources as well.

In an argumentative text, warrants or underlining assumptions must sometimes be investigated too. In this case, an underlining assumption could be that our perception can be changed. A corresponding question to verify this statement could be as follows:

Tick against the statement/s which best reflect/s your position on social issues:

- I almost never shift in my position on social issues.
- I have my position formulated but I review them when confronted by new perspectives occasionally.
- My position on social issues changes frequently.
- Others (please specify): _____

The next section of the position paper requires an argumentation of causes of the issue identified. Again, students are brought back to the concepts of claim and grounds and decide what they would like to hypothesise as causes (claim) and subsequently, to use their survey as a tool to validate (provide the grounds) their hypothesis. As an illustration, one of the causes in the current issue could be that the government perceives itself to fulfill a particular role that requires it to take certain actions to navigate the society towards certain directions. As such, a possible question is as follows:

These are some descriptions of the role of governments in relation to communicating sensitive social issues. Tick against the role(s) which most likely characterise/s the local government.

- Channel of information: to provide adequate objective information for people to form their own opinion.
- Paternalistic role to educate the masses to adopt a targeted position that conforms to certain conservative standards.
- Coercive role to
- Others: _____

Similarly, the recommendations that students provide should be substantiated by survey responses. Again, the idea of what they suspect to be good solutions could be worked into the survey for respondents to decide if they thought those were good solutions too. As such, a possible open-ended question to gather evidence for tentative solutions could be as follows:

List two ways of disseminating public information on sensitive social issues which are least intrusive and most objective to you.

A possible statement to substantiate the writer's recommendation could then be as such: "XX% of the respondents recommended YYY as an objective channel of communicating sensitive issues such as homosexuality."

As the above discussion illustrates, the use of Toulmin's terms and a simplified version of an argumentative model provide the platform to relate the relevant components of the position paper and the survey questions. It must be said though that the process has been simplified and there were some difficulties in helping students in their survey design although the platform was generally very helpful. For instance, students needed to be taught how to manage responses that do not align with what they wanted to argue for. Also, the process of negotiation is tedious as students are not always clear on the issue that they really want to argue for.

Conclusion: Potential and problems

The use of the Toulmin approach in teaching argumentative writing has the following possibilities:

1. Group work and thinking: The group work is beneficial in more than one way: apart from the physical distribution of tasks and jobs inherent in the research project, the pooling of information resources and ideas result in a rich mix, and students provide "critical checks on one another's thinking" (Perkins, 2001).
2. Learners are forced to grapple with concepts that involve a clear connection between ideas through a system and subsystem of claims, thesis, evidence, reasons, counterarguments, and the like, all compositely interwoven in the argument structure.

In order to complete the position paper, learners need to constantly process from the very beginning not merely ideas but the logical connection between them. A premium is put on the development of the skills of exposition, evaluation, analysis, argumentation and research—students constantly explore sense relationships between cause and effect, claim and reason, claim and evidence, argument and counter-argument, problem and solution.

The approach however, is not without problems. The Toulmin argument structure is not easy to teach, and learn. In a course that is already considered very "full" in terms of skills to be learnt, acquiring the structure to help in the argumentation, seems an extra load for students. Additionally, assessment proves to be a prickly issue. In a course that purports to teach both thinking and writing, presumably both should be assessed. But the fact remains that the assessment of thinking is a minefield, nor is it easy to design or plan. In CTW, the products—critique and the position paper—are taken as proof of the process, and it is not too difficult to see that this is far from ideal. Even though

the evaluation criteria take into consideration some thinking processes such as the problematizing of the issue, use of reasonable support, and the like, examining the product to determine students' acquisition of thinking strategies, is not ideal. However, on the whole, the approach is a reasonable one to use in relating the writing to the thinking required for the needs of the said course.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

We are a group of National University of Singapore students currently undertaking a project based on the theme of "Remaking Singapore". Please kindly take the next few minutes to fill up the following survey. We appreciate your most valuable opinions. Thank you.

1. Do you think national identity is important?
 Yes No

2. How will a lack of national identity affect Singapore? (You may tick more than one choice)
 - a) Racial disharmony
 - b) Unwillingness to defend Singapore
 - c) Increase in emigration of Singaporeans
 - d) Loss of pride
 - e) Others, please specify _____

3. Do you think Singapore currently lacks national identity?
 Yes No

4. How do you feel about Singapore importing foreign talent as representatives in sports competitions?
 - a) Strongly for
 - b) For
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Against
 - e) Strongly against

5. Do you think that the import of foreign talent impairs the building of national identity?
 Yes No

6. In your opinion, which of the following is/are the aim/s of current sports scheme? (You may tick more than one choice)
 - a) Nurturing talent
 - b) Winning medals
 - c) Fostering identity
 - d) Enhancing health
 - e) Others, please specify _____

7. To what extent do you think current sports schemes aid in fostering national identity?
Effective ←————→ Ineffective

8. In your opinion, what features characterize a national sport? (You may check more than one box?)
A national sport should be:
 - a) Enjoyable
 - b) Widely accepted by citizens
 - c) Able to encourage teamwork among participants
 - d) Able to enhance cohesion through interaction
 - e) Suitable for all ages
 - f) Others, please specify _____

9. What sport(s) would you qualify as (a) suitable national sport/s?

10. Will you support and/or participate in a national sport if there is one?

- Yes No

11. Do you think that the implementation of a national sport can aid foster national identity?

- Yes No

12. What are the effects of having a national sports hero in society? (You may tick more than one choice)

- a) Create a role model for society
- b) Induce inspiration in promising talent
- c) Promote racial harmony
- d) Reap economic benefits
- e) Others, please specify

13. The promoting of an athlete as Singapore's national sports hero may aid in fostering national identity?

- Yes No

Thank you for your time! Have a nice day.

The Effects of Cooperative Learning & Online Peer Review on High School Students' Writing Achievement

■ Ching-ya Chiu
Leader University, Taiwan

Shu-chuan Chung
National Chi-yi University, Taiwan

Feng-cheng Chiang
Leader University, Taiwan

ABSTRACT: *Although peer review has been found to have many positive benefits for EFL writing instruction, its practical application is sometimes problematic. One possible approach to dealing with this is to place peer review in the context of cooperative learning. This study set out to investigate whether the employment of cooperative evaluation in a CALL learning environment (the WE-COOL system) would improve Taiwanese high school students' English writing performance and their attitudes towards English writing. Using three data-collection instruments—writing tests, questionnaires on English writing attitude, and questionnaires on responses to the writing system—a 20-week quasi-experiment was conducted. It was found that the employment of cooperative evaluation in the writing process enhanced students' overall writing achievement, as well as their performance in the specific writing domains of focus, organization, and conventions. In addition, the use of cooperative evaluation was found to be more effective than peer review in promoting positive attitudes toward English writing. Finally, the students' response to using the system was found to be extremely positive. On the basis of these findings, several pedagogical implications and suggestions are raised.*

Introduction

Writing is often regarded as a thinking process (Elbow, 1973; Zamel, 1982; Brown, 1994) through which authors seek ways to communicate their thoughts and feelings. Therefore, writing instruction is usually highly emphasized across all levels in school settings (Zamel, 1982; Brown, 1994), whether in the L1 or L2 learning context. Since the 1980s, the instructional paradigm for writing instruction has been a process-oriented focus (Arndt, 1987), a recursive and ongoing loop which emphasizes the interaction of various writing stages, including planning, translating, and reviewing (Emig, 1971; Flower & Hayes,

1981). Based on Sommers' (1982) and Krashen's (1984) notion, revision is an essential part of the writing process, helping writers to correct grammatical errors, to allow new ideas to evolve, and to clarify meanings from the draft. To facilitate revision, feedback or response from a reader is rather crucial (Keh, 1990). In particular, peer response has been promoted strongly as an effective tool in process-oriented writing for students to construct productive feedback to help each other in revision (Blanton, 1989; Paulus, 1999; Tsui, 1999; Ferris & Roberts, 2001). Some students may also be able learn to evaluate writing critically through this process (Keh, 1990; Tsai, 2003). However, peer review in L2 writing instruction has its limits in improving students' writing, as the focus is on surface-level structures (Sommers, 1982; Crowhurst, 1986; Leki, 1990a)—comments tend to be very vague (Min, 2003), feedback tends to be overly critical (Amros, 1997; Nelson & Murphy, 1992), and counterproductive (Bender, 1989). Nonetheless, researchers still suggest that peer review is important to facilitate students' revision (Conner & Asenavage, 1994; Zhu, 1995; Berg, 1999; Liu & Hansen, 2002) as long as students receive enough training on how to evaluate peers' writings. By means of practice in evaluating peers' written work, they can comprehend and apply the scoring rubrics (Wolfe, Dalton, & Neuburger, 1993; Collins, 1998).

English writing is emphasized as a course in the standard curriculum in senior high schools in Taiwan (MOE, 2004) and as a test item in the National College Entrance Examination. However, most high school students think writing is difficult and a source of panic (Yang, 2003), instead of an enjoyable experience. They do not know how to start or organize ideas (Liu, 1998). At the same time, high school teachers think it is a nightmare to correct students' writing, although they believe it is important for students to have chance to practice writing (Chang, 1996). The more writing work they assign to students, the more time they have to spend correcting their written scripts, which increases the weight of their teaching load.

Research in this area has focused on computer-assisted language learning (CALL), which has been suggested as an effective aid for EFL teachers to promote the efficiency of their instruction (John, 1995; Kern, 1995; Yu, 2001; Wei, 2003). With regard to writing instruction, Chen & Lee (1998) concluded that on-line writing can have a positive influence on students' writing ability and the development of communicative skills. By means of computers in writing, students are able to gain a sense of empowerment and improve their communicative skills (Frizler, 1995).

Cooperative learning is also viewed as a powerful technique to help students to interact with one another and work together (Johnson & Johnson, 1994a). Peer tutoring, partner learning, peer mediation, and collaborative work groups all make cooperative relationships healthy. Olsen & Kagan (1992) believe that cooperative learning is a group learning activity organized dependently on a socially structured basis to exchange information between learners in groups, where each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and motivated to increase the learning of others. Therefore, it seems cooperative learning may be able to solve the problem in terms of peer review in writing.

In the light of this situation, a writing and evaluation-cooperative online learning system (WE-COOL) was established for this study, using programmed PHP (Hypertext Preprocessor) dynamic web-page language, and MySQL (Structured Query Language) database. Appendix A illustrates a framework of the system. Two primary modules, *Student Users* and *Teacher Users*, were designed. The *Teacher Users* module was for teachers to post writing topics, monitor users' writing processes, and to retrieve various kinds of data from the system, such as group lists, basic information about student users, and score management. The *Student Users* interface included the following sectors: "Writing Activity", "Learning Resource Center", "My Writing Portfolio", and "Q & A Board".

The study set out to combine the advantages of peer feedback, CALL, and cooperative learning, attempting to address some of the difficulties in writing instruction in high schools in Taiwan. Particularly, the study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How effectively will cooperative evaluation with WE-COOL influence senior high school students' English writing achievement?
2. How effectively will cooperative evaluation with WE-COOL influence senior high school students' attitude toward English writing?
3. What is the response of senior high school students to the use of WE-COOL?
4. What is the response of senior high school students to the use of peer review?

Method

Experimental design and participants

The 20-week research employed a quasi-experimental design due to the fact that random assignment of students to new classes is not likely in Taiwan's educational system. The unit of the experimental design was intact class sets, including one control group (COG) and two experimental groups conditioned in the independent variable, the teaching strategy, further divided into cooperative evaluation (CEG) and peer review (PRG). The participants in the COG only took a pre-test and post-test, and fill out a questionnaire instead of receiving any treatment.

The participants were 141 11th graders from three classes in a medium-sized national senior high school in Taiwan. The CEG, PRG, and COG contained 48, 49, and 44 participants respectively. During the experiment, there were three writing cycles, and each writing cycle was composed of a process-oriented writing (twice), including drafting, writing, peer review or cooperative evaluation, revision, and a writing test. The activity of cooperative evaluation included peer review, and a group-based discussion and evaluation of the same written work. That is to say, the participants needed to evaluate the same writing work twice. The first time evaluation was an individual peer review, followed by a group-oriented discussion on the peer's writing. For the purpose of this experiment, the student participants were randomly divided into nine ability-

heterogeneous groups in order to facilitate the implementation of peer review and cooperative evaluation. Each group in the PRG had to assess writing and provide feedback to peers in another group, assigned randomly by the system. The CEG participants had to discuss with their own group members to assess and offer feedback again after repeating the same process in the PRG.

Instruments

Writing tests

To investigate whether or not participants made improvement in their writing after the treatment, a 45-minute writing test was given in the form of a pre- and a post-test. The topic of the pre-test and post-test was “My Junior High School Life,” and the participants were required to write a paragraph of about 120 words on the topic. The four-point analytical scoring method was based on the five-domain rubrics adopted in the Pennsylvania Writing Assessment Scoring Guide. The five domains in this guide include focus, content, organization, style, and conventions, which are similar to the analytical rubrics employed by the Taiwanese College Entrance Examination Center (CEEC Report, 1993).

A questionnaire on English writing attitude (QEWA)

A Questionnaire on English Writing Attitude was administered to all the three groups to gather information about students’ attitudes toward English writing in the aspects of students’ writing confidence, anxiety about English writing, and perceptions of English writing. In order to obtain a reliable questionnaire, a pilot test was used. The Cronbach’s α Coefficient was .8759, indicating that the QEWA had high reliability. See Appendix B for a sample of the questionnaire.

A questionnaire on students’ response to the WE-COOL System (QRWS)

A questionnaire (Appendix C), was designed for CEG and PRG participants in order to discover their responses to the WE-COOL system and to elicit feedback on their attitudes towards evaluating their peers’ writing.

Results and discussion

In terms of writing achievement, it showed that the employment of the WE-COOL system yielded higher scores on senior high school students’ English writing in the CEG and the PRG. Table 1 indicates that there were no significant differences among the three groups in the pre-test, showing that the CEG, the PRG, and the COG had homogeneous levels of overall English writing proficiency and of each domain.

In the post-test, it was found that the means of the overall scores in both the CEG ($t = 9.765$, $p = .000$) and PRG ($t = 6.650$, $p = .000$) had a significant difference compared to the pre-test, while the COG did not ($t = 9.417$, $p = .437$), indicating that the cooperative evaluation and peer review had a positive impact on students’ overall writing performance. Besides that, students in the CEG and

Table 1: One-way ANOVA on writing assessment before treatment

Categories	Groups						N	df	F	Sig.
	CEG		PRG		COG					
	Means	SD	Means	SD	Means	SD				
Overall	10.66	2.53	10.66	2.35	10.67	2.25	141	2	.000	1.000
Focus	2.26	.76	2.04	.72	2.13	.70	141	2	1.115	.331
Content	2.30	.63	2.31	.57	2.33	.52	141	2	.030	.970
Organization	1.93	.68	2.11	.58	1.94	.67	141	2	1.232	.295
Style	2.04	.60	2.08	.57	2.07	.63	141	2	.055	.946
Conventions	2.17	.65	2.05	.65	2.18	.53	141	2	.650	.524

* $P < .05$

Table 2: Independent t-tests on writing assessment after treatment

Categories	Groups						df	t	Sig.
	CEG			PRG					
	Means	SD	N	Means	SD	N			
Overall	14.23	1.65	48	12.91	2.05	49	95	3.491	.001*
Focus	3.07	.47	48	2.76	.46	49	95	3.364	.001*
Content	2.69	.51	48	2.58	.52	49	95	1.006	.317
Organization	2.95	.40	48	2.56	.67	49	95	3.450	.001*
Style	2.71	.45	48	2.49	.62	49	95	1.976	.051
Conventions	2.81	.47	48	2.52	.52	49	95	2.905	.005*

* $P < .05$

PRG also made a significant improvement in each domain of writing, including focus, content, organization, style, and conventions.

In addition, as shown in Table 2, the use of cooperative evaluation and peer review was found to have significant differences between the CEG and PRG in all domains of the post-test except content and style, indicating that the different treatment contributed to overall writing improvement ($t = 3.491$, $p = .001$), as well as specific improvement in the domains of focus, organization, and conventions ($p = .001$; $.001$; $.005$). As mentioned above, the domains of content and style did not change significantly ($p = .317$; $.051$).

This supports the view that the employment of cooperative evaluation in the writing process can enhance students' overall writing achievement. The use of cooperative evaluation also seems to help students to improve in the writing domains of focus, organization, and conventions. By employing group discussion and cooperative evaluation to evaluate peers' writing, students in the CEG were able to figure out the key components of how to implement successful writing. They had the chance to evaluate the form of a two-way group discussion. However, students in the PRG could only provide one-way feedback in peer review. Questions were raised or errors of writing were pointed out,

but the answers were not effectively sharpened. Moreover, the CEG students improved the most after the treatment, especially in the domains of focus and organization, indicating that discussion could facilitate the development of controlling ideas in topic sentences and the logical arrangement of content with proper transitions in the supporting sentences in a paragraph. However, in terms of the content domain, there was neither enough nor diverse input for the students to generate ideas to write. It can be inferred from this that the supporting ideas students generated did not adequately elaborate their topic sentence with details. It was likely that students did not have enough life experiences, or that the brainstorming limited the diverse establishment of supporting evidence. The aspect of style in writing was challenging for students because they had difficulties in the expression of their ideas. Their sentence structures and the use of words were fairly limited, possibly resulting from insufficient vocabulary or insufficient grasp of the usage of different kinds of sentence structures. For the CEG and PRG students, it was easy to identify problems in the domain of style, but it was somewhat difficult to offer suggestions. However, generally speaking, cooperative learning in group evaluation could be interpreted as a more powerful strategy than peer review to assist students in English writing.

In addition, students' attitude towards writing in English was another issue to be explored by means of QEWA. As Table 3 shows, students in the CEG demonstrated a significant change in terms of their confidence and the amount of anxiety in writing. That is to say, the confidence that students in the CEG had in writing in English was raised after the treatment ($t = 6.312$; $p = .000$), and their anxiety was lowered ($t = -5.484$; $p = .000$). However, their perception of the usefulness of English writing did not change significantly. The PRG carried similar findings in that writing confidence increased, while anxiety decreased. Their perception of the usefulness in writing in English did not exhibit significant change, either. As for the COG, no significant changes were found in confidence, in anxiety, and in the perception of usefulness after

Table 3: Independent t-tests on QEWA

Group	Pre-test		Post-test		N	df	t	Sig.
	Means	SD	Means	SD				
CEG								
Confidence	20.46	2.77	24.13	2.92	48	94	6.312	.000*
Anxiety	28.65	5.93	22.88	4.25	48	94	-5.484	.000*
Perception	28.67	3.22	29.77	3.20	48	94	1.686	.095
PRG								
Confidence	20.73	3.38	22.71	3.28	49	96	2.941	.004*
Anxiety	28.06	5.03	24.84	4.99	49	96	-3.187	.002*
Perception	28.73	2.48	29.31	2.43	49	96	1.115	.253
COG								
Confidence	20.82	3.43	20.98	3.47	44	86	2.16	.829
Anxiety	28.87	6.05	28.02	5.09	44	86	-.038	.970
Perception	28.20	3.76	28.66	3.50	44	86	.587	.558

* $P < .05$

the treatment. Table 4 indicates further that the CEG students developed more confidence and felt less anxious about English writing than the PRG students. However, their perceptions of usefulness remained unchanged.

Therefore, the findings provide evidence to support that students' attitude towards writing in the two experimental groups would change significantly, especially for the CEG students who employed cooperative learning. Cooperative evaluation worked better than peer review in fostering more positive student attitudes towards English writing. By going through the process of working together to communicate and to reshape the writing mutually, the gain of positive support and useful feedback of how to deal with their difficulties would help the students to improve their writing performance, as demonstrated through their higher scores. This in turn built up their confidence and reduced their anxiety because they had learned the key components of paragraph writing through practice every week. In contrast, without the writing practice and the feedback generated in group discussion in the COG, students with low confidence and high anxiety did not make progress. As for the perception of usefulness, it remained unchanged after the treatment for all the groups, indicating that the treatment had no effect on enhancing students' perception. It is likely that the majority of students agreed that English writing was quite useful, even though they lacked confidence and found it difficult.

Finally, this study also tried to assess students' response to the use of the WE-COOL system, and cooperative learning in evaluation. Based on the results in Table 5, it can be seen that the response to peer view was identically different whereas the response to the system use was not.

Based on the results of the t-test on QRWS, the CEG students had a more positive response to peer review within WE-COOL than the PRG ones. They

Table 4: Independent t-tests on the CEG and the PRG in the post-test

Categories	Groups						df	t	Sig.
	CEG			PRG					
	Means	SD	N	Means	SD	N			
Confidence	24.13	2.92	48	22.71	3.28	49	95	2.236	.028*
Anxiety	22.88	4.25	48	24.84	4.99	49	95	-2.084	.040*
Perception	29.77	3.20	48	29.31	2.43	49	95	.806	.422

* $P < .05$

Table 5: Independent t-tests on QRWS

	Groups						df	t	Sig.
	CEG			PRG					
	Means	SD	N	Means	SD	N			
System use	31.63	3.10	48	31.45	2.97	49	95	.286	.776
Peer review	42.83	4.77	48	40.04	3.49	49	95	3.295	.001*

* $P < .05$

thought it was easier to review peers' writings. The differences could result from the possibility that CEG students' evaluation skills were sharpened by means of cooperative evaluation. In the group discussion, each student was offered a chance to interact with their group members about scoring and giving feedback. In other words, cooperative evaluation helped the CEG students obtain deeper understandings and develop more informed practice of evaluation for the following peer review.

Pedagogical implications and conclusion

Based on these findings, three implications for high school English writing instruction can be suggested. First, it is important for students to write on a regular basis so that they can improve and develop their writing skills. By experiencing the process of English writing regularly during the semester, students are able to become more familiar with the key elements of process-oriented writing. The employment of an online writing system offering feedback can help students form a habit of writing regularly, which may lead to more positive attitudes toward English writing confidence and to less anxiety. Next, since students' writing achievement showed positive gains after the treatment, it can be concluded that it is useful for teachers to train students to engage in cooperative evaluation as a part of peer review. With the employment of cooperative evaluation in group discussion, students are able to gain insightful understanding of writing and each scoring rubric, benefiting their own revising. The use of cooperative evaluation can also save high school teachers a lot of correction time. Although it may be difficult for students to engage in cooperative evaluation at first, with clear explanations and sufficient practice in scoring, they should be able to overcome these difficulties. With constant monitoring and necessary assistance, all students should be able to participate in group discussions actively and confidently. Finally, both model compositions and extensive reading materials should be incorporated into the writing instruction to help students enrich their content. Abundant reading materials can stimulate more diversity of ideas when brainstorming to provide detailed evidence as supporting ideas and the variety of word choices. In this way, they will be able to think more creatively and express their ideas more freely, so that improvement will be noticed in the domains of content and style. However, it is important to note that reading materials directly related to the writing topic should not be provided before writing because this may restrict students' thinking and expression.

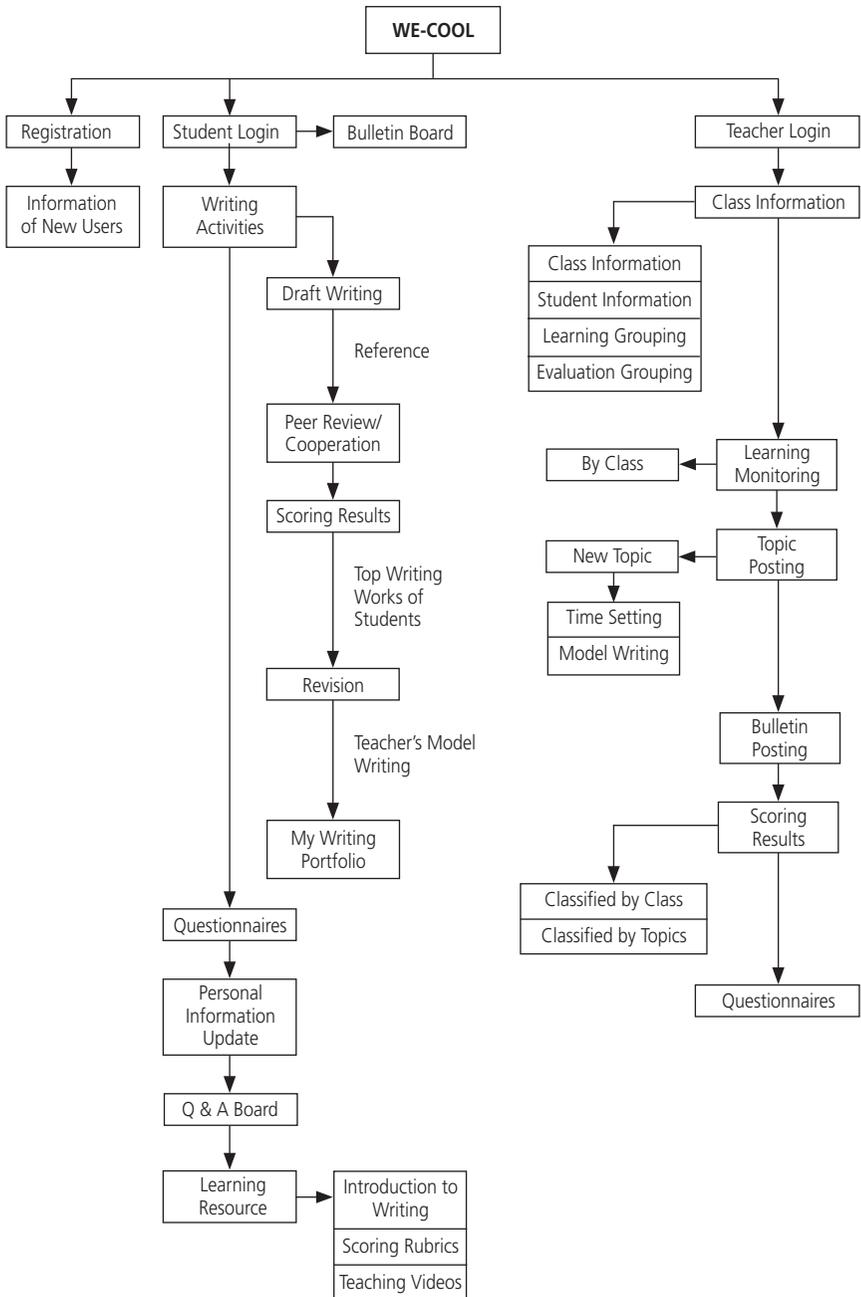
To sum up, the use of cooperative learning in the evaluation of peers' writing within a computer-assisted writing system can bring positive benefits to high school students both in English writing achievement and in attitudes toward writing. With continued practice in writing, evaluating, and revising, students are able to become more skillful, trusting, and insightful readers, with benefits for both their own revision and that of their peers.

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Appendix A: Framework of Writing & Evaluation—Cooperative Online Learning (WE-COOL)



Appendix B: Questionnaire on English Writing Attitude (QEWA)

I. Multiple choice (AC = agree completely; A = agree; D = disagree; DC = disagree completely)

	AC	A	D	DC
1. I like to write down my ideas in English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. English writing ability will be important for work in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Before writing, I like to discuss my ideas with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I think English writing ability will have a great impact on my study in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I don't know how to begin to write.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I feel nervous about participating in the activities in English writing class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I'm confident in writing narrative writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I'm confident in writing argumentative writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I have poor understanding of grammatical concepts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I think I have the talent to write in English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. I like having English writing class and participate actively.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. I don't know enough English vocabulary to express my ideas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. I think the main purpose of learning English is for the exams.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. English writing is a big headache for me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. I revise my writing until I'm satisfied.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. It's challenging to organize my ideas in writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. I like reading my classmates' writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. I can express my ideas in English quickly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. I think teachers' explanations can facilitate the process of my writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. I can apply the theory of writing skills in writing practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Learning English writing can help me make more foreign friends.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. I like sharing my writing with my classmates and receiving their feedback for revision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. I don't know how to revise based on teachers' feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. I know clearly who my audience is.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. I feel embarrassed to share my writing with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. I think my writing content is poor, because I have no ideas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. I clearly understand the teachers' scoring criteria.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28. I know English writing is a tool to communicate with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix C: Questionnaire on Students' Response to the WE-COOL System (QRWS)

I. Multiple choice (AC = agree completely; A = agree; D = disagree; DC = disagree completely)

	AC	A	D	DC
1. I like doing on-line peer review.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Different model paragraphs can help me to understand what I can improve in my writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I check my writing carefully before submitting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I don't believe that my classmates have the ability to evaluate my writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I can evaluate my classmates' writing fairly based on the scoring rubrics in the system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I read my classmates' writing carefully before evaluating.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I don't agree with the evaluation result and feedback that my classmates give.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I don't know what feedback to offer for my classmates' writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. The feedback from classmates can build my confidence in writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I think it's easy to evaluate the focus of the writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. I think it's easy to evaluate the content of the writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. I think it's easy to evaluate the organization of the writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. I think it's easy to evaluate the style of the writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. I think it's easy to evaluate the conventions of the writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. The scoring rubrics in the system are easy to understand and to practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. The scoring examples in the system can help me understand the scoring rubrics quickly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. I think we were given enough time for peer review.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Reading my classmates' writing can help me revise my own writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. I don't like having my writing evaluated using this system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. I think the on-line user guide is helpful for the use of the system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. I think each function in this system is user-friendly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. I will still keep using the system if there is no English writing class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. I will recommend other English learners to use the system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. I think the system helps me improve my English writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Referential Bundles in Academic Research Papers¹

■ Lau Hieng-Hiong
Ching Yun University, Taiwan

ABSTRACT: *Following Biber, Conrad, & Cortes (2004), this paper investigates frequencies and functions of referential bundles in three corpora relating to over 10 academic disciplines. Our data came from three different sources: (i) English journal articles published by L1 researchers; (ii) English journal articles by L2 researchers; (iii) English PhD theses written by L2 graduate students in Taiwan. The data consisted of over 1200 research papers, amounting to more than 8 million words. We set a frequency cut-off of 30 times per million words for lexical bundles to be included in the analysis. To further limit the scope of this investigation, we focused on 4-word referential sequences, like as shown in Fig, the effects of the, and others. The L1 and the L2 articles belong to the same text type, but we find that there are significant distinctions between these two corpora in the distribution of referential bundles. The L2 theses belong to a different text type, but they share considerable overlaps between distributions of functional sub-categories with the other two corpora. There are instances of overuse and underuse of referential bundles in the L2 corpora. Factors relating to L2 language backgrounds such as the target language proficiency, the writer's confidence in using the language, and writing experience might play important roles in academic communication. The L2 writers obviously suffer from language disadvantages in the use of English for academic purposes. The results may have some implications for teaching academic English to graduate students in EFL situations.*

Introduction

The distinction between spoken and written registers has attracted much attention in recent years (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan, 1999; Conrad & Cortes, 2003; Biber, Conrad, & Cortes, 2004; Cortes, 2004; Biber, 2006). Through the identification of grammatical features, researchers have consistently demonstrated that spoken registers like classroom teaching are different from written registers like academic prose. They also show that small distinctions among spoken registers, for instance, can be regarded as a cline from the more interactional text types such as casual conversation to the more informational text types like classroom teaching.

¹ This paper is mainly based on the research project 'Lexical Bundles in English PhD Theses Written by Taiwanese Graduate Students' (NSC95-2411-H-231-001), sponsored by National Science Council, Republic of China.

The advancement in computer technology has vastly facilitated this area of academic research. Researchers are now able to use corpus linguistic techniques to look for patterns from lexical features identified. Such patterns allow researchers to show differences as well as similarities among registers. Biber et al. (2004) and Biber (2006) are able to show that the two spoken registers they studied (i.e., conversation and classroom teaching) use a much greater range of different lexical bundles than the two written registers observed (i.e., textbooks and academic prose). Their analysis convincingly demonstrates that classroom teaching is not intermediate between conversation and written registers like textbooks. Classroom teaching, as their data show, uses about twice as many different lexical bundles as conversation and roughly four times as many as textbooks. The significance of the research by Biber et al. is that they are able to show precisely minor as well as major distinctions among a range of related text types. This initiates the current investigation into differences and similarities between three text types.

According to the explanation given by Biber et al. (2004, p. 393), 'referential bundles generally identify an entity or single out some particular attribute of an entity as especially important.' They allow language users to express two main kinds of reference: (i) identification of focus and (ii) specification of attributes. Identification can be precise (e.g., *that's one of the*) and imprecise (e.g., *or something like that*). Specification of attributes can be further divided into five subcategories, namely (a) quantity specification (e.g., *a lot of the*); (b) tangible attribute reference (e.g., *the size of the*); (c) intangible attribute reference (e.g., *in the case of*); (d) time reference (e.g., *at the same time*); (e) place reference (e.g., *the context of Taiwan*); (f) text reference (e.g., *shown in Fig. x*). The theoretical framework established by Biber et al. is the basis of the present investigation.

To limit the scope of our study, we focused on the patterns relating to the referential bundles used in one L1 corpus and two L2 corpora. We set a frequency cut-off of 30 times per million words for lexical bundles to be included in the analysis. To further limit the scope of our investigation, we focused on 4-word referential sequences, like *as shown in Fig, the effects of the*, and others. We hypothesized that the distribution of referential bundles might allow us to locate some distinctive features of L2 academic writing. We expected to find some common features between the L1 articles and the L2 articles because they belong to the same genre. We also expected to find some features specific to the L2 theses because such papers were written by student researchers, and they were written for different purposes and with different readership in mind. We speculated that factors like the writer's mother tongue background, proficiency in English and confidence in academic writing might have some impact on the product of academic communication.

Materials and methods

Three corpora used in the study

This paper observes the distribution of referential bundles in academic discourse. The data were collected from three different sources: academic journal articles by

researchers based in English speaking countries (L1 articles corpus), academic journal articles written by L2 researchers with Chinese language background (L2 articles corpus), and English doctoral theses written by Taiwanese PhD students (L2 theses corpus). The L1 articles corpus consisted of 405 academic journal articles relating to eleven academic disciplines, including applied linguistics (30), chemistry (30), civil engineering (40), computer science (30), electrical engineering (30), electronic engineering (60), life sciences (60), management (30), materials science (30), mechanical engineering (30), and physics (35). The L2 articles corpus consisted of 545 academic journal articles relating to thirteen academic disciplines, including applied linguistics (45), chemistry (40), civil engineering (70), computer science (30), electrical engineering (30), electronics engineering (30), industrial engineering (30), international enterprises (30), life sciences (60), management (60), materials science (40), mechanical engineering (30), and physics (50). The L2 theses corpus consisted of 286 English doctoral theses relating to eleven disciplines, including chemistry (20), civil engineering (26), electrical engineering (20), electronics engineering (20), industrial engineering (20), life sciences (60), management (40), materials science (20), mathematics (20), mechanical engineering (20), and physics (20). Texts for the L2 corpora were mainly from prestigious academic institutions in Taiwan such as National Taiwan University, National Tsing Hua University, National Chiao Tung University and others. Table 1 shows the composition of the three corpora.

Identification of lexical bundles

Our study is mainly based on the theoretical framework established by Biber et al. (1999, 2004). Accordingly, lexical bundles are regarded as ‘the most frequent recurring lexical sequences in a register’. Frequency data are not self-explanatory, but they enable us to look for patterns that are meaningful in the corpus. Therefore, our primary task was to obtain frequency data relating to referential bundles in the three corpora. The software KfNgram (Fletcher, 2006) was used to generate lists of n-grams (i.e., sequences of n words, also known in WordSmith as *clusters*) in text. We first set a frequency cut-off of 30 times per million words for lexical bundles to be included in the analysis. To further limit the scope of our investigation, we focused on 4-word sequences, like *as shown in Fig, the effects of the, as a function of, with respect to the, on the basis of, in the present study*, and others. To guard against idiosyncratic uses by individual writers, we followed the proposal by Biber et al. to include a bundle only when it is used in

Table 1: Composition of three corpora used in the analysis

Three corpora	Number of texts	Number of words
L1 articles corpus	405	2,201,000
L2 articles corpus	545	2,200,000
L2 theses corpus	286	4,320,000
Grand total	1,236	8,721,000

more than five different texts in the same corpus. Since the primary data obtained by KfNgram contained too much unnecessary information, the program was set to be case-sensitive, retain numbers, and keep internal marks like “ and ‘’. All the irrelevant items were discarded, including bordering cases like *as well as the* and *can be used to*. Such bundles are respectively categorized as discourse bundles and stance bundles, which will be kept for future investigation.

We started to search all 4-word bundles in the L1 articles corpus and produced a list which contained only referential bundles. This list was then used as a basis for further searches in all three corpora, producing four separate groups of referential bundles realizing four main discourse functions. All the relevant items were then tabulated, together with their frequencies. Owing to different lengths of the corpora, all the frequency counts were normalized to a basis of per one million words of the texts, so that the final calculations can be compared and interpreted. For the purpose of comparison, we include in the table display frequencies of all the significant bundles occurring 30 times per million in at least one of the corpora. All the grand totals obtained were then checked using the Chi-square procedure. The results of the statistical analysis were then compared and interpreted. We attribute this investigation to the efficiency of three sets of computer software, namely, WordSmith (Scott, 2005), KfNgram (Fletcher, 2006), and the SPSS for Windows (Version 11.5).

Results and discussion

Some basic calculations of 4-word bundles are presented in Table 2. As mentioned above, the statistics in the tables below include frequencies of all the significant bundles occurring 30 times per million words in at least one of the corpora.²

On the surface, the three corpora seem to be very similar in terms of the percentage of total frequencies (33% vs. 34% vs. 33%). These data suggest a common feature in academic discourse; researchers seem to rely, to a similar extent, on the use of English bundles in their academic writing. However, the issue is more complex than expected. As the discussion of the four functions of the referential bundles will show, the L1 and the L2 articles belong to the same text type, but there are statistical distinctions among different functional sub-categories found in the two corpora. On the other hand, the L2 theses belong to a different text type, but there are considerable overlaps in the distributions of certain functional sub-categories across the text types.

In our attempt to analyze our primary data, we found that the theoretical framework established by Biber et al. (2004) could not precisely classify a large proportion of referential bundles collected. The framework understandably needs to be general enough to cover both spoken and written data. However, such a framework becomes less sensitive when it is used to handle data which involve delicate functional features relating to variations in academic written corpora. In order to look more closely at the distinction among the 4-word

² ‘Significant bundles’ refer to those occurring more than 30 times per million words in at least one corpus among the three.

Table 2: Four-word referential bundles in three corpora

Corpora	Number of types and frequencies			
	Bundle types	Total	Per 1 million	% of total
L1 articles	39	4,754	2,160	33
L2 articles	35	4,935	2,245	34
L2 theses	30	9,431	2,184	33
Grand total	104	19,120	6,589	100

Table 3: Four categories of referential bundles and their frequencies

Categories	L1 Articles		L2 Articles		L2 Theses	
	Freq.	Per 1 million	Freq.	Per 1 million	Freq.	Per 1 million
	References to texts	1,204	547	1,840	837	3,969
References to attributes	1,560	709	1,318	600	2,029	470
References to focuses	688	313	905	412	1,877	435
References to conditions	1,302	592	872	397	1,556	360
Grand total	4,754	2,161 ^a	4,935	2,246 ^b	9,431	2,184 ^c

^a In the comparison of L1 articles and L2 articles, $\chi^2 = 367.32$, $df = 55$, $P < .001$

^b In the comparison of L2 articles and L2 theses, $\chi^2 = 229.65$, $df = 55$, $P < .001$

^c In the comparison of L1 articles and L2 theses, $\chi^2 = 565.23$, $df = 55$, $P < .001$

sequences, we categorized all the referential bundles into four groups, according to their discourse functions in the data. These are (a) reference to texts; (b) reference to attributes; (c) reference to focuses; (d) reference to conditions. For the purpose of presentation and comparison, the data obtained from the three corpora are displayed together in the same tables. In the interpretation, it is better to compare two corpora as a group, and this has also been the basis in our statistical calculation.

Table 3 shows that there are nearly 20 thousand instances of 4-word referential bundles found in the three corpora. A general picture emerges when we compare the total occurrences of the four categories of bundles as presented in Table 3. The L1 articles differ from the L2 articles, reflected in the ratio of 2161 versus 2246 ($\chi^2 = 367.32$, $df = 55$, $P < .001$). These results are consistent with our earlier hypothesis. From the statistics, we are certain that the two corpora represent two different text groups. This discrepancy is interesting because both these corpora belong to the same genre. They have similar goals or purposes in publication and have the same range of readership in mind. What makes them different might be due to dissimilar writers' backgrounds. In this case, different mother tongue seems to play a crucial role.

The contrast between the L2 articles and the L2 theses is understandable because these two represent two sub-genres in academic discourse. Again, this contrast has been shown to be significant in the statistical figures, reflected in

the ratio of 2246 and 2184 ($x^2 = 229.65$, $df = 55$, $P < .001$). Such a discrepancy is generally expected, and this has been borne out in the bundle distributions in our current investigation. It is accordingly reasonable to expect more discrepancy between the L1 article and the L2 theses, reflected in the ratio of 2184 and 2161 ($x^2 = 565.23$, $df = 55$, $P < .001$). Indeed, these two corpora are composed of different varieties of texts, produced for different purposes. Thus, the general picture shows that distribution of referential bundles may reflect different text types, further supporting the main argument reiterated in Biber et al. (1999, 2004) and Biber (2006).

As mentioned earlier, the focus of our discussion is on the referential bundles occurring more than 30 times per one million words in at least one corpus among the three. In the calculation, we include frequencies lower than this threshold for the purpose of comparison. Table 4 shows that a large proportion of bundles refer to tables or figures,³ which contain research statistics. Such data are used as bases for certain claims or proposals derived from a reasoning process. This phenomenon appears to be a common feature of all research papers, mainly because all claims or arguments in academic writing are based on research results, different from a personal belief or speculation commonly found in daily communication.

Table 4: Text deixis types and their frequencies

Text Deixis Types	L1 Articles		L2 Articles		L2 Theses	
	Freq.	Per 1 million	Freq.	Per 1 million	Freq.	Per 1 million
As shown in Fig	58	26	164	75	323	75
As shown in Figure	4	2	57	26	183	2
as shown in Fig	297	135	409	186	821	190
as shown in Figure	13	6	64	29	489	113
as shown in Table	28	13	67	30	144	33
of this paper is	47	21	83	38	13	3
shown in Fig 1	139	63	213	97	103	24
shown in Fig 2	127	58	179	81	367	85
shown in Fig 3	101	46	150	68	446	103
shown in Fig 4	89	40	129	59	447	103
shown in Fig 5	78	35	104	47	302	70
shown in Fig 6	67	30	89	40	160	37
shown in Fig 7	72	33	74	34	67	16
used in this study	84	38	58	26	104	24
Grand total (14 types)	1,204	546^a	1,840	836^b	3,969	918^c

^a In the comparison of L1 articles and L2 articles, $x^2 = 44.67$, $df = 13$, $P < .001$

^b In the comparison of L2 articles and L2 theses, $x^2 = 154.48$, $df = 13$, $P < .001$

^c In the comparison of L1 articles and L2 theses, $x^2 = 199.82$, $df = 13$, $P < .001$

³ Note that bundles like *Fig. 2 shows the* and *are shown in Fig.* are not included in this calculation; they have been analyzed as instances of stance bundles, realizing alethic modality in academic discourse. Stance bundles are themselves used to realize an assertion or a claim rather than employed as a basis for a certain argument.

The three corpora differ from one another, reflected in the total frequencies of text bundles used in the texts: 546 vs. 836 vs. 918. Again, it is more appropriate to consider two corpora as a group in our current discussion. The distinction between any two corpora has been shown to be statistically significant. As far as text bundles are concerned, the L1 corpus employs the lowest number of text bundles compared with either of the L2 corpora. It appears that the L2 writers are more ready to validate their arguments by reference to evidence displayed in figures or tables. This feature is particularly prominent when we consider the different calculations representing the L1 articles and the L2 articles corpora, 546 vs. 836 ($\chi^2 = 44.67$, $df = 13$, $P < .001$). The results correspond with the overall calculations discussed earlier. This current contrast is interesting because both these corpora are composed of texts supposedly of the same type. The fact that they differ in the frequencies of text bundles might be accountable in terms of language backgrounds of the writers concerned. To the L2 researchers, frequent recurrence of text bundles in their classroom teaching, textbooks or whatever accounts for internalization of the bundle usage, and this in turn results in their confidence in using the word sequences in their academic writing.

As mentioned above, the vast majority of text bundles refer to statistics or evidence on which a claim or argument is based. In this subcategory, the bundle *as shown in Fig* is the most frequent type in the three corpora, 135 times in L1 articles, 186 times in the L2 articles, and 190 times in the L2 theses. Looking more closely at the other types of chart bundles⁴, we find that a very high proportion of this group are actually variants of *as shown in Fig*, including *As shown in Fig*, *as shown in Figure*, *shown in Fig x*, and so on. From this perspective, the occurrence rates of certain chart bundles becomes several times higher if they are counted as variants of the same unit. They are included as separate types in our calculation because exact word forms have been used as the basis of searching in this investigation.

The exact word forms of the 4-word bundles show regular variations in the three corpora. One prominent pattern involves the use of abbreviated versus full forms in the chart bundles collected. There are two pairs of these variations in the use of *Fig* versus *Figure* in Table 4, like *as shown in Fig* versus *as shown in Figure*. The L1 corpus tends to use the abbreviated form, whereas the L2 corpora generally use both the abbreviated and full forms. This tendency is more obvious in the L2 theses corpus. This might be due to the fact that the PhD students more consciously follow what are supposed to be 'standard' ways of expression. It also implies that the writer's confidence and writing experience might affect the product of academic communication.

Our second subcategory of referential bundles has been called 'attribute bundles'. Some are tangible attributes referring to size and length, and others are intangible attributes like function and performance. Attribute bundles provide a structural frame which allows language users to single out a certain aspect of an entity as a focus of attention. A bundle like *a function of the* highlights 'function' of the following entity as especially important in academic communication. As

⁴ The term 'text bundles' is more general than 'chart bundles'. The former includes instances like *used in this study*, *of this paper*, and others.

indicated below, all the contrasts between two corpora as a group have attained statistical significance in the calculation.

This issue is further complicated by the total frequencies of attribute bundles in the three corpora (708 vs. 600 vs. 470), possibly reflecting the difference in the researchers' language backgrounds as well as the generic features. As far as the 30-word threshold is concerned, the numbers of attribute bundle types vary in the three corpora. There are 18 bundle types in L1 articles, compared with only 9 and 5 types in the L2 articles and the L2 theses, respectively. The data in Table 5 allows us to make three main generalizations. First of all, 4 out of 5 significant attributes in the L2 theses corpus overlap with their counterparts in both the L2 articles and the L1 articles, and 7 out of 9 attribute bundles in the L2 articles overlap with their counterparts in the L1 articles. Overlapping bundles suggest similarities in their functions, which might reflect some general concerns in academic research. Second, both the L1 and L2 articles corpora contain more instances of attribute bundles than the L2 theses. One possible

Table 5: Attribute types and their frequencies

Attribute Bundle Types	L1 Articles		L2 Articles		L2 Theses	
	Freq.	Per 1 million	Freq.	Per 1 million	Freq.	Per 1 million
a function of the	123	56	60	27	121	28
a large number of	67	30	42	19	103	24
a result of the	66	30	19	9	55	13
a wide range of	78	35	33	15	73	17
and the number of	60	27	85	39	97	22
is the number of	81	37	133	61	179	41
of the number of	70	32	60	27	71	16
the accuracy of the	18	8	65	30	103	24
the case of the	65	30	28	13	54	13
the center of the	44	20	55	25	130	30
the effect of the	75	34	66	30	99	23
the end of the	81	37	77	35	59	14
the extent to which	69	31	24	11	34	8
the length of the	78	35	84	38	75	17
the nature of the	81	37	27	12	60	14
the performance of the	103	47	153	70	184	43
the presence of a	80	36	24	11	85	20
the size of the	86	39	90	41	134	31
the surface of the	80	36	38	17	102	24
the total number of	81	37	113	51	149	34
the use of the	74	34	42	19	62	14
Grand total (21 types)	1,560	708^a	1,318	600^b	2,029	470^c

^a In the comparison of L1 articles and L2 articles, $\chi^2 = 106.08$, $df = 20$, $P < .001$

^b In the comparison of L2 articles and L2 theses, $\chi^2 = 33.12$, $df = 20$, $P < .005$

^c In the comparison of L1 articles and L2 theses, $\chi^2 = 59.24$, $df = 20$, $P < .001$

reason is that there are respectively 405 and 545 papers in the L1 and the L2 articles corpora, with each of these papers discussing a separate topic. As a consequence, these two corpora naturally cover a very wide range of topics and sub-topics. This feature might account for much more diverse attributes singled out for particular attention in the articles corpora. In contrast, the theses corpus contains only 286 papers, and this smaller number understandably covers a much narrower scope of subject matter. Third, the more varied bundle types allow the L1 writers to express a more diversity of attributes relating to their subject matters. Bundles like *a large number of*, *a wide range of*, *the extent to which*, and *the surface of the* allow the L1 researchers to focus on various facets of their subject matters. These 4 bundles also occur in the L2 papers, but they are all below the 30-word threshold in the L2 corpora. The frequency of *the extent to which* is significant in the L1 corpus but not in the L2 corpora. There might be grammatical and semantic reasons for this phenomenon. This bundle is grammatically dissimilar to all the other types as presented in Table 5; it uses the preposition *to* rather than *of* as in the other bundles. Semantically, the head noun *extent* might be 'not so internalized' by L2 writers as core items like *function*, *number* or *performance*. Again, the L2 researchers appear to be more linguistically disadvantaged than their L1 counterparts.

Our third subcategory of referential bundles has been referred to as 'focus bundles'. This category differs from attribute bundles in that the structural frames provided by focus bundles are much more abstract in nature. Members of focus bundles contain a structural frame which specifies a particular entity to be especially important, but they do not actually contain features like 'length' or 'function' of a certain entity. The focus bundles in the three corpora were identified and the relevant results are presented in Table 6. The grand totals of this subcategory show that L2 writers appear to rely more on the 4-word bundles for specifying focal points in their academic discourse. There are 10 significant bundle types in total: only 3 types in the L1 articles, 8 in the L2 articles, and 10 in the L2 theses. It is noted that the contrast between the L2 articles and the L2 theses is insignificant in this category, $\chi^2 = 3.24 < \chi^2 (10, 0.05) = 18.31$.

There are two interesting points about the distribution of focus bundle types in Table 6. First, both the L2 corpora are similar in their bundle types; among the 10 significant focus bundles, 8 items overlap with one another. On the other hand, there are only two overlapping types between the L1 and the L2 corpora. These two overlapping bundles (i.e., *in terms of the* and *with respect to the*) appear to have acquired the status of 'core bundles' in the academic community. They have become 'typical' ways to specify a focus in academic discourse. The L2 writers seem to have internalized the usage of this bundle. On the other hand, the L2 writers appear to overuse certain bundles like *is one of the* and *than that of the*. This tendency might be due to their increased familiarity with these items, reflecting different degrees of internalization of lexical bundles in a foreign language situation. Perhaps, the higher degree of internalization of these two bundles is attributable to formal teaching in the classroom. The familiarity with these two bundles is significant to the L2 researchers in that

Table 6: Focus bundle types and their frequencies

Focus Bundle Types	L1 Articles		L2 Articles		L2 Theses	
	Freq.	Per 1 million	Freq.	Per 1 million	Freq.	Per 1 million
for each of the	99	45	22	10	46	11
in terms of the	110	50	88	40	175	41
is defined as the	41	19	78	35	146	34
is one of the	41	19	91	41	212	49
is the same as	31	14	82	37	177	41
one of the most	29	13	51	23	134	31
similar to that of	39	18	71	32	133	31
than that of the	44	20	129	59	305	71
the same as the	28	13	72	33	141	33
to that of the	54	25	61	28	133	31
with respect to the	172	78	160	73	275	64
Grand total (11 types)	688	314 ^a	905	411 ^b	1,877	437 ^c

^a In the comparison of L1 articles and L2 articles, $\chi^2 = 69.82$, $df = 10$, $P < .001$

^b In the comparison of L2 articles and L2 theses, $\chi^2 = 3.24 < \chi^2 (10, 0.05) = 18.31$

^c In the comparison of L1 articles and L2 theses, $\chi^2 = 84.5$, $df = 10$, $P < .001$

the item *is one of the* can be a convenient way to express hedging and *than that of the* is useful to compare two items. The second interesting point is that the bundle *for each of the* attains a significant status in the L1 corpus but not in the two L2 counterparts. This bundle functions as a booster, useful to stress one's commitment in communication. Boosters, like hedges, are useful resources in academic discourse because they allow writers to adjust their stance towards an accompanied proposition in academic writing. It appears that the L2 writers are sometimes not as confident as the L1 researchers in conveying certain delicate meanings. Again, the L2 writers obviously suffer from language disadvantage in the use of English for academic purposes, especially when trying to express certain delicate meanings.

Our fourth category of referential bundle has been called 'condition bundles'. These bundles realize a range of circumstances as prerequisites for certain claims. Structurally, these bundles are mostly prepositional phrases; functionally, they provide a frame for the realization of a condition. They allow language users to specify their logical reasoning related to a certain assertion. The condition bundles in the data were identified and the results are presented in Table 7. The data show that there are only 9 significant bundle types, which occur more than 30 times per million words in at least one corpus in this investigation. There is much overlap of bundle types among the three corpora, reflecting some common features of academic discourse. In this subcategory, the L1 corpus employs more condition bundles, not only in types but also in frequencies. The L2 writers appear to be less confident in using certain condition bundles, such as *in the context of* and *as a result of*. Looking at these bundles more closely, we find that some of them are more specific in meaning,

Table 7: Condition types and their frequencies

Condition Bundle Types	L1 Articles		L2 Articles		L2 Theses	
	Freq.	Per 1 million	Freq.	Per 1 million	Freq.	Per 1 million
as a function of	282	128	215	98	305	71
as a result of	123	56	50	23	109	25
at the end of	67	30	84	38	68	16
at the same time	47	21	77	35	125	29
in the absence of	114	52	44	20	139	32
in the case of	171	78	77	35	186	43
in the context of	81	37	26	12	35	8
in the form of	104	47	65	30	140	32
in the presence of	239	109	152	69	329	76
on the basis of	74	34	82	37	120	28
Grand total (10 types)	1,302	592^a	872	397^b	1,556	360^c

^a In the comparison of L1 articles and L2 articles, $\chi^2 = 41.58$, $df = 9$, $P < .001$

^b In the comparison of L2 articles and L2 theses, $\chi^2 = 18.19$, $df = 9$, $P < .05$

^c In the comparison of L1 articles and L2 theses, $\chi^2 = 21.35$, $df = 9$, $P < .025$

which might have some impact on their distribution in the data. The bundle *as a result of*, for instance, has a meaning closely related to *the results of the*, but the former has a hedging function, which is absent in the latter. There is also a conjunctive function relating to the bundle *as a result of*. The multifunction of this word sequence accounts for its high frequency in the L1 corpus, but this might also affect its internalization rates among the L2 English users. Again, the L2 researchers appear to be more linguistically disadvantaged compared to their L1 counterparts.

Overall, the data appear to strengthen our previous argument that there are referential bundles which might become distinctive features of text types. As far as 4-word bundles at the threshold of 30 times per million words are concerned, the L2 writers seem to use referential word sequences more frequently than the L1 counterparts, but the L1 writers appear to use more varied forms in their bundle types. In this context, the L1 and the L2 articles belong to the same variety of English, but they show variation in the way referential bundles are employed in the discourse. Moreover, the L2 articles and the L2 theses corpora also differ in the frequency of certain bundles used. This distinction might be due to different reasons because the articles and theses belong to different text types which presuppose varying writing purposes. Thus, factors like purposes of communication and backgrounds of language users seem to affect how a communicative activity is actually conducted.

Conclusion

Biber et al.'s (1999, 2004) theory provides a very useful framework for the investigation of lexical bundles. Their results significantly reflect the distinction

among the four text types investigated: conversation, classroom teaching, textbook, and academic prose. The argument that frequencies of lexical bundles can be indicators of text types has gained more support from the results discussed in the previous section.

The L1 and the L2 articles belong to the same text type, but we have shown that there are significant distinctions between the two corpora in the distribution of referential bundles. Among the three corpora, L2 theses belong to a different text type, but there are considerable overlaps between the distributions of certain functional sub-categories across the corpora. In terms of frequencies, the L1 articles and the L2 theses seem to differ most among the three corpora. The L1 articles have the highest frequencies of attribute and condition bundles, but the L2 theses have the lowest in these two sub-categories. On the other hand, the L2 theses corpus has the highest frequencies of focus and text bundles, but the frequencies of these two are the lowest in the L1 articles. Both the L1 articles and the L2 articles are supposed to be of the same genre, but the distinction shown in the previous discussion suggests that the L2 articles belong to a different text type, possibly an instance of interlanguage in academic English. This argument also applies to the status of the L2 theses, which have been shown to lie at the other end of the text spectrum. Some reasons have been suggested to account for the varying text types. Different levels of English proficiency due to language backgrounds of the writers have their impact on the language use, and varying degrees of confidence in academic writing might also result in some variation of bundle distribution in the data.

The exact word forms of the 4-word bundles show an interesting and regular variation among the three corpora. We have shown that a prominent pattern involves the use of abbreviated versus full forms of two text bundles, *as shown in Fig* versus *as shown in Figure*. The L1 writers tend to use the abbreviated form, whereas the L2 writers use both the abbreviated and full forms. This tendency may be another feature of interlanguage, where language users might be more conscious about following what is supposed to be 'standard' ways of expression in the target language. Formal classroom teaching might also lead to the overuse of certain bundles. Instances of overuse in the L2 corpora are exemplified in two focus bundles, *is one of the* and *than that of the*. The less linguistic competence of the L2 writers is exemplified in the frequency of *the extent to which*, a significant bundle in the L1 corpus but not in the L2 corpora. Instances of underuse are also exemplified by bundles like *for each of the* and *as a result of*. Both attain a significant status in the L1 corpus but not in the two L2 counterparts. The L2 writers are sometimes not so confident in conveying certain delicate meanings. Multi-functionality as well as confidence might cause the underuse of certain referential bundles in the L2 corpora. Thus, factors relating to language backgrounds of the writers such as the target language proficiency, the writer's confidence in using the language, and writing experience might play important roles in academic communication. The L2 writers obviously suffer from language disadvantages in the use of English for academic purposes.

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Project Work As a Catalyst for Change: An Action Research

■ Zheng Yongyan
University of Hong Kong

ABSTRACT: *The booming development of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach has pushed learners to the forefront. Project Work (PW), as a more elaborate form of task-based activities, has been documented as an effective and motivating approach to language learning in both EFL and ESL settings. However, controversy in learners' attitudes towards this approach particularly in the East Asian context has also been identified. This action research explores these questions:*

1. *How do the Chinese students perceive language learning and what attitudes do they hold to PW?*

2. *What fundamental processes are going on during the PW cycle?*

3. *Will the PW approach prove to be the learning context that facilitates change?*

Adopting an ethnographic approach, the study draws data from project journals, naturalistic observation and informal interviews. Sixteen students enrolled in the intensive English program of a prestigious university in Shanghai, China were exposed to a series of Project Work related to their textbook for one semester (four months). Data analyses generally show positive responses to PW on the part of the learners. The participants developed deeper understanding of group work and collaborative learning during the PW cycle and reactive autonomy was also enhanced. The lively and vocal style of learning manifested by the participants has falsified the stereotype passive Chinese learner that prevails in the literature, and the PW approach has been found as a catalyst that brings about change to learners' learning patterns and attitudes. The flexibility and fluidity that Chinese learners exhibit given facilitative conditions (i.e., the PW approach) are consequently emphasized.

Introduction

The past two decades have witnessed the booming development of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach in the language teaching enterprise. By definition, a task refers to "a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed" (Ellis, 2003, p. 16). In particular, Project Work (PW) is regarded as a more elaborate form of task-based activities and has been, as an approach to enhancing language learning, vigorously implemented in diverse English-teaching contexts (Stoller, 1997; Beckett, 1999; Moulton & Holmes, 2000; Beckett, 2002; Beglar & Hunt, 2002; Fried-Booth, 2002; Beckett & Slater, 2005).

With a focus on the characteristics of learner-centeredness, real-world authenticity and integration of skills and content (Stoller, 1997; Beckett, 2002; Fried-Booth, 2002; Diaz-Rico, 2004; Beckett & Slater, 2005), PW has been documented in the literature as successful pedagogical endeavors to motivate students and to encourage collaborative learning (Wilhelm, 1999; Beglar & Hunt, 2002; Beckett & Slater, 2005). However, not all participants in PW express positive feelings (Eyring, 1989; Beckett, 1999; Moulton & Holmes, 2000), particularly in the EFL (English as a foreign language) contexts in East Asia where some researchers have reported pedagogical conflicts between Chinese students and their expatriate teachers (Li, 1999; Wang, 2006).

Bearing these problems in mind, I conducted this action research in an intensive-reading course for English major students in Mainland China. The purposes of the study were to closely examine Chinese learners' responses to PW approach in English language learning, and to explore the fundamental processes that occur in the course of a PW cycle. I propose that the PW approach may create the catalytic conditions under which learners' perceptions of learning can be reshaped and learner autonomy facilitated.

Background literature

Project-based Instruction (PBI) was introduced to ESL education as a way to reflect the fundamental tenet of learner-centeredness (Hedge, 1993). It is defined as "an instructional approach that contextualizes learning by presenting learners with problems to solve or products to develop" (Moss, 1998, p. 1). Hence, PW is regarded as the operational method that integrates and materializes the concepts and principles underpinning the PBI. In various configurations, PW shares the following features:

- *Real-world connection.* PW is a distinctive approach to learning in that it represents a natural extension of what is already taking place in class (Stoller, 1997). Through participation in a project, students are engaged with a driving question that bears real-world concerns. For instance, in their PW practices with Japanese EFL learners, Beglar & Hunt (2002) found that the diverse topics their students chose were all socially relevant, which implies that PW is embedded in the larger societal context rather than the isolated classroom. Bridging the inside of a classroom with the outside world, PW enables students to go beyond the boundary of the local educational setting by which they are normally constrained.
- *Learner-centeredness.* Intrinsic to PW is the underlying principle of learner-centeredness. Although the teacher plays a role in offering support and guidance through the PW process, learners are making concerted efforts to achieve a common goal, while gaining experience in diverse opinions and viewpoints as well as negotiation and reconciliation. Underpinning this feature is the humanistic perspective of language learners. Given opportunities for purposeful and authentic communication in various social contexts, EFL learners are treated as intellectual users of language rather than "defective native speakers" (Liddicoat, Crozet, & Lo Bianco,

2000, p. 181). In particular, learners with mixed language abilities can all participate in a single project, which can in turn give all participants a sense of achievement and boost their motivation.

- *Process- and Product-orientation.* For one thing, PW is process-oriented in that it is emergent and negotiated rather pre-planned (Diaz-Rico, 2004). It tends to stimulate students to maximize their engagement all along the project and provide them with ample opportunities to use the target language at different PW stages. At the same time, it culminates in an end project. In terms of how information is reported, a project can end in some bulletin board displays, radio programs, oral presentations, debates, or in conversation tables or food fairs (Stoller, 1997).

For the features mentioned above, PW as a pedagogical practice has won favor in the EFL setting. As Sarwar (2000) shrewdly pointed out, most EFL teachers are facing a “vicious circle” in which the lack of exposure to real-world English hinders learners from using English, which in turn leads to lower self-esteem, lack of confidence, and even reinforces the beliefs of their inability to learn English well, which further exacerbates the lack of English proficiency. But PW is able to help by constructing a context rich in opportunities of authentic uses of the language. A number of researchers have used the PW approach in EFL settings as well as ESL Intensive English Programs (Wilhelm, 1999; Sarwar, 2000; Beglar & Hunt, 2002; Beckett & Slater, 2005) and their attempts were welcomed cordially and enthusiastically. Students generally expressed feelings of being rewarded, showed an elevated interest in English learning, a stronger confidence in using English and a willingness to continue to do projects in the future.

However, dissonance has also been heard. In Eyring’s (1989) comparison of a project class and two non-project classes, students in the project class appeared to be dissatisfied with the project approach because they thought these projects were not worthwhile pursuits in ESL classes. In her study of secondary school ESL students, Beckett (1999) found that over half the participants regarded the project activity as distraction from learning what they felt they needed to know to advance their education, particularly grammar and vocabulary knowledge. Similar responses were echoed in Moulton’s and Holmes’ (2000) observation that their participants believed ESL classes should be limited to the study of language, and non-linguistic tasks simply did not appeal. It seems that students’ attitudes to PW may be unfavorably affected by such belief of language learning as an ESL class is for learning language components rather than building skills (Beckett & Slater, 2005).

This controversy in response to the PW approach becomes more conspicuous in East Asia, where a number of classroom observations have indicated that the adoption of PW is not as productive as teachers expect (Wang, 2006). This is due to the prevailing impression of East Asian learners as passive rote learners, unwilling to be involved in classroom activities, and reluctant to ask questions in the classroom (Ho & Crookall, 1995; Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Pennycook, 1998; An, 2002). But the counterargument holds that social, political and economic conditions, even structural elements of the educational system per se,

may have been more influential upon the teaching and learning practices than the cultural ones (Pierson 1996; Stephens, 1997). In particular, the “powerful role of the learning context” has been brought to the foreground (Littlewood, 1999). Studies have shown that Chinese learners who put in a different learning context may adjust their own expectations of learning as well as their sets of behaviors in order to be fully socialized into the context (Cheng, 2002; Gieve & Clark, 2005). With regard to PW, Dixon & Stokes (1998) reported that their endeavor with the PW approach has stimulated a high degree of creativity and independence with their Hong Kong students, and similar results have been observed by Beglar & Hunt (2002) with their Japanese students, and Wang (2006) with his English major students in Mainland China.

The controversy identified in the literature compelled me to conduct this action research with my own intensive-reading class for English-major students enrolled in a prestigious university in China. In Mainland China, the majority of students get into tertiary institutions by continuously surviving various kinds of tests and examinations, and ultimately, the National College Entrance Examinations. Hence, they have more or less been socialized into the test-oriented educational system (Gao, forthcoming). I have learned, via personal communication, that the students’ secondary-school English classrooms were filled with knowledge cramming exercises in grammar and vocabulary, a teaching-learning pattern necessitated by the pressing needs of passing the National College Entrance Examinations. This past experience may have led to similar expectations for the college EFL classroom. In China, the traditional practice of teaching intensive reading is to use a selected textbook, identify language points and cultural knowledge, and impart the knowledge to students through explicit instruction. In this sense, a college English class is not a far cry from those in secondary schools. However, at the same time, the students are keenly aware that exclusive focus on language components can get them nowhere in job hunting, given the increasingly competitive tertiary graduate job market (Bai, 2006). This particular contradiction gives rise to the tension in my own English classroom. On the one hand, the students are comfortable with the traditional textbook-based teaching and learning; in my several initial attempts to implement pair work and self-teaching, they expressed reluctance and even minor resistance. On the other hand, they feel that English classes are rather boring and that they can gain little to improve their skills. To better understand this phenomenon and search for a possible solution, I decided to initiate the Project Work plan as a complement to the traditional text-based instruction. The following research questions are addressed:

1. How do students perceive language learning and what attitudes do they hold to PW?
2. What fundamental processes are going on while they are doing different projects?
3. Will the PW approach prove to be the learning context that facilitates change?

Research design

The current study is an action research project. By definition, action research is “a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out” (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 162). Bearing the teacher-researcher double identity, I expected to enhance my pedagogical practice, to gain new theoretical understandings and to bring about change to my classroom by initiating the PW cycle.

Sixteen first-year English major students in my intensive-reading English class participated in the action research during the second semester (February 2006 to June 2006). The intensive English course that I taught was a core course in their program, and bore 6 credits out of the total 12 credits they gained each semester. Therefore, they were serious about the course and all expressed determination to try their best in this class. The text book used that semester was *Close Reading for First Year Students of English* (Shen, 2000). For four months in a row, I designed three projects based on three thematic units covered in sequence that semester, that is, ‘Romance and Affection’, ‘Cultural Diversity’, and ‘Arts and Literature’. All projects were relevant to the texts so that students could draw on the linguistic, philosophical or cultural resources from the textbook. It needs to be noted that, after the experience of doing the first two projects, Project 3 involved students’ self-teaching of language points and cultural notes. The students were asked to sort out key vocabulary from the text, look them up in dictionaries, find out relevant background information, and then present the information to the rest of the class. Though I was the designer, the students were free to express their preferences and to negotiate the form of production and preparation time. Once the details were set, project groups were randomly formed by a lucky draw and the right of labor division was totally handed over to the students. When the next project started, the whole process was repeated, and the groups reformed. I was available when they needed help or had problems. Table 1 provides a brief description of the project.

The data sources were drawn from students’ Project Journals, their project production (e.g., essays, presentation handouts, and preparation notes), informal interviews, my own classroom observations and self-reflections. All

Table 1: Project description

Unit Theme	Project	Culminating Activity
Romance and Affection	To imitate the writing style of the text “Sons and Mothers” and write a letter to your father/mother as a group.	Writing up the group essay; Sharing and revising each group’s essays.
Arts and Literature	To compile an A-Z list to summarize your experience (likes and dislikes) of college life.	In-class presentation of the A-Z list to the class with explanation.
Cultural Diversity	To revise the text “Mystery Date” into a skit, and to prepare language points as well as cultural notes from the text.	Drama performance; In-class presentation of language points and cultural notes.

16 participants kept their Project Journals to document significant incidents, their feelings and opinions that were related to the projects. I scanned through their journals, checked for interesting points, and interviewed the participant individually for clarification. In data analysis, I examined all the data, looked for emerging patterns and themes by counting, clustering, ordering and selecting representative pieces of narrative (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For triangulation, I checked the findings with in-class observation and my own reflections, and also compared similar incidents documented by different participants.

Findings and discussion

Analyses of students' written reflections, interview data, and project portfolio (i.e., power point handouts, tables, and graphics) showed that participants overall held positive responses to the PW approach. All the 16 participants reported "a sense of achievement", "feelings of being rewarded" and regarded PW as "a fresh experience". For example, in talking about Project 1 (i.e., the group writing project), Angela¹ wrote:

Looking at the typed piece of paper, I felt a sense of achievement. Not only have we achieved the first cooperative essay in our life, but also the experience of group work, the pleasure in discussion, the precious friendship, and so forth.

The participants particularly recognized PW as an effective approach to English learning in terms of deeper understanding of the text achieved through thorough preparation. For example, Angela noted that Project 3 (drama performance) "proved to be an effective way for us to bear the plot in mind", and the self-teaching part of Project 3 gave all the students the opportunities to "participate in the lessons, and (they) got deeper impression about the words and phrases in the text due to thorough preparation", as noted by two other students, Emma and Karen. Apart from deeper understanding of the text, the benefits of sharing and division of labor were acknowledged by the participants. Daisy noted that after "scrupulous preparation, ... , everyone has his own language points to share with others and we can save time and energy". Real-world connection of Project 2 (i.e., compiling a list of likes and dislikes about the students' college life) immensely stimulated the students to reflect on their days in the university, making the project motivating and intrinsically interesting. Vivien's comments below can serve as a representation of her classmates' response as well:

Generally speaking, the ABCs (of the university) were far more leisurely and amusing than any other assignments during the nine months' study in this university. Maybe it's because of our deep affection for the school.

The theme of collaborative learning emerges from the qualitative data. The participants documented diverse opinions about their experience. For example, all 16 students noted that they unanimously had "heated discussion" during the preparation stages. Brian expressed frustration in his journal, by saying that "I went to the dorm with a heavy heart. ... It's really a hard mission for me."

¹ Note: The names of all the participants mentioned in this paper have been changed to protect privacy.

However, despite the distressful experience of disagreement and argumentation, he noted that “we’ve tried our best and I believe we can be regarded as ‘dedicated’ to the whole project.” It seems that the project epitomizes a small society filled with differences and diversity, which propels everyone to reach out for their greatest potential in arguing, disagreeing, discussing, and finally compromising along the process towards the common end.

But differences in opinion seem to neither harm group harmony nor sabotage the project goal, probably because the experience of collaborative learning offers the participants a perspective to focus on other people’s strengths. As Brian expressed in the journal, though he did not agree with two other group members’ suggestion of what writing style to adopt, he compromised because he knew “their writing skills were so much higher than me”, and he “trusted their judgments.” A closer scrutiny of the project journals further demonstrated that the participants never begrudged compliments and appreciation for each other. They generously commented on their group members as being “inspiring”, “talented” and “diligent”. Accompanying the developed mutual appreciation, the participants discovered that the PW approach maximized their own potential, as noted by Fiona:

The potential of every person is boundless. Throughout the discussions, I find that both my partners possess actively-thinking minds, broad views and wonderful inspirations. ... In the group work, everybody’s potential has been dug up, which is indeed inspiring. I’ll improve myself by learning from my friends.

Group discussion is indeed filled with differing opinions occasionally causing frustration and distress, but all these differences seem to be mediated and reconciled by mutual trust and appreciation among the team members, and group harmony is successfully maintained. This particular collaborative pattern enables the team members to seek for the common ground while preserving differences.

While the potential-provoking process of collaborative learning is materialized as experience with diversity, mutual appreciation and maintaining group harmony, the results of such learning receive favorable responses from the participants. As Helen observed: “In a project work, so long as everyone is working together, there is no difficulty that can’t be overcome.” In particular, the indispensability of “interdependence” was accentuated in Fiona’s metaphorical remark:

Interdependence plays an important role in group work....If we hadn’t had a heated but friendly discussion, we certainly wouldn’t have the final story....We were just like a Western orchestra, merging the sounds of violins, flutes and trumpets into a harmonious tune.

The excerpt shows that the participants attach great value to “heated discussion” and are not so afraid of argumentative discussion, but not at the expense of group harmony. The participants seem to be able to prioritize group harmony and the common project goal, so that differences in opinions can be successfully reconciled and the goal achieved through joint efforts.

The collaborative learning pattern found with the participants confirms the general predictions made by Littlewood (1999), based on the discussion of East Asian people's stronger inclinations, compared to their Western counterparts, for collectivist orientation and perception of interdependent self. A collectivist orientation encourages individuals to see themselves as an inseparable part of the in-group (Littlewood, 1999), and while collectivist orientation addresses the cultural level, "interdependent self" addresses the personal level. According to Markus & Kitayama (1991), two constructions of the self exist in all individuals: an independent self, which perceives itself as separate from others, and an interdependent self, which sees itself as connected with others. By reviewing a large number of studies, Markus & Kitayama (1999) came to the statement that the East Asians have a greater tendency to perceive themselves as interdependent selves. Based on these two levels of descriptions, Littlewood (1999) predicted that East Asian students will have a strong inclination to form in-groups which work towards common goals, will be eager to engage in activities which involve discussion within groups, and will be concerned to maintain harmony within their groups. These predictive statements found evidence in the collaborative learning pattern demonstrated by the participants.

Accompanying collaborative learning which is driven by the dynamic interactions between group harmony and individual differences, learner autonomy seems to have been enhanced as well. The participants were given the chance to make their voices heard and to gain control of the classroom. As Emma noted in her journal:

The class activity of Mystery Date (i.e., Project 3) was really thought-provoking to most of us, for it was the first time for us students to control the process of a text—both teaching and acting.

This fresh experience of process control led the participants to reflect on some greater issues that were beyond the realm of language learning, such as democracy. Angela wrote in her journal:

We can voice our own ideas in public, though only a small audience, and share a sense of democracy.

These statements demonstrate that the portrait of Chinese learners as "passive rote learners" (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Ho & Crookall, 1995; Pennycook, 1998; An, 2002) is simply a myth rather than the truth. It is important to differentiate their not making their voices heard from their unwillingness to make their voices heard. If they show any reluctance, it might simply be caused by their past experience in a traditional classroom, which is further confirmed by Georgia's retrospection:

For such a long time we've been taught to learn whatever teachers teach us. We just need to sit still and take down the notes ever related to exams. Asking questions is never easy as teachers can select who they prefer. We've been sent into a place of exile where knowledge is reinforced [instilled] by authorities—teachers. Fight back for our land and space!

Hence, the PW approach creates such a learning context that the students can gain control, become the master of the class, make their voices heard, and subsequently unfetter themselves, step by step, from the constraints of the passive learning pattern they brought with them from their past experience.

It needs to be pointed out that although the participants clearly stated their will to take control, they did not completely dismiss the teacher's function. They relied on the teacher for instructional help as well as mental support. For example, Jessica noted that:

When I saw my teacher nodding from time to time, I felt greatly encouraged, and I knew what I said, no matter good or bad, got attention from my audience. ... If we have missed something, or made some mistakes, the teacher will point out or make some supplementation. So (the project) is a successful try.

It seems that the participants are not yet sufficiently confident to take complete control over the classroom. The teacher's presence is still seen as a source of help and support, giving them a sense of security.

The participants' claim to take control, perception of interdependent self and their acknowledged dependence on the teacher all confirm the pattern of reactive autonomy proposed by Littlewood (1999). Reactive autonomy refers to the level of self-regulation that does not create its own direction but, once a direction has been initiated, it enables learners to organize their resources autonomously in order to reach their goal. He further suggests that this type of autonomy is more suitable to describe East Asian learners.

Contextualized in the current study, and once the project was set, the participants took the initiative and started conscientious preparation towards the group goal. As a process and a product, the project work approach provides students abundant opportunities to exercise their freedom of choice and to develop their own voices in the public domain, no matter how small the scale is. More importantly, the project gives them concrete, first-time experience that leads to retrospection and introspection of the learner role as well as the teacher role. They see themselves as depending on each other in achieving the goal, and realize that, as learners, they can also assume control in the classroom; the teacher is no longer the absolute authority, but rather a guide from whom they can seek help in times of difficulty. The bud of autonomy is to burgeon and bloom in this facilitating environment.

Conclusions

The literature on the PW approach to EFL teaching and learning in the East Asian context has documented controversy in learners' responses and attitudes. The blame generally goes to the stereotype of East Asian learners as "passive rote learners." However, the successful attempt reported in the present study to implement PW as a complementary method in an intensive-reading course in China generates encouraging findings indicative of the participants' developed deeper understanding of group work and collaborative learning. Considering the participants' loud claim for classroom control, their aspiration for democracy and the eagerness to make their voices heard—all these findings

file a falsification charge against the general stereotype that has been used to label Chinese learners for a long time. The time has come to differentiate between not making their voices heard from their unwillingness to make their voices heard, because hidden in this difference is the institutional constraints under which the learners have been struggling all along. On the other hand, cultural influences prove less powerful in this case. Though they have been generally socialized in a test-oriented, teacher-centered educational tradition, the flexibility and fluidity found in the Chinese learners can by no means be underestimated. If learners are provided with an autonomy-facilitating learning context, obvious changes are expected to occur.

The pedagogical implications of PW are far-reaching. This approach does not aim to subvert the existing educational system as a whole, but rather to suggest a complementary alternative. In the current English language teaching (ELT) practices in China, the text-based instruction still prevails. To supplant it with the PW approach seems premature, as far as I am concerned, because not only will the established institution frown upon such a drastic change, but the students themselves might not be ready in view of their reliance on teachers for instructional help and mental support as found in the present study. But as a limited action taken in a limited situation (Freire, 1973), the PW-based language classroom builds a small domain for students to exercise their freedom of choice, to create their own discourse, and to develop skills and confidence which might be transferred to wider public domains in the future.

However, the current research is not free from limitations. The most obvious one is concerned with the involvement, perhaps over-involvement, of the action researcher which might have led to personal bias. The action researcher being the teacher might have attracted the participants to give favorable responses simply to please the teacher. However, as an action researcher, I tended to prioritize my understanding of the practice and the meaning of the local context. Probably the research cannot live up to the traditional criteria of random selection of participants, replicability of study and generalizability of findings, but it is the emic perspective that I see as the greatest value in the current study.

Limitation of time and the narrow scope of the current research have restricted the data sources and the number of participants. In addition, the current study did not involve an analysis of the participants' development in language skills. The influence of PW on language proficiency improvement still awaits further exploration. It might also be interesting to investigate how multimedia technology impacts students' language learning during the PW cycle. However, what has been highlighted in this research is that the participants embraced the PW approach as one effective and inspiring method in language learning. Motivated and empowered, they have just taken the first step to becoming autonomous learners. This is a good beginning in their long journey of high academic endeavors.

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Teacher Imposed and Externally Imposed Changes in Brunei Darussalam's English Language Classrooms

■ Sue Nair
Universiti Brunei Darussalam

ABSTRACT: *A number of externally imposed changes have been introduced to Brunei Darussalam's education system which could be expected to have an impact on teaching and learning across the primary curriculum and on the teaching of English in particular. Recent initiatives include: the implementation of an inclusive education policy (1996); the Primary Schools Computer Project (1999); a revision of the Primary 6 English Language examination to include information transfer questions and writing in a particular format for a specified audience and purpose (2001); and the ongoing introduction of new primary school English Language textbooks. Using information gathered from a questionnaire distributed to experienced teachers on degree courses in Universiti Brunei Darussalam and follow-up interviews with half of the respondents, this paper will discuss these teachers' engagement with change. In particular, it addresses these issues: the changes teachers introduced in their classrooms; the teachers' motivation for making these changes; their perceptions of the impact of self imposed and externally imposed change initiatives; and what these engagements with change reveal about the locus of control in the process of change in English language teaching and learning in Brunei Darussalam's primary school classrooms. The findings suggest that if change of depth, duration and breadth is to take place, policy makers need to take account of teachers' personal visions and purposes.*

Introduction

Changes introduced in the classroom can be seen as either externally imposed, that is originating from an external authority (for example, a government department) or teacher imposed. This is a simplified distinction as all changes are mediated through the teacher and thus are subject to a complex process of interpretation and reinterpretation by the teacher implementing them. Nevertheless, it is a useful distinction to make when discussing the motivation for and impact of changes in classroom teaching and learning.

To be effective, educational change needs three characteristics: depth, duration and breadth (Hargreaves & Fink, 2000). With depth, a change affects

important aspects of students' learning; with duration, it is sustainable over time; with breadth, it transforms national education systems.

For an innovation to acquire these characteristics, it needs the support of teachers. Without this, externally imposed change may not have the intended consequences. The result may be: "...teachers adopt, adapt, and subvert new techniques according to their existing practice, and their existing conceptualizations of teaching and learning" (Higgins & Leat, 2001, p. 66). Depth, duration and breadth may be lost. This view is reflected in the extensive research in the field. (See, for example, Schmidt & Datnow, 2005, pp. 949-952.)

In contrast, teachers' self imposed changes, by their very nature, have teachers' support. They accord with teachers' personal and professional motivations and reflect their understanding of teaching and learning. They may also demonstrate teachers working towards achieving their own personal vision or "images of ideal classroom practice" (Hammerness, 2001, p. 143).

Goodson, in developing a theory of educational change, argues that any successful change most often begins: "...with a transformation of people's personal perceptions and projects and flows outwards into the social and institutional domain" (Goodson, 2001, p. 57). Educational change is most powerful when it is driven by the personal commitments of teachers.

Policymakers can create a climate in which teachers' commitments are translated into powerful forces for change. Where teachers are working in a culture which promotes their capacity to initiate and sustain change, for example through supporting professional development and respecting teachers' authority, experience and knowledge, their self imposed changes are more likely to have depth and duration (Sachs, 1997). Where systems are in place which make it easy to exchange resources and expertise and time is provided for teachers to reflect on proposed changes and adapt them to their own situations, teacher imposed changes will also have breadth.

Thus, rather than imposing change, policymakers wishing to encourage substantive curricular change need to "work with teachers rather than on them" (Bailey, 2000, p. 113).

Objectives

This study seeks to contribute to the understanding of teachers' engagement with change through an analysis of 18 teachers' self-reports of their experiences of change initiatives. It addresses the following issues: the changes teachers introduced in their classrooms; the teachers' motivation for making these changes; their perceptions of the impact of self and externally imposed change initiatives; and what these engagements with change reveal about the locus of control in the process of change in English language teaching and learning in Brunei Darussalam's primary school classrooms. This is a follow-up study, developing research into teachers' engagement with change in Brunei Darussalam.

Background

Brunei Darussalam is a small sultanate of 5,765 square kilometres with a population in 2004 of approximately 357,800 (Government of Brunei Darussalam, 2007). It has 68,572 pupils in government schools: 32,662 pupils in 123 primary schools and 35,910 pupils in 30 secondary schools. A further 31,287 pupils are in private education, 25,563 of these in primary schools (Ministry of Education Brunei Darussalam, 2007). In government schools, a bilingual educational policy has been in place since 1985. At the primary level, English is taught as a specialised subject from Primary 1–3. From Primary 4 onwards, English is the medium of instruction for geography, mathematics and science. Malay is the medium of instruction for Malay, history, Islamic religious knowledge, physical education, arts and crafts, civics, and MIB (which is the teaching of Brunei's national philosophy).

The ministry's approved approach to teaching English language at the primary level is reflected in the Reading and English Language Acquisition (RELA) programme implemented in 1989. This programme is based on the language experience approach, whole language and the child centred curriculum (Cox & Kanafiah, 1999, p. 81). Big books are used for shared reading; pupils create word banks and classrooms include a listening post and reading corner.

A questionnaire seeking information about teachers' engagement with change was distributed to 35 experienced primary school teachers of English in full-time study at the Universiti of Brunei Darussalam in January and February of 2006. It showed the most powerful motivation for change was the respondents' increased awareness of pupils' needs (100%, $n = 35$), followed by an increased confidence in their own professional judgement (85.7%, $n = 30$). Changes to the syllabus provided the next most important motivating factor (71.4%, $n = 25$). Assessment changes motivated 54.3% ($n = 17$) of the sample (Nair, 2006).

Changes in methodology had been made by 60% ($n = 21$) of the respondents. Where specific descriptions were made of these changes, it was clear that they were derived from externally imposed change initiatives, in particular the Primary Schools Computer Project and the Reading and English Language Acquisition (RELA) programme.

Further research was intended to resolve this apparent conflict in the findings. If pupils' needs and teachers' increased confidence in their own professional judgement are the main motivation for change, why does it seem that externally imposed changes dominate classroom practice? Where is the locus of control in implementing change?

Methodology

Semi-structured, one-to-one interviews (See Appendix) were conducted from March to November 2006 with 18 of the 35 respondents to the questionnaire. They developed ideas and spoke widely on the issues raised by the interviewer. Reference to the questionnaire originally completed by the interviewees was made at the end of the interview if requested by the interviewee. All interviews

were held in the researcher's room in the university and lasted anywhere from 50 to 90 minutes, but usually around 60 minutes. Interviews were not recorded, as it was felt this might intimidate the interviewees. They were, in fact, very enthusiastic to discuss their experiences. Notes were made during the interviews, written up immediately after completion of the interview and returned to the interviewees within a week to check the accuracy of the data. Two interviewees made alterations which were incorporated into their self-reports and subsequently approved by each of the interviewees. To protect the privacy and identity of participants, interviewees were assigned a number and these numbers are used in the findings and discussion sections to indicate the source of each quotation. Content analysis was used to analyse the data. Units of the texts were identified, categorised and their frequency counted. The units related to the teachers' motivation for making changes; the in-service education attended; the externally linked and self imposed changes; and the impact of these changes. Further analysis linked the units and attempted to show what they revealed about the locus of control in implementing change in Brunei Darussalam's primary English language classrooms.

Limitations of research

Eighteen interviewees form a very small percentage of Brunei Darussalam's primary school teachers and their engagements with change cannot claim to represent those of the majority. These findings, then, are not generalisable. In addition, other stakeholders' interpretations of changes discussed by the respondents were not elicited. Perceptions of these changes and their impact, then, are necessarily subjective. Finally, the researcher has taught all the students, which may have had an effect on the interviewees' statements.

The interviewees

Purposive sampling was used to identify interviewees from the original 35 respondents to the questionnaire. 16 were students in the second or third year of the Bachelor of Education in Primary Education (TESL) and two were students in the Masters in Education, Language in Education, course. All 18 have obtained a teaching qualification and been teaching English for between six and 15 years in primary schools. They have a wide variety of teaching experience. The majority ($n = 13$) have taught lower and upper primary level classes. All have attended courses on RELA and been identified by the Ministry of Education as good teachers who would benefit from further academic study. In addition, the postgraduate students have completed successfully the Bachelor of Education in Primary Education (TESL). Of the 18 interviewees, two of the undergraduate students were male.

In 2006 there were 2,707 government primary school teachers in Brunei Darussalam: 798 male and 1909 female (Ministry of Education Brunei Darussalam, 2007). The interviewees form a very small and unusual sample. However, such a group of experienced and highly regarded teachers could be expected to play a key role in the development of English teaching in the

organisations to which they are posted on completion of their courses. All are potential subject leaders, head teachers and curriculum development officers. Their involvement with change will be critical to the development of a culture of change.

Findings

1. Teachers' motivation for initiating change

The much richer insight into teachers' motivation provided by the self-reports (see Table 1) reinforces the finding from the questionnaire that the most powerful motivation for change is the teachers' relationships with their pupils. However, the second factor most mentioned by the teachers, the impact of other educators on these teachers, did not emerge from the questionnaire, which sought information only on interaction with colleagues. Another difference is that the data from the self-reports suggest the teachers' confidence in their own professional judgements, reflected in the category teachers' personal and professional development, is less important in motivating changes than the influence of other professional educators and external authorities. The categories of personal goals, society, family and friends, and teachers' beliefs did not emerge from the questionnaire, but the self-reports reveal their importance.

This list reflects the teachers' lives and careers: children, brothers and sisters, husbands, parents, friends, colleagues, their own education, their differing class-room experiences, relationships with pupils and their awareness of their backgrounds, their career stage, vision of what it is possible to achieve in a classroom, personal needs and ambitions, self understanding and how they see themselves as teachers. This linear table simplifies the complex interaction of personal, professional and moral motivational factors which individual teachers revealed in the interviews. A cross section of these factors and the interplay between them influence teachers as they make decisions about the teaching and learning in their classrooms.

2. Teachers' perceptions of the impact of externally imposed changes on Brunei Darussalam's primary English language classrooms

In Brunei Darussalam, the most commonly used means of disseminating information about and encouraging the implementation of innovations is workshops for teachers conducted by external experts. All the interviewees had attended such workshops. Their attitude to them was mixed. Five enjoyed the opportunity: "When I was teaching, I loved to go to workshops. I love to learn new methods, new ways of teaching" (13). Two were more cynical: "Teachers regularly attend workshops to encourage them to change their teaching style. The workshops are not effective as change requires time and resources" (12). Eleven accepted them as part and parcel of their professional lives.

Teaching many subjects, primary teachers are invited to attend many workshops. Several interviewees could not remember what in-service education they had attended: "I attended in-service courses like the RELA course and some

Table 1: Teachers' motivation for introducing changes in the classroom

Teachers' motivation	Times mentioned
Category 1: Children	
a. To make the lessons enjoyable and interesting for the children	9
b. Greater awareness of children's needs, e.g., responding to children's different and developing academic needs; providing safe opportunities for children to try and fail	7
c. To better prepare children for examinations	5
d. To make learning English less difficult	2
e. To improve children's reading skills	2
f. To compensate for lack of support in children's home background	2
g. To make children literate in English	1
h. Children's appreciation of the teacher's work	1
i. Children's enthusiasm and enjoyment creating a special teacher/learner relationship	1
	Total: 30
Category 2: Other professional educators	
j. Other teachers in their own and/or other schools, head teachers, their children's teachers and their own teachers	Total: 17
Category 3: External authorities	
k. Workshops	5
l. Responding to syllabus and assessment change	4
m. A visit from an authority figure	2
n. Practical and sensible recommendations by an expert	2
	Total: 13
Category 4: Personal goals	
o. To be a more creative teacher	3
p. To do something to be proud of, to make a difference	2
q. To provide a model of continuous learning	2
r. An intrinsic desire to learn new methods	2
s. To reflect on and thus improve each lesson	2
t. To provide a better education for all children	1
	Total: 12
Category 5: Teachers' personal and professional development	
u. Increasing confidence and enthusiasm because of: greater experience, greater subject knowledge, successfully implementing change, children's success	Total: 12
Category 6: Family and friends	
v. Husbands, own parents, brothers and sisters, and friends	4
w. Comparison between learning of teacher's pupils and own children	2
	Total: 6
Category 7: Society	
x. To keep pace with a changing world	2
y. Responding to a generation with different lives and attitudes	2
	Total: 4
Category 8: Teachers' beliefs	
z. Teachers make a difference to children's lives	Total: 2

Table 2: Teachers' attendance at in-service education events designed to implement English language policies

In-service education provided by outside experts	No. of interviewees attending
Workshops supporting the teaching of the Reading and English Language Acquisition (RELA) programme	15
* Workshops supporting the introduction of the Primary Schools Computer Project	12
Workshops supporting the introduction of new items in the Primary 6 English language examination.	3
Language teaching workshops (e.g. bilingualism, drama, readers' theatre)	3
Workshops on teaching phonics	2
Workshop: Using stories in science, geography, art and physical education	1
*Conference on special education	1

** Whilst not supporting initiatives specifically related to English language teaching, these events are intended to have an impact on that teaching and thus are included here.*

workshops I can't remember" (17). This does suggest that at least some in-service education is wasted on some of the audience. Table 2 lists the in-service education related to teaching English language which the interviewees were able to recall attending. See Table 2.

Teachers' perceptions of the impact of three of these externally imposed innovations will be considered: the Reading and English Language Acquisition (RELA) programme; the introduction of the Primary Schools Computer Project; and the introduction of new items in the Primary 6 English language examination.

- **The Primary Schools Computer Project**

Originally introduced in 1999, the Primary School Computer Project is an innovation which has been sustained by the creation, in 2001, of the Department of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), responsible for the implementation of the e-Education initiative; and a budget of B\$145 million, allocated to promote the use of ICT in education. It is intended that the use of digital content and networked applications will make teaching and learning more engaging and interactive. By 2005, all schools had been provided with at least one multimedia lab, networked and Internet ready, and an interactive whiteboard (Dhamotharan & Aminatol Norilah Haji Abdullah, 2006). Pre- and in-service courses support the use of ICT in schools.

Of the 12 teachers who referred to the workshops supporting the use of ICT in primary schools, nine made specific reference to the impact of this innovation. Six were unreservedly enthusiastic. Initial problems, such as a lack of experts and expertise and overworked and insecure teachers, were described. However: "The change was good for teachers who had to learn

new IT skills" (1); "(The students) learned skills they could use in science, maths, English and Bahasa Melayu" (2); "Each class is now timetabled to use the computer room and the pupils have acquired basic computer skills. This innovation has been successful in my school" (11); and, "IT has been a great change to my teaching" (17).

Some teachers identified with the innovation: "I love computers and technology. I can type fast without looking at the key board. I used the interactive white board for picture composition" (17). This teacher's talents had been tapped; she was confident, and might even have begun to see the reform as her own. Two teachers demonstrated an awareness of the need for the reform to be implemented throughout their school.

There were black spots, though: "(The pupils) used the computer to type up their compositions. It was not possible to be creative. We had been trained to let the students do games and drawing. But they could not use the tool bar" (8); "When the IT programme was first introduced, one of the ten maths lessons was supposed to be used for computers. I was not told what to do so I continued to use it for maths" (14); "At first, teachers really did not know what to do... As time went on, sometimes teachers forgot to go to the lab when they were scheduled to do so" (3).

Nevertheless, the self-reports show the impact of this externally imposed change on the interviewees was widely felt and, in the view of a third of the teachers, the effect on teaching and learning in their classrooms was far reaching and beneficial.

- Reading and English Language Acquisition (RELA) programme
Sixteen teachers reported attending RELA workshops, and 11 discussed their impact. Three made favourable comments, two focusing on the impact on methodology: "I did focus more on interaction with students after the RELA workshops" (15); and "Before I went to the RELA workshops I taught skills separately, but after RELA I integrated the skills" (17). The third teacher saw the methodology associated with RELA as a means of hiding her uncertain control of the past tense: "I'm not good at the past tense so I don't insist on too much accuracy there... I feel more confident using the new syllabus. I don't have to spend a week teaching the past tense. I can space it out. I can teach the past tense for half an hour only and do more next week. And using stories is so much better in teaching the past tense. We used to have to fill in blanks in sentences. Now we highlight the use of the past tense in stories" (13).

Ten teachers, however, found fault with the programme. One teacher never finished the course (2). Nine did not use the recommended methodology because: it is not seen as appropriate for mixed ability classes; it is either too time-consuming or does not have enough activities to support five days of teaching and learning; it requires resources like balloons, fruit, peanut spread, bread, biscuits and Smarties, which the teacher is required to supply, perhaps for as many as 90 pupils; sharing classrooms means resources, like the reading corner, cannot be set up; the pupils find the Big

Books, and other resource materials, boring and/or irrelevant to their lives; the RELA programme does not prepare pupils for the high status Primary 6 examination; the pupils' command of English, in particular their reading skills, is no better than before the introduction of RELA.

- The introduction of new items in the Primary 6 English language examination

There have been a number of changes in the format of the Primary 6 English examination: the introduction of a picture sequence as a stimulus for narrative writing; and the inclusion of information transfer questions and questions which require knowledge of anaphoric reference in the reading comprehension. These were in place by 2001. Their introduction was supported by a number of workshops provided by the Curriculum Development Department of the Ministry of Education. Pre-service courses now support teaching towards these assessment innovations, too.

Three teachers referred to these changes and the in-service education which accompanied them. All participants found them useful. One felt the washback effect "had a positive effect on teaching and learning" as it enabled the pupils to "do better in the examination" (11), and provided teachers with a focus for change: "I had to find new materials and present them differently. I had to teach pupils what they can put in a picture composition, like dialogue for those pupils who are quite good. I worked with them all on vocabulary. These changes in format made me change my English teaching considerably" (11).

Other teachers described the workshops as "the most practical in-service training" (7) and "... helpful. I used their suggestions to teach composition" (14).

3. *Teacher imposed changes on Brunei Darussalam's primary English language classrooms and teachers' perceptions of the impact of these changes*

Seventeen of the interviewees introduced the following self imposed changes in their classrooms:

- a. Seven teachers **created a more relaxed atmosphere in the classroom** by:
 - Allowing pupils to talk more
 - Being more approachable to pupils
 - Changing the way children are corrected orally
- b. Five teachers **relied less on the set textbook**. They:
 - Moved around units of work
 - Related their teaching to the pupils' experience rather than always following the advice of the teachers' guide
 - Simplified/replaced exercises in the textbook
- c. Four teachers **differentiated the teaching and learning in their classrooms** through:
 - Working individually with slow readers
 - Grouping students according to their abilities

- Differentiating tasks and activities
 - Providing extension work
 - Organising enrichment activities
- d. Four teachers **utilised a wider range of resources** such as:
- Reading books from outside sources
 - Pictures and diagrams taken from the Internet to teach grammar
 - Foreign television programmes to develop English language skills
- e. Four teachers **introduced more interactive activities**, for example:
- Games
 - Drama
 - Project work
- f. Four teachers **improved the physical environment of the classroom** by:
- Changing the seating arrangements
 - Displaying charts, timetables, children’s work, anything colourful
- g. One teacher **improved the teaching of reading** when she:
- Introduced a commercially available phonics programme
- h. One teacher **developed pupils’ awareness of the use of English across the curriculum**, for example by:
- Using the English textbook’s unit on plants and animals in the science and geography lessons

All 17 teachers felt the self imposed changes had brought about improved teaching and learning and teacher/pupil relationships. For example:

“They loved to read. I enjoyed staying back to clear up the classroom. I felt a real sense of accomplishment. I had made some changes, even if I had not made one big change” (6).

“A Primary 1 boy, who could not read at the beginning of the year, read me a short text before I came on this course. He would read a word and look up at me for confirmation that he had read it correctly before moving to the next word. I had tears in my eyes. That’s the best moment of becoming a teacher” (5).

Discussion

1. *Teachers’ motivation for initiating change*

As would be expected, teachers are motivated by a wide variety of personal and emotional factors. Of 96 references to motivations for change, externally imposed changes were mentioned 13 times. They are one variable in the process of teachers’ decision making about the teaching and learning in their classrooms. The literature (e.g., Nias, 1985; Huberman, 1988; Hargreaves, 1998) suggests that if externally imposed change does not provide an opportunity for teachers to satisfy other personal and professional motivations it is less likely to be implemented. “... teachers may hear what is said to them but not respond to it because they are listening to other voices” (Nias, 1985, p. 117). Or, as one interviewee put it: “Teachers attend courses. Whether you implement it is up to

you. As long as knowledge has been transmitted to you, the authority has done their job. So it's back to the teacher" (12).

This statement crystallises a finding which emerged from the teachers' discussion about motivation: the majority perceive themselves to be in control of the change process. Occasionally this control may be exercised in a spirit of resistance, for example, in a determination to prove wrong a parent's negative view of her child's abilities, but it is a manifestation of the teachers' purposes.

Some teachers described these purposes in terms of a vision towards which they are working (Hammerness, 2001).

"I tried to do things my teachers did with me when I was in the secondary school I attended. I read poetry to the class. I used my lap top to let them watch Sesame Street and I ask them what they have learned. ...I want to care for the children the way I was cared for" (18).

"Small children nowadays are exposed to different things. I try to plant good morals in them. Sometimes, I worry about them when I am at home. ...I want to learn how to help them, be open to them. You think of them as your own children" (3).

"I am very interested in teaching reading. If pupils cannot read they feel inferior. Reading is the basis of educational success. ...I thought I had to do something because students who cannot read cannot work" (5).

"I believe students study better in a stress-free environment. ...I want to provide them with opportunities to interact in English. ... Pupils need to be encouraged to try. As humans, we will fail, but we must try" (7).

"I want to improve students' reading performance by going to the library and motivating them to read. Many of them just pick up a book in the library and look at the pages. They do not read. I don't want to force them to read, but I want them to want to read" (8).

"In the future, I hope teachers will be able to assess pupils using their class work and informal assessment rather than just keeping up with a timetable dictated by the examination. The pupils do not have the time to study, to catch up with everything" (13).

"Children should gain knowledge from education: they should have their say, interact with others, and talk confidently in front of an audience because they have had opportunities to interact, communicate. When they learn something from the syllabus they should gain useful knowledge for their future, for further studies" (17).

Whilst some teachers' visions are focused, others are vague and ill-defined perhaps making them difficult to achieve, for example: "I want to learn how to help them, be open to them. You think of them as your own children" (3). Some are broad, for example requiring a change in the national assessment system; others relate to a group of students so their achievement is within the teacher's control.

Some visions may be supported by the environment in which the teacher is working; attempts to realise others may encounter resistance from other teachers, and syllabus and assessment requirements such as:

“Some people don’t like noise, and if the activity is noisy you might be told you do not have good classroom management skills” (4).

“When I introduce a new idea, sometimes I’m afraid because it’s not according to the syllabus, but usually there’s a positive outcome as pupils like it and can do the work well so I presume it’s OK” (16).

“I gave the pupils who had difficulties easier writing tasks which they could do, but although these tasks suited them, they were not prepared for the examinations. I am anxious when they take examinations because if your pupils fail you are not seen as a good teacher” (5).

The tension visions may cause can be destructive. Where visions are not achieved, teachers may consider leaving the profession:

“I always try my best to make students enjoy the lesson, so the responsibility is very high. For a perfectionist like me, teaching is very stressful because I never feel I am doing the job well. I will not leave the education service but, in the future, I hope to be doing office work” (2).

“I love teaching in a way but, how can I put it into words? If I’m only teaching my students, only my students benefit. It can be frustrating. I am a strict teacher and I insist on good manners and a tidy classroom. ... But not all teachers reinforce this behaviour. ...So I’m not sure I’ll stay in teaching” (5).

However, where teachers had clear visions which they believed they could realize, where closing the gap between reality and the vision was within their control, motivation seemed to be sustained. Four of the interviewees considered other areas where they could make an impact in the classroom: spelling; supporting the less able; and more child-centred rather than exam-oriented teaching.

As teachers perceive the classroom to be within their locus of control, this is where their change efforts are concentrated.

2. *The impact of externally imposed changes on Brunei Darussalam’s primary English language classrooms*

A deliberately planned, government-driven impetus for change will be funded and will mobilise considerable resources. Thus, policy makers introducing nationwide changes may assume the impact will be wide ranging. However, the impact may not be the intended one. In the case of the Primary Schools Computer Project, the self-reports of a minority of the interviewees show evidence of subversion and denial of change, as well as resistance to it. Their statements imply that individual teachers received insufficient professional training to support the implementation of the innovation; and that this national reform may be less successful in some schools because the institutional culture does not support it.

Nevertheless, six of the interviewees saw this externally imposed change as successful. One reason for this may be that it satisfied a number of their motivational drives, for example: making the lessons more enjoyable for the children; responding to the influence of other professional educators; accepting

the practical and sensible recommendations of an expert; providing the children with a model of continuous learning; providing a better education for all children; and keeping pace with a changing world.

The responses to the ongoing implementation of the RELA programme suggested that half of those interviewed see the impact of the RELA as pervasive, but are resistant to aspects of the programme. It is not perceived as practical to implement or as in alignment with the final examinations. It does not respond to pupils' literacy needs or personal interests. Worryingly, it was also seen as a shield behind which to hide a teacher's lack of professional knowledge. The resistance of these teachers is reflected in research findings reported in a national newspaper article: "A research (sic) conducted in 2006 showed that less than 50 per cent of the English teachers in the country used the RELA teaching techniques in full". It was suggested that a lack of resources may have contributed to this situation (Za'im, 2007).

RELA has become institutionalized: it is "a taken-for-granted feature of life in a school" (Datnow, 2002, p. 224). However, it would seem that its practices, and perhaps its principles, have not been sustained over the 18 years of its use in primary schools. Apart from a reference to the introduction of methodology which is likely to make lessons more enjoyable for the children, the self-reports did not reveal a match between RELA and teachers' motivations. Resistance to it, though, may have long term implications and beneficial results (Giles, 2006). This research showed that teachers were motivated by a desire to improve what they perceived to be RELA's shortcomings. One responded by conducting some research into the use of phonics in the teaching of reading and introducing a phonics programme. Another sought help in the resources of a specialist library. Resistance has resulted in teachers' professional development.

In contrast, smaller scale, more manageable, externally imposed change related to children's success in high stakes examinations, appeared to motivate teachers to introduce changes as policy makers intended.

Perhaps because these assessment changes and their in-service support seemed small scale in comparison with the investments of teachers' time in the ICT and RELA initiatives, fewer teachers mentioned them. However, this slender evidence suggests their impact may have been wide ranging and, in the teachers' view, beneficial.

In sharp contrast to the ICT and RELA implementations, teachers saw the recommended methodological innovations as directly related to their pupils' performance in high stakes assessment; they could implement the ideas in their classrooms without the need for extra space and expensive resources; the results were seen in pupils' improved examination performance; and teachers' professional expertise rose to and met the challenge. In support of this last finding, much more extensive research (Rosenblatt, 2004) has shown that the stronger the impact of a change on teachers' work life and on students' learning and experience, the higher teachers' skill flexibility became.

The changes to the Primary 6 examination also appealed to the teachers' desire to better prepare students for examinations; to respond to syllabus and assessment change; to provide a better education for all children; and, in

helping pupils pass the examination so as to make a difference to pupils' lives.

The data, then, characterise large scale, externally imposed change as having wide ranging though often unintended consequences. Innovations may not have been implemented, or were implemented occasionally and superficially perhaps in response to change agents' visits, and often were not sustained. In other words, these changes lacked the depth, duration and breadth which the initiators intended.

If teachers are not engaged with the innovations, they will not take place as planned. Once behind the classroom door, teachers may perceive the locus of control to have shifted to them. As one interviewee said: "Admin does not make changes — teachers do. We can make their changes or pretend to. We are the great pretenders" (6).

3. *The impact of self-imposed changes on Brunei Darussalam's primary English language classrooms*

Lacking the support networks to disseminate information about them, these teacher imposed innovations are both piecemeal and of limited impact. They lack breadth.

However, some of them may have duration. Their implementation does not require expensive resources, technical support or outside expertise but does respond to a perceived need. Teachers have ownership of these changes, some of which have been sustained despite an unfavourable context. A small number of teachers evaluated their change initiatives which led to modifications being made, or to the introduction of other innovations. However, other researchers have found that once teachers working alone in classrooms have solved a perceived problem it is unlikely this solution will be significantly questioned in the long term (Day, 1997, p. 197).

It seems likely, though, that some of these self imposed changes have depth. A number of them may have affected important aspects of learning, in particular reading. The increased differentiation and interaction may have improved teaching and learning across the skill areas. Some interviewees perceived their own teaching to have improved, a view supported by Rosenblatt's research, which found teachers tended to be more skill flexible when they had a role in the change (Rosenblatt, 2004).

Though lack of success in implementing these changes may have a negative effect on teacher motivation, the descriptions in the majority of these self-reports of the impact on teachers of their own change initiatives are mirrored in Huberman's much larger research, conducted with 160 secondary-level teachers in Switzerland: "It would seem that the secondary-school teachers in our sample thrive when they are able to tinker productively inside classrooms in order to obtain the instructional and relational effects they are after" (Huberman, 1992, p. 132). This research, then, supports the suggestion that involvement in self imposed change often leads to happier teachers who are motivated to further their own professional development.

Nevertheless, for the benefits of this tinkering to have an impact beyond

the classroom in which it takes place, it may need to be informed by a broader perspective and a more comprehensive knowledge base; in other words, transformed into knowledge which can be validated and disseminated (Hargreaves, 1999). Only then will individual teacher's tinkering more consistently achieve depth and breadth.

Conclusion

This research suggests why these teachers perceive themselves to be in control of changes in teaching and learning in their classrooms. They are. All the interviewees chose to implement only what they perceived to be practical and feasible and to offer clear benefits to teachers and learners. The lack of a vision shared between policy makers and teachers meant the depth, duration and breadth of the large scale, externally imposed changes appear to have fallen short of the policy makers' intentions. However, 17 of the 18 interviewees introduced self imposed changes which reflected their own professional, personal and moral purposes. Lacking breadth, some of these innovations may have had depth and duration. For the majority of the teachers, involvement with self imposed changes brought a degree of personal and professional satisfaction.

A change initiative is only as effective as teachers allow it to be. Policy makers and implementers need to acknowledge teachers' motivations and engagements with self imposed change. It is only through building on these that the means of dissemination available to policy makers can be harnessed to contribute to changes in depth, duration and breadth.

Suggestions for further research

Five areas for further research emerge from this study. Research into the depth and duration of the impact of teacher imposed changes on teaching and learning would be of importance to all stakeholders in primary school ESL teaching in Brunei Darussalam. This should also consider whether the teachers themselves have, over time, significantly questioned their own initiatives. Secondly, successful teacher imposed changes need to be identified and transformed into credible research evidence which can be disseminated. Thirdly, an investigation into the impact of teachers' visions on the professional development of Brunei Darussalam's primary school ESL teachers will further inform policy makers' and implementers' work. In addition, a more thorough exploration of the washback effect of changes to high stakes examinations in Brunei Darussalam would be valuable. Finally, it is time to undertake a longitudinal evaluation of the implementation of the RELA programme.

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Appendix: Interview issues/questions

Where/what have you been teaching? How do you feel about it?

How did you choose to become/remain a teacher?

What do you think are the “proper duties” of a teacher?

What do you want pupils to gain from their education?

How would you describe yourself as a teacher?

Do you feel successful as a teacher?

Why did you choose to come on this course?

In what ways has your classroom teaching changed since you began teaching?

The changes you have made — why did you make them? Were they externally or self imposed?

Were you encouraged to make changes in the school?

Were you provided with sufficient support to implement the change?

Did you share, plan, observe other teachers’ work?

Did you collaborate, set up learning partnerships outside departmental boundaries?

Do you belong to a teachers’ organization?

How did you feel about the changes you were making — before, during, after?

Tell me about the impact of these changes on teachers, children, parents, colleagues.

How do you see yourself in the years to come? How do you feel about it?

Are the Current Listening Comprehension Assessments Reliable and Valid?

■ Hamid Reza Haghverdi
Khorasgan Islamic Azad University

ABSTRACT: *Listening comprehension teaching and testing is one of the most difficult and complicated activities in language pedagogy. Lack of a solid theory in these areas has made teaching and testing listening comprehension quite hard (Buck, 1992). Assessment considerations in listening have mainly followed reading comprehension and assessment with no particular credit given to testing of listening. At the same time, assessment experts claim that tests should truly manifest one's competence (Bachman, 1990). Accordingly, this study investigated whether current listening comprehension tests correctly reflect subjects' competence. It also examined the construct validity of the three listening comprehension tests; namely, the listening part of TOEFL, Dictation and Dictation-Translation. For this purpose, a comprehensive analysis of listening comprehension was undertaken. At the same time, the three listening comprehension test types were produced and administered according to their theoretical backgrounds. These three tests were administered to seventy-four Iranian university students who were majoring in English. Various statistical operations such as correlation, reliability estimates and t-test were performed on the data. The computations revealed significant differences among the tests. To account for these differences, the self-report data which the students were supposed to fill in were examined. The survey indicated that test methods had a sizable effect, and factors like memory, concentration, speed, vocabulary, chance, reading trait, and topic were reported to have a significant role in the process of test taking. Hence, the construct validity of these tests is questioned. The washback validity of these tests is also questioned as the source(s) of the errors the students make cannot be detected.*

Introduction

It is widely recognised that listening is an active skill, or rather, a cluster of various sub-skills, which are both learnable and teachable. Listening is regarded as an essential element of foreign language proficiency, and as such plays an important role in foreign language programs. Rost (1990, 1994) and Ur (1984) agree that in order for learners to benefit from practising listening, it is necessary to develop this skill in them in a direct and systematic way. Recent methodologies for the teaching of listening (Brown & Yule, 1983; Ur, 1984;

Anderson & Lynch, 1988; Rost, 1990; Brown, 1991) point out that listening develops through exposing learners to listen to texts and by getting them to perform tasks specially designed to promote the development of certain sub-skills.

Richards (1983) proposes that the following are the micro skills involved in understanding what someone says to us. The listener has to:

- retain chunks of language in short term memory.
- discriminate among the distinctive sounds in the language.
- recognize stress and rhythm patterns, tone patterns and intonation contours.
- recognize reduced forms of words.
- distinguish word boundaries.
- recognize typical word order patterns.
- recognize vocabulary.
- detect key words, such as those identifying topics and ideas.
- guess meaning from context.
- recognize grammatical word classes.
- recognize basic syntactic patterns.
- recognize cohesive devices.
- detect sentence constituents, such as subject, verb, object, prepositions and the like.

It has become evident now that listening is a cluster of sub-skills. Having this in mind, three different listening comprehension tests will be examined to see how valid they are in their claim to test listening comprehension. A review of the literature on listening suggests that there is no generally accepted theory of listening comprehension (Buck, 1990). This lack of knowledge on how listening works suggests that there is an urgent need for research into the listening process and the best ways of testing it.

Testing is a form of measurement. As we test listening comprehension, we would like to determine to what degree these abilities are present in the testee. Tests of language abilities may be inaccurate or unreliable in the sense that repeated measures may give different results. These measures may also be invalid in the sense that other abilities are mixed in the tests. Hence, our primary concern is whether an individual's test performance can be interpreted as an indication of his competence or ability to use language appropriately and effectively in non-test contexts (Bachman, 1990). The key measurement problem is determining the extent to which the sample of language we obtain from a test adequately characterizes the overall potential language use of the individual. Accordingly, considerations from measurement theory would help us design language tests that would be more reliable and valid.

Along the same lines of argument and with respect to the fact that listening comprehension includes sub-skills, three different listening comprehension test types are examined to see how well they fulfill their promise in testing listening comprehension.

Method

Participants

The subjects who participated in the experiments were 83 Iranian university students at Khorasgan Islamic Azad. This research was conducted during their sixth term of study at Khorasgan University. They were randomly sampled from a total of 145 students to take part in the experiments.

Testing instruments

The testing instruments in this study consisted of the listening part of TOEFL, dictation and dictation translation. The Oxford Placement Test was also used to examine the validity of the listening part of the TOEFL. The TOEFL test in general is used for the determination of academic qualifications in the English language. In this study, only the listening part was used. It was an original version. It was correlated and hence validated with Oxford Placement Test. It served three purposes. First, it was used as a standard and valid test, according to Oller (1979), as a criterion to establish the validity of other test types. Second, as a discrete-point test, it was based on a general proficiency theory. And third, it was used as a kind of listening comprehension testing method. The listening part of the TOEFL used in this study consisted of 50 items in three sections. In the first section of the test, a short sentence was heard only once.

The subjects were asked to read the four choices in their test book and decide which was the closest in meaning to the sentence they had read. In the second section, short conversations between two speakers were heard. At the end of each conversation, a third person asked a question about what was said only once. Then the subjects read the four possible answers in the test book and decided which one was the best answer to the question that had been heard. In the third section of the test, short talks and conversations were heard and after each of them some questions were asked. The subjects received one point for each correct answer; hence, the total score for this test was 50.

The dictation used in this study was taken from Voice of America (VOA) news. It was based on Oller's (1979) argumentation on pragmatic tests and validated through correlation with the listening part of TOEFL. It has been argued that the success of dictation as a pragmatic language-testing device depends mostly on the administration procedures (Oller, 1979). The subjects were instructed on how to take the dictation. Unusual names or expressions from the dictation passage were discarded. The dictation was read three times, first at normal reading pace, second, with pauses at determined points; and third, at normal reading pace again. Students did not write anything at the first reading. For the second reading, students wrote down what they had heard during each pause; words and phrases were not repeated. The third reading without pauses and at normal speed provided an opportunity for quick proofreading. The material chosen for dictation was unified. The pauses came around seven or eight words; the structure of a sentence served as a guide. This dictation had 250 words. It was scored based on the model offered by Oller (1979, p. 282). One point was allowed for each word in dictation; hence it had 250 points, which was

divided by five and the mark that the students received was at most 50. Error types included deletions, distortions, and intrusions. Spelling errors were not counted. Punctuation and capitalization did not contribute to the total score.

The text for dictation-translation was taken from VOA news. It consisted of eight sentences with 250 words. The subjects were supposed to write the meanings of the sentences they heard in their mother tongue. They received 6 to 7 points for each correct translation. The total mark they received was 50. This activity was scored on a pre-planned scale for each sentence. The scale had three levels. Those who translated the sentence in full received 6 or 7, depending on the length of the sentence. Those who did not translate the sentence received 0 and finally those who translated half of the sentence received 3 or 4 depending on the length of the sentence. It should be noted that the expected translations were meaning-based in nature, hence grammatical problems and thematic organizations were ignored. It should also be noted that the inclusion of dictation-translation task in this research was based on the primary assumption that it might be an easier activity for the subjects, since they could provide the responses in their own mother tongue.

Procedures and administration

The listening part of the TOEFL was the first test that the subjects received. The subjects were informed of the type of questions they were supposed to answer on their answer sheets. The dictation was the second test which the students received a week after the first test. Subjects were informed that they would hear the dictation three times. As for the first time, they listened attentively and wrote nothing. They were told that the dictation would be read at a conversational rate. The second time, the dictation was read with pauses. During silent periods, the subjects were allowed to write. Finally, the dictation was read again at a conversational rate for proofreading. The process for the administration of dictation-translation was the same as dictation. The only difference was that the subjects were supposed to translate the material into their mother tongue.

It should be noted that the subjects were asked to give a detailed description of the process of test taking after each test by providing an account of the strategies used and the advantages and disadvantages of each test type as far as they were concerned.

Results

The same group of subjects took part in all experiments. After obtaining the scores from the three listening comprehension tests, the following statistical computations were undertaken to determine if there was any relationship between the test scores and to respond to the research questions.

The first statistical computation to be considered was the correlation between the listening part of TOEFL and Oxford Placement Test. The reason was that since the listening part of TOEFL was used, it must be correlated with a valid and reliable test in order to determine its validity.

The correlation coefficient between the two tests, as Table 1 indicates is

Table 1: Correlation between the OPT and the Listening Part of the TOEFL

		OPT	TOEFL
OPT	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.687
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	83	83
TOEFL	Pearson Correlation	6.87	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	83	83

significant. This indicates that the listening part of TOEFL is a valid test. Reliability estimates were as follows: Dictation (Alpha = .7900) and then TOEFL (Alpha = .7590) and finally Dictation-translation (Alpha = .7089). Henning (1987) and (Jafarpour, 1995) claimed that the Cronbach's alpha yields the same results as the KR 20 method. It is obvious now that the tests enjoy a relatively high reliability.

Correlation coefficients

All correlations turned out to be significant. The highest correlation existed between dictation and dictation-translation (.725). The correlation between dictation and TOEFL and dictation-translation and TOEFL was .630 and .654 respectively. However, the common variance (r^2) or the overlap between these tests was low ($r^2 = .364$ for dictation and TOEFL, $r^2 = .395$ for dictation-translation and TOEFL, and finally $r^2 = .526$ for dictation and dictation-translation). The results indicate that dictation and dictation-translation had more in common. In order to see if there were any differences between these tests, a t-test was run.

T-test

In order to establish whether or not significant differences can be detected between the means, a t-test was used.

The results (see Table 2, 3 and 4) revealed that there are significant differences between all the three tests, implying that there are significant differences between dictation and dictation-translation, dictation and TOEFL and dictation-translation and TOEFL. Now that significant statistical differences had been found between these tests and since the t-value was much higher than t-critical, it was essential to find out the major factors that seem to account for these differences. Hence, the processes underlying test taking were analysed.

Table 2: t-test between TOEFL and Dictation (DIC)

	Mean	N	SD	SEM	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
TOEFL	20.8243	74	8.7435	1.0164	22.900	73	.000
DIC	39.6081	74	5.3707	.6243			

Table 3: t-test between TOEFL and Dictation-Translation (DIC.TRAN)

	Mean	N	SD	SEM	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
TOEFL	20.8243	74	8.7435	1.0164	6.386	73	.000
DIC.TRAN	27.0811	74	10.1290	1.1775			

Table 4: t-test between Dictation and Dictation-Translation (DIC.TRAN)

	Mean	N	SD	SEM	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
DIC	39.6081	74	5.3707	.6243	13.80873	73	.000
DIC.TRAN	27.0811	74	10.1290	1.1775			

Analysis of the processes underlying test-taking

Thus far, significant differences have been detected among the three tests, according to the t-tables. In order to investigate the sources of differences, the subjects who participated in this research were requested to first respond to the question about what factors they believed were involved in the process of test taking for each of the three listening comprehension tests. Second, they were asked to provide answers to the questions in a self-report format, based on the factors that may influence listening comprehension. The objective was to examine the construct validity of the tests.

Factors underlying TOEFL test performance

The following factors were reported by the students to be of significance in taking TOEFL test:

- **Memory:** Students reported the significant role of memory in this particular test, since they had to preserve everything they heard in their minds in order to be able to answer the questions appropriately.
- **Concentration:** Full concentration during the application of the test was reported to be indispensable, because lack of concentration, even for a short while, ended up to missing the points that the questions of the test addressed.
- **Vocabulary:** Vocabulary size was reported to be effective.
- **Speed:** the students complained that the speed of the reaction to the test and questions should be very quick, otherwise many points would be lost.
- **Chance:** Since TOEFL is a multiple-choice test, students regarded chance as an intervening factor in answering the questions, whenever they could not come to a solid decision.
- **The effect of reading skills:** The students had to read the questions and responses. As such, they claimed that this test involves reading comprehension as well.
- **The effect of key words:** The students reported that misunderstanding of a key word in a key sentence automatically resulted in a loss of several points in the listening passage and as a result they were not able to respond to the questions appropriately.

- Pronunciation: Familiarity with the type of pronunciation used by the reader of the passage plays quite a significant role for some students.
- Precise: Since the students had to take care of a lot of factors while responding to the questions, they believed that being exact during the process of examination helped them a lot.
- Topics of listening passages: The students reported that lack of interest in the content of the listening passages discouraged their listening.
- The role of listening skills: Listening attentively to comprehend is a skill different from just hearing. Students reported that this kind of listening comprehension testing requires a period of training in listening skills in general because this kind of test needs full comprehension of listening materials. This is not a common activity in the daily activities of the real world.
- The length of the listening passages: The students reported that the passages were long for them to process.
- Students' capacity: The students reported that the bulk of test was beyond their capacity and this resulted in their general tiredness, which effectively lowered their performances.

Factors underlying dictation-translation test performance

The following factors were reported by the students to be of significance in taking dictation-translation:

- Differences in the structure of the two languages: Since Farsi and English are structurally two different languages, the students confronted difficulties concerning translation from one language into another.
- The role of grammar: The students asserted that knowing the grammar of the two languages was quite indispensable in rendering the ideas from one language into another. The reason is that in some cases like 'developed countries' vs. 'developing countries' only the grammatical morphemes make that great difference.
- Word meaning: Knowing the exact meaning of the words in the context that they have occurred determined its translation.
- Equivalent forms: Knowing the equivalent words in Farsi was necessary for the students to write the translation meaningfully.
- Writing exercise in Farsi: The students claimed that this test was both a test of listening ability and writing in Farsi.
- Thinking and making decisions in two languages: The students believed that they needed to think and make decisions in two languages.
- Concentration: The students reported that this test required a lot of concentration, since they had to think in two languages at the same time.

Factors affecting dictation test performance

The following factors were reported by the students to be of significance in taking dictation:

- Writing skills: The students admitted that writing skills in English was effective in taking dictation as a listening comprehension test.

Table 5: The comparison of factors relating performances on TOEFL, dictation and dictation-translation

Items	TOEFL	Dictation-translation	Dictation
1. Memory effects	.93	.87	.69
2. Concentration	.87	.76	.54
3. Vocabulary	.95	.98	.94
4. Speed	.89	.68	.73
5. Chance	.65	.42	.23
6. Pronunciation	.87	.78	.91
7. Comprehension	.74	.85	.32
8. Difficulty level	.96	.82	.43
9. Topic choice	.76	.81	.63
10. Listening role	.89	.78	.75
11. Reading role	.76	.36	.23
12. Writing role	.12	.89	.93
13. Grammar	.56	.78	.65
14. Background	.84	.72	.58

- **Memory:** Memory was also considered important by the students because they had to keep what they heard in their short-term memory and then write everything down.
- **Spelling:** The students considered spelling of operational significance because the way they spelt the words indicated whether they have grasped them or not.
- **Pronunciation:** Knowing the correct pronunciation of words was reported by the students to play an important role in understanding individual words.

The results obtained from the self report data are shown in Table 5.

Conclusions

The observations made so far clearly question the construct validity of the three listening comprehension tests in this study. The effect of test method thus presents two problems: 1) a dilemma in choosing the type of error we want to minimize and 2) ambiguity in the inferences we can make from test scores (Bachman, 1990). If method factors vary from test to test in an uncontrolled manner, they are sources of random error.

Examining the sub-skills of listening comprehension provided by Richards (1983), we may conclude that the TOEFL deals with them in general and does not reveal the subjects' strengths or weaknesses in any of them. This means that when the students make mistakes in responding to test items we cannot specifically attribute the mistake to any of these sub-skills. In other words, we cannot distinguish the source of error. Thus, such a test, or any other teacher-made test that would resemble TOEFL, fails to determine the source of error for

us. This observation undermines the value of such tests for teaching purposes. After all, language teachers are interested in knowing the sources of error for their remedial programs. Moreover, it is not clear how the TOEFL deals with these listening comprehension sub-skills specifically—and accordingly, how can the construct validity of such a test be determined? It is hard to decide what it indeed measures.

Dictation-translation also suffers from the problems associated with TOEFL. The reason is that many factors work together to produce the results of such a test. Factors such as dealing with the two structures of the two languages at the same time, the intervention of oral translation skill, knowing the exact meaning of the words in both languages and their proper equivalents, thinking in two languages at the same time, and full concentration lead us to the conclusion that the test is not uni-dimensional and measures many things simultaneously. Hence, the construct validity of this test is questionable as it is not clear what it exactly measures with regards to the sub-skills in listening comprehension.

Implications of the findings

The first implication of the findings of this research is that qualitative analysis should accompany quantitative analysis in research, especially if we are dealing with validity considerations. In fact, the results of both would complete the study. Dealing with quantitative analysis alone could be misleading. We can consider three broad classes of statistical pitfalls. The first involves sources of bias. These are conditions or circumstances which affect the external validity of statistical results. The second category is errors in methodology, which can lead to inaccurate or invalid results. The third concerns the interpretation of results and on how statistical results are applied (or misapplied) to real world issues.

The second implication of the finding of this research is concerned with washback validity. The concept of washback presupposes a belief in the notion that tests are prominent determiners of classroom practices and events. Accordingly, the term itself is neutral in that the influence of a test may be either positive or negative in nature. That is, a poor test yields negative washback, while a good test will have effects perceived as positive. Since a test influences learning and teaching and their depth, it can deliberately be designed to secure practices in both activities. The present research indicates that the three listening comprehension testing methods under study deal with listening comprehension as a whole. They do not practically and specifically tap the sub-skills of listening comprehension. This can lead to the neglect of the learning and teaching of these sub-skills, which are quite necessary in the development of listening comprehension. It seems that the sub-skills of listening comprehension are all equally important in the formation of a successful listening activity. The reason is that failure in any of these skills can impair the total comprehension of material. Thus, we should design listening comprehension tests that clearly manifest the strength and weaknesses of the students in any of these sub-skills. The listening comprehension tests in this study cannot take care of this important issue and as a result when a subject makes a mistake in responding

to an item we cannot determine the source of error. But if we design tests that would specifically deal with discrimination among the distinctive sounds in the language, stress and rhythm patterns, word boundaries, typical word order patterns, identifying topic and ideas, guess meaning from context, grammatical word classes, cohesive devices and sentence constituents, we would be in a better condition to clarify students' strengths and weaknesses. Remedial programs can then be designed to compensate for their shortcomings.

The third implication of the findings of this research is with regard to the problems concerned with multiple-choice testing for listening comprehension, particularly when it involves the reading trait in the determination of listening ability. The listening part of TOEFL requires reading ability too in order to respond to the items that appear on the questionnaire. Any kind of misunderstanding concerning the questions brings forth a reduction of score, which is not necessarily the result of listening comprehension problems.

It is finally hoped that this research would pave the way for further and deeper explorations of the issues at hand to arrive at a better understanding of the nature of listening comprehension and the best ways of testing it.

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A Case Study of an Adult Refugee Learning English in Ireland

■ Lorna Carson
Trinity College Dublin

ABSTRACT: *Ireland has only recently become a country of immigration and asylum. Provision of English language training is a priority both for refugees and for the host community. There has been very little research in Ireland on language provision for refugees. Wider studies of learning suggest that outcomes are enhanced by a classroom environment which fosters autonomous and self-determined behaviour. This paper presents the case of one individual from Moldova and examines his experience as a language learner particularly in terms of “relatedness”. The case study analyses his profile as an adult who struggled with his roles as refugee and student, but who continued to apply himself to the task of learning English and demonstrated increased motivation and progress. Data was collected by multiple techniques, including participant observation, audio interviews with students and teachers, closed- and open-format attitudinal questionnaires, and archival data from school records. The findings of the study suggest that the patterns of goal-setting observed contribute to some increased intrinsic motivation, and the development of internalized extrinsic motivation congruent with learner needs.*

Introduction

In this paper, I present a case study of an adult refugee learning English in Ireland. This case study is drawn from a wider ethnographic study (Carson, 2006) of 13 learners at Integrate Ireland Language and Training, the official provider of English as a Second Language classes for refugees in Ireland. Ireland has only recently become a country of immigration and asylum. For many years, Ireland’s airports and ferry terminals were packed with Irish citizens leaving to find work abroad. The “Celtic Tiger”, an extended and unprecedented period of economic growth, contributed to a reversal of this trend, and in the early 1990s, rates of emigration fell for the first time below those of immigration. This economic boom brought a large number of asylum-seekers to Ireland, as well as many other types of new arrivals including returnees and migrants from within the European Union, and beyond. The Irish government has therefore had to create immigration and integration policies and infrastructures in a limited period of time (Torode, 2001).

¹ The opinions expressed in this paper are entirely the author’s, and do not necessarily represent the views of Integrate Ireland Language and Training, its directors, managers, teachers or students.

The issues I would like to discuss in this paper are situated within the field of learner autonomy. In particular, I would like to focus on the contributions of Self-Determination Theory to autonomy and motivation in adult learners. Self-Determination Theory is in fact a group of theories. I will draw on one particular sub-theory, the notion of “relatedness”. I will also discuss the use of the European Language Portfolio as a learning tool which promotes autonomous learning and the creation of connections between the classroom and the everyday lives of language students.

Self-Determination Theory

The two principal proponents of Self-Determination Theory are Edward Deci and Richard Ryan. They argue that researchers have been asking the wrong questions about motivation. We ask, for example, “how can people motivate others”, rather than, “how can people create the conditions within which others will motivate themselves?” (Deci, 1995, p. 10). Self-Determination Theory is a general theory of motivation and personality which focuses on the extent to which human behaviour is autonomous or controlled, that is, whether it is self-determined or imposed by external forces. Self-Determination Theory assumes that individuals are actors with innate tendencies to seek out challenges and integrate new experiences into their sense of self. The social environment is therefore of vital importance in either encouraging individuals to act in a self-determined manner, or in thwarting their natural tendency to control their own psychological growth. When individuals act in accordance with their own will, they act autonomously. However, external factors have a controlling influence on individual behaviour. It is the operation of will, “the capacity to choose behaviours based on inner desires and perceptions” (Deci, 1980, p. 5) that is the basis of self-determination.

Self-Determination Theory is based on the hypothesis that humans have three inherent psychological needs: autonomy, competence and relatedness. Satisfying these three needs is a prerequisite for promoting self-determined behaviour. Deci describes this kind of behaviour as self-governing. The autonomous and self-determined individual acts freely and volitionally in accordance with him/herself. In this model, autonomy is the opposite of control. “When autonomous, people are fully willing to do what they are doing, and they embrace the activity with a sense of interest and commitment” (Deci, 1995, p. 2). The second fundamental need is for competence, the need to feel effective in one’s environment. Deci asserts that feelings of competence result when individuals take on, and in their opinion, meet optimal challenges. Feeling competent depends on our ability to see linkages between our behaviour and its outcomes. The third innate need, and the focus of this paper, is relatedness. People do not develop in isolation but in interaction with a social world where they need to relate to each other. Deci argues that people need to integrate a sense of self and the world around them in order to feel truly themselves. For the purpose of this case study, I will focus on the idea of relatedness and examine how it can shed light on classroom experiences, and contribute to optimum learning conditions and attitudes.

Adults and autonomy

Interest in autonomy in language learning developed from the field of adult education. From the 1970s, the Council of Europe called for a new approach to adult language education by providing opportunities for adults to develop abilities which would enable them to become more active and responsible citizens. Lifelong learning and self-directed learning were investigated in an effort to help adults master a set of broad skills, and to experience freedom and control in their lives (Benson, 2001). This development occurred against a backdrop of social change in the 1970s, and the growing realization that training adults for narrow applications would not be sufficient for the new demands of society. Holec's report to the Council of Europe in 1981 on autonomy in language learning discussed progress as no longer a correlate of material success, but also "in terms of an improvement in the 'quality of life' [...] based on the development of a respect for the individual in society" (1981, p. 1).

The emphasis on autonomy is not without controversy. Rogers (2003) points out that many adults do not want autonomy in education; they prefer the dominant construct of student in need of guidance, "they construct studenthood and adulthood differently and frequently at odds with each other. They prefer to place greater emphasis on the student element as traditionally interpreted" (ibid.). However, autonomy is still the dominant goal for, and approach to, adult education: "[t]he fundamental requirement is that the adult must take, and must be allowed to take, responsibility for his or her own learning" (Illeris, 2002, p. 20).

Adult refugees learning English in Ireland

Statistics from the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner in Ireland (ORAC, 2006) show only 39 requests for asylum in the early nineties, but a dramatic increase occurred in subsequent years. In 1996 there were 1,179 asylum applications, and in 2002 this had increased to 11,634 applications. Numbers have since decreased; there were 4,265 applications in 2004, and 4,323 in 2005. Table 1 (Irish Refugee Council, 2006) indicates the top countries of origin of individuals awarded refugee status, by number of applications (at first instance and at appeal), in 2004.

Refugee status grants people rights and entitlements similar to those of Irish citizens. Amongst other entitlements, they are able to work or start their own business, apply for housing, social welfare and travel documents,

Table 1: Origin of refugees in Ireland, 2004

Top countries of origin of refugees in 2004

1. Somalia	6. Zimbabwe	11. D. R. Congo
2. Iraq	7. Nigeria	12. Albania
3. Sudan	8. Afghanistan	13. Moldova
4. China	9. Ukraine	14. Kosovo
5. Iran	10. Russia	

avail of vocational training and English language classes. Being a refugee is a difficult and complex life situation (Torode, 2001; Fong, 2004). Refugees come to Ireland from a changing mosaic of countries in turmoil and upheaval. The asylum process is long and complicated, marked by “fear and uncertainty, frustration and distress” (Torode, 2001, p. 61). Once registered as a refugee, a whole new range of issues is encountered as people try to find their feet in an alien society.

Refugees, like other minority populations on the fringes of society, are vulnerable to loneliness, anxiety and depression (Fong, 2004). Without sufficient proficiency in English, some refugees may never access employment or anything more than minimum wage jobs, and become victims of the disadvantages which accompany poverty, such as low self-esteem, loss of dignity, mental and physical health problems. This vicious circle leads to a culture of dependency and prevents refugees participating in processes of Irish society. Refugees, unlike some other minority groups, are individuals who may not have left their homes by choice and have taken the risk of seeking new life elsewhere (Summerfield, 2002). The psychological and emotional effects of this disruption mean they may not have positive attitudes to the host community. Some may be relieved to settle in Ireland and look forward to founding a new life here; others may be angry that they had to leave their country and look forward to returning there at the first possible opportunity.

Although there are a number of different methods and approaches to language instruction, it is difficult to see how anything other than a learner-centred approach to language learning would be appropriate for adult refugees. Past language provision in Ireland for refugees has included mainstream English as a Foreign Language classes alongside European visiting students, ill suited to the needs of immigrants, especially refugees. Language instruction for Vietnamese Programme refugees in past decades was severely lacking and inappropriate (Maguire, 2004), provided by special educators trained in teaching the deaf. The Irish government has had to play “catch-up” in the field of English language provision, given the rapid changes in the country’s demography.

Refugees’ experience of language instruction is likely to be mixed, ranging from those who will have already learned English in a formal setting to those who will have picked it up naturalistically during their asylum process. Some refugees in Ireland are highly trained professionals in their home country; others may not have completed primary education and may be semi-literate. Some may have experience of strict, rote learning; some may never have encountered female teachers; some may come with negative experiences of school.

The body of learner autonomy research suggests that the best approach to language learning for refugees will lie with the learners: their perceived needs, their reasons for learning English, their interests and ambitions. In the case of adult refugees from a wide range of different cultural and educational backgrounds, taking learners’ own needs and goals into account appears to be the only satisfactory means of determining their knowledge base as they enter the learning process, and ensuring effective learning occurs out of their existing knowledge.

Learner autonomy and the European language portfolio

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) was designed, among other things, to promote learner autonomy in the language classroom (Council of Europe, 2004). It is a learning tool which can be adapted to different groups of students and target languages. Briefly, the Portfolio contains three sections: (i) a Language Passport which enables learners to record their achievements and proficiency in the different languages which make up their linguistic repertory, including formal qualifications, extended periods of L2 use, and a self-assessment of proficiency for each language; (ii) a Language Biography is used for goal-setting and ongoing self-assessment, and is designed to help the learner to fix goals, plan learning activities and reflect on the learning experience; and (iii) a Language Dossier, where the owner's work is stored, thus functioning as a "showcase" for elements of learning which they feel best represent their abilities and skills in the target language. These three parts are contained in a folder which passes into the ownership of the learner.

Integrate Ireland Language and Training² (IILT) is the government-designated body responsible for co-ordinating English as a Second Language provision for adult refugees in Ireland. Adult learners of different nationalities with refugee status or with permission to remain in the country are entitled to attend English classes at one of IILT's centres throughout Ireland. Students attending General English classes enrol for a full-time course of twenty contact hours per week over a term of four months.

In 2004, 529 learners were enrolled in General English classes. Of these, 59% were male and 41% female. Learners attending classes run by IILT tend to reflect the top countries of origin of refugees described in Table 1.

An integral part of IILT's approach to English as a Second Language provision for refugees is the use of the European Language Portfolio in all classes and for all proficiency levels, encouraging students to take responsibility for their individual learning. IILT aims to help learners become autonomous, and teachers systematically encourage students to assume responsibility for the content and the modalities of the course, as well as encouraging ongoing self-evaluation and reflection on the learning process. Using the Milestone version of the ELP, learners are assisted in developing individual learning agendas which correspond to their personal needs, and are introduced to the notion of goal-setting in the classroom.

The Milestone project (Milestone ELP, 2006) has developed versions of the European Language Portfolio for adult migrants. It is the result of collaboration between partners from five different European countries, seeking to develop autonomous learning in migrants learning the language of their host community. Milestone ELPs have been developed in English, German, Dutch, Swedish and Finnish. Milestone ELPs have the same tripartite structure as all other ELPs.

However, there are some differences derived from the needs of its specific learner group. The Milestone Language Biography is divided into two sections. The first relates to the owner's previous language learning and intercultural

² www.iilt.ie

experiences, and the relationship between the learner's previous life in their country of origin, and their new life in the host country (Milestone ELP, 2006). The self-assessment grid common to all ELPs asks learners to assess their proficiency in all the languages they know; a simplified self-assessment grid is also included for learners with low proficiency. The first section of the Biography includes an assessment of "Past, Present and Future", comparing activities, interests and hobbies of the learner in their home country and in the new host country, as well as questions about the learner's experience of speaking the language of the host community since their arrival. The second part of the Language Biography contains checklists of "Can do" statements describing tasks in the target language, as well as some specific components tailored to the needs of adult immigrants, asking learners about their expectations, degrees of cultural awareness and learning strategies.

Ethnographic research project at Integrate Ireland Language and Training

This case study is drawn from a wider study of thirteen refugees learning English (Carson, 2006). Fieldwork was conducted by the author from May 2003 to April 2004 at IILT's headquarters in Dublin city. Multiple methods of data collection techniques were employed, including participant observation, audio interviews, attitudinal questionnaires and archival research. I was involved in overt participant observation as a language assistant in two classrooms for twelve months, preceded by a pilot period of three months when I visited several other classrooms. I attended class one day per week, and kept a detailed logbook of notes. Four semi-structured audio interviews of one-hour duration were recorded during my fieldwork, as well as a twenty-item closed-format attitudinal questionnaire administered four times throughout the year, and one open-format attitudinal questionnaire. Supplementary data sources were teacher interviews, student records and class documents. Interviews were transcribed using a simplified version of the Jefferson (1992) Conversation Analysis conventions. I employed a narrative approach in the discussion of my findings, and produced an account of motivational highs and lows centred on four specific points in time throughout the year. These were discussed in terms of autonomy, competence and relatedness, and the goals or linkages set by learners between the classroom and their everyday life in Ireland. In my discussion below, I indicate in brackets the source of the data cited. These are reproduced in full in the appendix in my original study.

Nicolae Yenko

Nicolae Yenko³, from Moldova, was born in 1973. At the time of fieldwork, he was married with one child. He had worked in construction in his home country, and also in France before arriving in Ireland. He had completed secondary education, and three years of technical college at third level in engineering/

³ Names have been changed to protect identity.

construction studies. He spoke French and Russian as well as Romanian. Nicolae started English classes at IILT on 3 September 2003, “reserved and a bit moody” (end-of-term confidential administrative report). He was sent a warning letter about his attendance in the first week of term.⁴ His attitudes to Ireland seemed somewhat distant. In December 2003, we discovered during class discussion that he had been stopped by immigration police at Dublin airport. According to his account, he had been stopped in a rather forcible manner, although he recounted his experience lightly. Nicolae was hostile to authoritarian regimes, and commented often how he appreciated the ‘democracy’ of the classroom: how he liked being able to make choices, for example, choosing what the class would work on next.

I was aware he had spent time in France earlier in his life, and my first impression was that he wanted to settle in Ireland and stop moving around: “Has travelled quite a bit, keen to stay in Ireland now with his family” (logbook, 22 October 2003). However, by the time of our audio interview, it appeared that Nicolae was not sure whether he wanted to remain in Ireland:

Maybe I want to, you know, change jobs. I don’t know. I don’t like too much this country, you know, the cold. I prefer to live in France. Very good country, for me, because I know the language. (11 November 2003).

Language is one of the most serious obstacles for refugees who arrive in Ireland (Collins, 2002). A Home Office report in the UK (Home Office, 1999) states that language is the key to integration, and that knowledge of English is closely related to an immigrant’s ability to obtain full economic participation in the host community (Casciani, 2003). Gaining an adequate mastery of English is therefore one of the most important steps they can take to take control of their lives, to integrate into their new community, and to access training and employment (Torode, 2001).

Although Nicolae’s first week seemed inauspicious, by October he appeared much more comfortable and in better spirits. On 22 October, I wrote that initially, he appeared “reticent” and “hostile”, but that he “opened up incredibly over the last few weeks” (logbook). I also noted that he had some issues with authority. I commented that he had “no problem speaking out now [...] now that he understands how the system works”.

Studies of adult education report a number of barriers related to a return to formal instruction (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). These barriers include dispositional or psycho-social obstacles. Adults who return to formal education often feel they have regressed “back to school”, and experience feelings of insecurity and inferiority when they return to the classroom and are faced with a teacher who is academically “superior” to them, and may also be much younger than them. Adults may have very rigid ideas about how to learn, their own intelligence, and the best way to learn (Brindley, 1984). Adults too may exhibit a “tired of school” attitude often seen in younger learners, especially if they have had negative experiences of formal education in the past. They may also expect a

⁴ Students at IILT were required to maintain their attendance and punctuality at satisfactory levels on a weekly basis, maintaining at least 85% attendance rates.

school-like atmosphere, including a teacher teaching from the front of the class, whilst learners learn sitting in rows taking notes (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). They may find it difficult to work with adults who have a different construct of their student role. A range of expectations engendered by this constructed role of student may lead some adults to expect an experience similar to their previous schooling, others may expect an entirely different situation with a less formal approach. Although the student role is often constructed out of some elements of childhood, adults bring their own maturity, wider horizons and knowledge of self to the process of language learning (*ibid.*), and so often make their own decisions about how, in their own way, to make the most of an educational system.

How did the “system” in this particular English language classroom work? The four-hour daily class usually started with a plenary session, followed by a short discussion led by the teacher asking for news. Students usually worked in small groups which varied in size and make-up according to the task, or in pairs, moving the furniture around to suit. Students often chose their own group, but sometimes the teacher changed the composition, placing more proficient learners alongside less proficient learners, or breaking up groups of students with a common L1. Nicolae frequently worked in a pair with Ivan, from Romania. Although they both spoke Romanian, they formed a positive collaboration with Nicolae’s confidence and risk-taking counter-acting Ivan’s reticence and lack of confidence. Class ended with a final plenary session, answering any remaining questions, and closed with a few minutes of small-talk about plans for that evening or topics in the news. The first task of each new term was to draw up a class contract. Students formulated and negotiated collectively a set of rules, guidelines and objectives for the term ahead. This was an introduction to the idea of goal-setting which formed the basis of all curriculum planning, methodology and assessment at IILT. Learners were introduced to the cycle of goal-setting through use of their ELP to choose course content and determine their own progress.

Despite demonstrating some negative behavioural patterns at the beginning of term, Nicolae seemed to appreciate the democracy of the classroom and the opportunity to make choices. Although he seemed a little uncomfortable (including physical discomfort, as a large man sitting at a small wooden desk!), he appeared to have the study skills and drive to acquire quickly a working knowledge of English. As the term progressed, Nicolae began to relax and engage with the class. His teacher wrote that he “got into the mood and started joining in more”. By November, in his audio interview, he thought he had made some progress, “in some new words, now I speak a great deal”. His teacher believed that he had the potential to work quickly through the proficiency levels at IILT:

I thought six months in the system and out there working. I would have thought at the beginning, ok, he’s a linguist, he speaks what five languages, he just needs a bit of orientation, or a bit of a breathing space as he sorts out his other stuff, and he’ll be out of here in six months. (Teacher interview)

He appeared to be equipped to learn English, and outwardly gave the

impression of a motivated student: “he just seems... he’s highly motivated, he came in, he seemed to be halfway on the road already”.

Although Nicolae participated in the goal-setting activities in class and used his ELP, he had no defined personal goals at the start of his time at IILT beyond simply learning English. When I asked him about his plans after IILT, he replied, “I don’t know, I can’t now, I don’t know the future” and “For now I don’t think about the future”. He did not believe that he would ever speak English fluently. English was only part of his linguistic profile; a Moldovan speaker of Romanian, he also spoke fluent Russian and French. An “English-only” rule was enforced in the classroom, but during breacktime and lunchtime, students used their L1 or other shared languages to chat with each other. Nicolae said he was not completely committed to learning English well:

NICOLAE: Yes, I want, for me, I want to learn, uh, 80%

ROSE⁵: 100%!
(laughter)

NICOLAE: No, because 100%. Because I don’t speak Romanian 100%. Some words I don’t understand in Romanian. Is my mother language and I don’t understand. In this school, I speak Russian, you know, and at home I speak Romanian [...]. For me, nobody speak very good Russian 100%. Romanian, some words, Alina⁶ speak I ask Alina, you know, about bad words, because you know, I don’t (pratique) this. I don’t think I will speak English 100% in Ireland. Maybe my my children will speak, no me.

Yet he also thought that in a year’s time, his English would have greatly improved: “I think in one year times, will be very good for me, many more English, good” and “for me I want to learning very good. If I want, *si je peux*”. But Nicolae argued that speaking just enough English to cope was sufficient, and that the safety net of Social Welfare would catch anyone who was unemployed. In our interview in November, his attitudes to learning English were mixed, and he gave the impression that he was attending class by default:

don’t like, coming to school, for learning. For learning. If you don’t want to stay in home and can’t no work, then is good.

He did not like learning English, but acknowledged that it was important for anyone living in Ireland:

NICOLAE: don’t like English because it is hard, you know, but is very important for the (.) this is first language in the world, very important. If you come, living here, what’s the word?

LORNA: obligatory?

NICOLAE: yeah obligatory

Nicolae did not seem to enjoy life in Ireland nor did he seem to want to integrate into Irish society, “for some people, Irish people is difficult, for me is very difficult”. He had no firm plans either to complete his language study or

⁵ Female student from the Democratic Republic of Congo who participated in the same audio interview as Nicolae.

⁶ Female classmate from Romania.

to remain in Ireland. Nicolae seemed to be learning English because he had no choice, he had not found a job and he preferred to attend class than remain at home. His motivation may have been hampered by his attitudes to living in Ireland. He knew that learning the language of the host community was important, yet his sense of relatedness, or integration, was marred by a dislike for Ireland (or perhaps a preference for France).

Nicolae displayed these issues in his conversation during our audio interview. Rose argued extensively with him during the interview. She stated that simply taking classes because they were available, or even learning just enough English to cope, was unacceptable to her. Part of her debate with Nicolae was about a hypothetical person who did not speak English and was employed as a driver. She pointed out that the low income jobs favoured by immigrants that do not require much English were not adequate if the worker falls sick, "maybe he lose his leg". Nicolae's response was that he would be taken care of by Social Welfare, "if he lose his leg, it's for social pay!" Rose was adamant that this was the wrong attitude, and that even in the case of an accident, the worker would still have to know some English to be able to cope: "If today he go to hospital [...] he have to speak [...] and this and this and that, and my wife, you know?" Later in the interview, conversation again turned to the importance of speaking the language of the host country in order to integrate fully. Nicolae continued to contest this point. Rose stressed, "If you are driver you have to speak English, because you are a driver here. Maybe you have some problem, if Garda⁷ came, you can say, I'm driver!"

The reaction of the majority population of Irish nationals has an effect on the minority population of refugees. Much of the Irish population is largely uninformed about the reality of immigration to Ireland. Their responses have been "ambiguous, complex and varied" (Torode, 2001, p. 59). Some may be suspicious and resentful of the arrival of what appear to be large numbers of outsiders and foreigners, especially those of different race and ethnicity. There has been considerable media coverage of the new arrivals to Ireland, some of it negative (Mac Éinrí, 2001). There is confusion about the terms used: e.g., refugees, asylum seekers, economic immigrants and illegal immigrants (Torode, 2001). There have been fears that refugees are welfare-dependent and exploiting Irish society. These fears are sometimes substantiated. However, refugees easily feel excluded and isolated (Collins, 2002), and may perceive discrimination against themselves, even if this is not the case, which can in turn generate feelings of resentment towards the host community (Little, 2000). This process of marginalization means refugees may not feel they belong in Ireland, leading to closed ethnic groups and ghettoization in Irish cities (Torode, 2001). Ireland has been an overwhelmingly Roman Catholic monocultural state with very few minorities and foreign-born residents of non-Irish extraction.

I have argued that Nicolae seemed to demonstrate a lack of relatedness in his attitudes to living in Ireland. He also gave the impression that he was not studying English by choice, rather his choice was affected by external factors

⁷ Garda is an abbreviation for *An Garda Síochána*, Ireland's National Police Force.

beyond his control. He had no specific goals for the future. However, the move to the next class level in January 2004 seemed to bring about some changes in Nicolae's attitudes to learning English and attending school. His September–December 2003 report from his teacher read: "Well done Nicolae, you have come a long way. Thank you for everything and best of luck". The confidential administrative report included: "spoken [...] really improved but needs to concentrate on writing".

Nicolae made a good first impression on his new teacher in January. The teacher wrote in a report to me in January 2004:

Nicolae's attitude to his English I imagine is similar to his attitude to anything he does: he wants to do a good job. He enjoys making connections between his existing linguistic knowledge and new information encountered. Nicolae will work at an activity until it is finished or until he loses interest in it.

In November, Nicolae had told me he had no idea what he would do in the future. However, his responses in the open-format attitudinal questionnaire administered in April 2004 showed that he had since developed some specific, personal goals: "For me personally, I want to learn two targets, about construction and new words from Driving Theory Test to get Driver Licence". Nicolae moved from a position in which he could not articulate any goals to a position in which he was able to articulate two personal, specific and achievable goals. When asked whether he was learning what he wanted to learn, Nicolae replied, "Not everything I want to learn, for example, I want to learn more about construction". Although feeling in control of his learning, "I can choose what target I want to learn", Nicolae pointed out that choosing learning content as a group could be difficult, "Is not easy to choose targets because many students have a different idea about this" (open questionnaire). However, as Nicolae himself recognised, when learners choose their own goals, and achieve them they feel competent and in charge: "I make [myself] more motivated when I want to learn what I want" (open questionnaire). His final confidential administrative report read:

Nicolae has strong reading, comprehension and communication skills. He completes class tasks with determination and will always clarify anything he doesn't understand. He is an intelligent student and a pleasure to have in class. Small grammatical errors hamper written and spoken production, as I think communication is perceived as more important than accuracy.

Conclusion

Self-determined behaviour is discernible in individuals. Optimum functioning, a sense of well-being, curiosity and vitality are all characteristics of self-determined behaviour. In the context of education, Self-Determination Theory is concerned with self-endorsed behaviour, promoting interest in learning and confidence in ability (Deci, Vallerand et al., 1991; Vallerand, Fortier et al., 1997), which in turn leads to enhanced learning outcomes (Miserandino, 1996; Black & Deci, 2000). The classroom setting does not always encourage such behaviour, and some classrooms may hinder learners from assuming charge of the learning

process. Ryan & Deci (2000) argue that when their natural propensity for self-determination is frustrated, individuals become passive, alienated and even hostile.

The systematic use of the ELP as the central tool in the classroom at IILT created an environment where students were encouraged to participate in decisions which affected the “what, when, how and why” of learning. There were constant discussions and votes about what to do next. There was scope for both minor and major changes of direction and content if the students asked. Nicolae developed two specific targets (learning vocabulary about construction and for the Driving Theory Test), whereas a few months previously he had no specific goals beyond just learning English. Nicolae moved from exhibiting manifest boredom to demonstrating motivated and self-directed behaviour and working on personal goals. Not all students were confident or driven enough to articulate their needs; for example, at the end of the third term, Nicolae felt he still had not learned enough construction vocabulary. It was unclear whether he had specifically made this goal known to the class, or perhaps it was a goal he had only set at a relatively late stage in the term.

Relatedness is an innate psychological need within Self-Determination Theory, the need to engage with the world around us. I have argued above that this need to connect assumes particular relevance in the case of immigrant learners, where the process of feeling ‘related’ to the surrounding social milieu is markedly different from the experience of the majority of the population. Ryan & Deci argue that in different situations throughout an individual’s lifetime, “intrinsic motivation [is] more likely to flourish in contexts characterized by a sense of security and relatedness” (2000, p. 71). They also argue that this sense of relatedness is particularly important when activities hold no intrinsic interest for the individual, but rather hold extrinsic value. Extrinsically motivated activities are more likely to be successful when the surrounding community stimulates feelings of relatedness (*ibid.*, p. 73). The importance of these findings cannot be overstated in the context of immigrant learners.

Two ways of dealing with being a newcomer in Ireland were evident in this small group of students. Rose, who participated in the same audio interview as Nicolae, seemed to have a highly developed sense of relatedness with Irish society, a desire to connect. Nicolae, however, had a more negative view of Ireland, perhaps stemming from an initial hostile experience and failure to find employment. A growing sense of connection with Ireland did not manifest itself during my period of fieldwork.

Learning English is essential for adult refugees in Ireland. From the perspective of the host community, equipping refugees with language skills means they are more likely to access training and employment, to become less welfare-dependent, to participate in their local community and add their voice to an increasingly multicultural chorus, thus combating racism and contributing to democratic processes. From the perspective of the refugee, learning English is a liberating process of making one’s voice heard. Individuals move from passive recipients to active producers, and take charge of their own lives. Some of these steps are simple: passing a driving test, using a bank card, being able

to complain about poor services. Other steps, such as putting down roots in a new community, establishing a credit history, participating fully in a child's education, are more demanding. Learning English may have an important psychological impact, redressing exclusion, alienation and depression; speaking English helps refugees take control of their lives.

Nicolae Yenko experienced many of the problems encountered by adult learners in the classroom. Although he made good progress in English, and set more concrete goals for his life in Dublin, during the period of fieldwork he did not appear to make the kind of connections with the world around him that contribute to the self-determined behaviour and optimum functioning described by Deci and his collaborators. Many refugees fall into a dependency trap, and do not achieve the kind of autonomy they would have experienced in the past in their home countries. Of course, the shortcomings of a project of this kind include the limited length of investigations—even months of participant observation merely provide a snapshot of one person's story. Further work remains to be done in the area of refugees, relatedness and autonomy.

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Motivation as a Stepping Stone to Learner Autonomy

■ Mikiko Kawano
Charles Darwin University

ABSTRACT: *There is broad agreement that to the extent learners accept responsibility for their own learning, they can learn more efficiently and effectively. To this end, teachers should prepare supportive environments for learner autonomy. Such environments can be discussed from various points of view, for example, in terms of the cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social dimensions of learning and how they interact with one another. In terms of the affective dimension, motivation is one of the important elements to promote learner autonomy. The present paper describes action research designed to positively affect learner motivation through the organisation and presentation of class activities in a general English class in an ELICOS (English Intensive Courses for Overseas Students) in Australia. In addition, self-motivating strategies of considerable importance to learner autonomy were also taught through class activities. These encouraged students to reflect on and make decisions about their study; as one example, students discussed suitable strategies to help an imaginary student motivate herself in circumstances similar to theirs. Although the students' reactions to the activities varied, they still revealed interesting insights on student motivation.*

Introduction

Motivation is often said to be one of the key elements in successful language learning. Being responsible for their own learning is also said to be one of the characteristics of good language learners. The current paper discusses the relation between motivation and learner autonomy based on my own students and teaching in an ESL classroom in Australia over twenty weeks in 2006 with employing an action research approach.

Motivation and autonomy

Motivation and learner autonomy are frequently discussed together. This should not be surprising as both are considered as keys to successful language learning. Several studies maintain that the autonomy supportive environment enhances learner motivation (e.g., Black & Deci, 2000; Dörnyei, 2001; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Downing, 2000; Noels, 2003; Young, 2005). In practice, therefore, language teachers must provide activities, instructions and administration to encourage students to be autonomous in various ways in class in order to promote learner motivation.

Both motivation and learner autonomy, however, are slippery terms. There are so innumerable definitions for them that it is essential to define what they are for the present paper. Following Gardner's (1997) definition, I define that motivation is made up with three components, attitude toward learning the language, effort and desire to learn the language.

As for learner autonomy, according to Little (2003), there is broad agreement that autonomous learners understand the purpose of their learning program, explicitly accept responsibility for their learning, share in the setting of learning goals, take initiatives in planning and executing learning activities, and regularly review their learning and evaluate its effectiveness (Holec, 1981; Little, 1991). What Little mentions above concerns learners' capacity and behaviours that hinge upon metacognitive skills and resource management strategies (Pintrich, 1999), which are regarded as part of self-regulated learning. Therefore, it is important for the language teacher to find ways to promote these skills and strategies in order to help learners to become autonomous.

Students and setting

I taught English in an ELICOS (English language intensive courses for overseas students) in Australia. The class in this study was a general English class where students learned English for general purposes, which ranged from every day conversation to preparation for an academic course. The duration of the study was twenty weeks, which were divided into two ten-week terms. During the two terms, the number of students was between six and nine and the number was unstable over the terms, since students in the general class were allowed to enrol on any Monday and for any duration. Most of the students discussed here studied with us for ten weeks, and three students did for twenty weeks. Most of the students were from Asian countries, and all studied full-time, namely they studied for five hours a day, five days a week. A daily lesson was divided into three sessions roughly equating to four macro skills. The student levels were diverse, from beginner to intermediate, and their ages were between eighteen to mid-thirties. The class had three different teachers, and I taught only on Monday and Thursday.

Instruments

Six instruments were used to gather the data. They were essay writing, two questionnaires (see Appendix A), a feedback form (see Appendix B), diaries, interviews and class observations (for the observation form, see Appendix C). First, students wrote an essay about why they were studying English. They also filled in an initial questionnaire to give me information about their motivational orientations and preferences for class activities. Through these two instruments, I analysed reasons why they studied English and planned initial class activities. After each lesson on Monday and Thursday, students filled out a feedback form to inform me of their opinions about the activities they had done. Also, students were interviewed weekly so that I could obtain more detailed information about their preferences and needs with respect to class activities. Students'

behaviours and attitude in class were observed mainly by me and by third parties. According to the data collected, class activities were modified, discarded or kept to suit students' needs and eventually to motivate them. Before students finished studying with us, they filled out a second questionnaire so that I could see how their motivation and motivational orientations changed over a certain period of time.

The initial data collection

The essays and the first questionnaire revealed that students' motivational orientations were mostly instrumental and extrinsic. They were studying English for practical reasons, such as for getting better job opportunities. The questionnaire told me that students were very teacher-dependant, which was not a good start from the point of view of learner autonomy. The popular activities among them were:

- Listening to the teacher talk about grammar
- Listening to the teacher's instructions and explanations
- Receiving teacher's feedback (oral/written)
- Playing language games (three students, with two others choosing this as an activity they liked the least)

The least popular activities were:

- Checking writing on your own
- Receiving classmates' feedback (oral/written)
- Listening to tapes and doing exercises.

Although I was going to promote learner autonomy in class, I could not bombard students with learner-centred activities from the beginning. The students were all adults and it is said to be difficult for the teacher to change their values. Friction can occur between students and the teacher if the teacher gives activities which s/he considers effective without paying attention to students' preferences (Bernat, 2002; Nunan, 1989). Therefore, I planned to shift the control from the teacher to students gradually. Naturally, I was aware that helping students become more autonomous would take time. As soon as the term began, I started trying to create an autonomy supportive environment.

Initial attempts to nurture learner autonomy

On Monday in the second week, we spent a whole morning for goal-setting and metacognitive skill development, which are capacities and behaviours of autonomous learners (Little, 2003). I explained my expectations of students for the term and encouraged them to decide their own personal goals for the term. As a model, I gave several examples of concrete goals, such as memorising 100 new words by the tenth week. Then, I gave an example of plans to achieve a goal, "If you remember two words everyday from Monday to Friday, you can remember ten every week, and by the tenth week you can remember 100. You can make a vocabulary book to keep record of your new words and practice them in it." In addition, I told students to keep diaries and show them to me every week. Students were required to write about what kind of study they did

at home, and how they felt about their study in the diaries. By this, I was hoping that students would reflect on and regulate their learning.

In these dedicated instructions (Reinders, 2004), by which the teacher set aside specific time in class to focus on strategies, students were given choices and control, explicit instructions, models/examples, opportunities to try out autonomous learning, and opportunities to evaluate what they would do. It turned out that the session was not as successful as I had expected, however. Only two students out of nine frequently did what they had been requested and the other students either did it a couple of times or did not do it at all.

Diaries are regarded as a self-reflective tool (Suzuki, 2004). For my students, however, they did not work well. One of the two students who continued to write about study in the diary clearly reflected on his learning, while the other mechanically made a list of what he did at home. The former student asked me meaningful questions in the diary, such as how many words he should remember to be able to communicate with people in English without any major difficulty. It is obvious that in setting up a goal with regard to vocabulary, he wanted to compare the number of words he knew and the number of words he needed to know. He also wrote as follows.

I think plan is important I have plan study at home. I study repeat a lesson last week. I have exercises book about 30 minutes. I write the sentence also I write a letter, I memorize new words. I make sentence. How I can make good sentence. If I know I make sentence well or wrong I talk to friend. He doesn't understand I make sentence wrong or mistake. I try again. I read a book. When I read a new words I have look dictionary.

He was aware of importance of planning and showed learning strategies he used. On the other hand, it was not clear the other student actually reflected on his learning when he made a list of what he had done at home. Later, I learned that he had been reflecting on his learning through interviews and essay writing, although the way he described his weekly study in his diary did not give me clear information about it.

Not every student showed development of autonomy like these students. One student said the following during the interview.

Writing diary is boring. I know you want me to write about my study, but I want to choose my own topic.

Even though he said the above, this student had written nothing about his study. After I told him that he could write anything he wanted, his diary submission was still intermittent and he wrote only a couple of sentences whenever he submitted his diary. This particular student was eager to practice writing in the beginning of the term. Why he did not practice writing by keeping diary, even after he was allowed to write about whatever he wanted to write about, was a riddle.

Another dedicated instruction we did was a discussion about how to improve speaking skills. Students talked about their problems in improving their speaking skills and exchanged advice. For example, one student lived with people who spoke the same language as hers and did not speak English at home.

Another student suggested that she set up a period during which everybody had to speak in English as a game. In this activity, students were asked to think about their speaking skills and problems, and they became aware of several strategies and their potential use to deal with the problems. Four students out of nine said this activity was good as their feedback.

I used only a couple of dedicated instructions and most of my attempts to promote learner autonomy were integrated instructions. For example, students read a brief story about an imaginary student whose situation was similar to theirs and discussed advice they would give her in groups. Below is the task they were given.

Alice is a 24 years old student. She is from China and studying English as a second language in Australia. Before she came to Australia, she was so excited about studying English in an English speaking country. It has been three weeks since she arrived in Australia. Now she feels a bit bored. Even in class, she does not feel like studying. She wants to improve her English. She is happy about her class. However, she has been lazy for a while.

Q1. *Do you feel like Alice? If yes, when?*

Q2. *What kind of advice would you give to Alice?*

This activity went well in that students were all actively involved in a discussion where they compared themselves and the fictitious student. Students reflected on their learning and they tried to find a solution for Alice from their experience. It was difficult for me to listen to all the students talking as it was group work and there were three groups in class, but students seemed to be struggling to come up with any effective advice. The discussion resulted in two pieces of advice: "Change the class", and "Ask the teacher to give her more homework". These were slightly disappointing for me because I had expected advice which showed their metacognitive skills and control over affective domain. Their feedback forms showed that all of them thought that this activity was good, but it appeared that they did not notice the strategies I wanted them to deal with, namely metacognitive and resource management strategies.

Another example of the integrated instruction was a grammar session on Thursday morning where students acted as a teacher and taught grammar rules in turns. In the first week, we discussed and chose the grammar rules which students wanted to learn. Then we decided who would teach those grammar rules in which week. While students were acting as teachers, I sat at the back of the classroom and hardly opened my mouth. Thus, the class was as if it had run without me, which was extremely student-centred. Almost always students did a magnificent presentation and some students said that preparing for their presentations and explaining the rule was useful to understand grammar well. On the other hand, some students expressed their discomfort with this session. They thought the sessions were not effective for learning grammar because my explanation was clearer and easier to understand than students' presentations. In the same way as the discussion activity described in the previous paragraph, some students did not notice that I wanted them to take control and have initiative over their study in addition to acquiring grammar rules through this practice.

Throughout the term, students took a review test every week so that they could evaluate their learning strategies. The results were rather poor most of the time. In the sixth week, after students took a vocabulary review test and its result was far worse than my expectation, I explained how important it was to enrich their vocabulary. Then, one student said that he thought he had memorised new words in class, but could not recall later. So, I asked what he had to do to remember new words better. His answer did not satisfy me. He said, "If you give me a lot of tests, I'll remember." Disappointed, I explicitly said that students had to do revision at home to memorise new words more efficiently. I did not want to give students time for revision in class. If I had done it, surely students would have remembered more words. However, what I was aiming at was an autonomy supportive environment in which students could regulate their own learning. I wanted them to establish their study habits on their own. All I could do was explain how important revision was and encourage them to do it.

Even after this episode, their results in the review test remained poor. At this stage, I started to be dubious of my way of promoting learner autonomy, which was simply not working. What I had tried up to that point was as follows:

<i>What was done in class</i>	<i>Relation to learner autonomy</i>
<i>At class discussion, students and I talked about goal-setting and I encouraged them to decide their personal goals and make plans to achieve them. I also showed some example goals and plans.</i>	<i>Goal-setting and planning are capacities and behaviours of the autonomous learner.</i>
<i>I suggested that students decide their own weekly homework and keep record of it in their diary.</i>	<i>I gave students choices and control over their study outside of their classroom.</i>
<i>Students took a review test every week.</i>	<i>This was an opportunity for them to see if their learning strategies were effective.</i>
<i>For some activities, students were required to reflect on their own learning. For example, students were asked to compare themselves with an imaginary student in a reading task.</i>	<i>This was an opportunity for them to understand themselves as a learner.</i>
<i>Students were required to be responsible for a grammar session on Thursday morning.</i>	<i>Accepting responsibility is part of learner autonomy.</i>
<i>Twice a week, students filled out the feedback form in which they made comments on class activities and I modified them accordingly.</i>	<i>This was to create more motivating learner-centred lessons.</i>
<i>I interviewed all students weekly to ask them for their opinions about the lessons and their study in general.</i>	<i>This was an opportunity for the teacher to elicit more detailed students' opinions to create learner-centred lessons.</i>

In spite of what I had been trying, most of my students did not start to show the development of learner autonomy. Furthermore, motivation among the majority of them did not seem to be particularly enhanced since they did not start making an effort outside of class, which I desperately wanted them to do.

I started to see the difference between those who appeared to be or tried to be regulating their learning and those who did not. Although Black & Deci (2000, p. 754) state as follows, all of my students did not react to my autonomy supportive attitude in the same way.

...for students low in initial relative autonomy, perceived instructor autonomy support related to the better course performance: and for all students, perceived instructor autonomy support related to positive adjustment and to the students' becoming more autonomous over the semester, which in turn related to better performance.

The two students mentioned earlier in this section who frequently mentioned their study in diaries seemed to know what their weaknesses were and how to work on them. When they had commenced their study, they were not particularly independent. For example, one of them seemed not to know what to do in order to improve his English and asked me to give him homework in his diary as below:

I feel like studying English very hard. I want extra homework. I'd like your comments. I'll receive and do it. Thank you.

From what he said during the interview in the fifth week, it is clear that his attitude toward studying English became more active and independent.

At home, I read books, try to remember vocab. I find questions every week, so I ask Mikiko.

Hence, it can be said that those two students responded to an autonomy supportive environment positively and developed strategies to be more autonomous. On the other hand, the other students did not appear to know what to do outside of the classroom to improve their language skills.

When I interviewed students and asked them what they did at home, some of their answers puzzled me. There were two things I was bewildered with. One was what they did at home was not the areas of the top priority for them. The other was that they were not able to assess their current levels. For example, some students were weak in vocabulary and should have spent extra time on vocabulary building, but they did listening activities such as watching TV at home instead. Also, one student claimed that he read newspapers, but I thought that reading newspaper was too difficult for his level unless he read it for vocabulary. In order to improve his reading skills, he would have benefited far more by reading the textbook we used in class or books for ESL learners from our library.

Analysis—Why my attempts did not work

The contrast between these two groups of students made me think deeply about

my teaching. I had been aware of importance of explicit instructions, showing models, giving students opportunities to try strategies to learn more effectively, and give them opportunities to evaluate the strategies in order to help students nurture autonomy (Reinders, 2004). I also tried to understand students' needs and preferences through interviews, diaries and feedback forms, and gave them choice and control over their study.

However, if students did not understand themselves as a learner, they would not see the point I was trying to make. Metacognitive knowledge, one of the components of metacognitive skills, enables learners to assess their skill levels (Pintrich, 1999). When they set up their goals, they can gauge how far they have to go from their current level if they properly understand themselves as learners. In the process of achieving goals, they need to monitor and regulate their learning, in addition to controlling their feelings and environment if necessary. Since the motivational orientations of my students were instrumental and extrinsic, it was unlikely that they enjoyed studying English for its own sake. Also, it is unlikely that they enjoy a long process of language learning without having specific instrumental goals and achieving them, in ways similar to many students in an EFL setting (Wu, 2004; Noonan, 2005).

In the second week, students and I had talked about goals. As well as encouraging them to decide their own goals, I explained my expectations of them. If they did not decide their own goals, they could use my expectations as goals. So, goals were set. Even so, if students did not see the gap between their goals and their skill levels at that stage, they would not feel an urge to narrow the gap. That was probably why they did not make adequate effort outside class. In the same vein, if they did not understand themselves as learners, it was not surprising that they chose ineffective tasks for their own study at home.

Providing autonomy supportive environment was not enough for my students to develop learner autonomy and to get motivated. They had to be given guidance for metacognitive strategy development as a prerequisite for learner autonomy.

Behaviour modification

It is said that metacognitive skills can probably only be taught over extended periods of time (Reinders, 2004). I taught only two days a week and I could not spare much time for metacognitive skill development, especially during the second term, because the students were to take an admission test to a more advanced course after the term, and I understood that they were keen on engaging in only language activities. Consequently, I turned to a behaviour modification approach. Behaviour modification is a kind of interventions to lead students to self-regulated learning (Boekaerts & Corno, 2005). It allows students to practice skills and makes it likely that students will perform the skills in the future. There are three steps in the intervention.

1. Identifying the problem
2. Designing a way to change the behaviour
3. Applying the reinforcement consistently to change the behaviour.

What I wanted my students to do was to make a constant effort efficiently while using appropriate material outside of their class. I designed the following procedure:

- a. I gave a reading task which I chose as homework every Thursday. This task contained a vocabulary exercise, comprehension questions and a discussion question.
- b. Students needed to complete the task in order to be able to discuss the question in class one week later, namely the following Thursday.
- c. I explained the purpose of the reading homework, which was to improve their reading and speaking skills, so that students could see a cause-effect relation.

As I gave the homework one week before a discussion, students would have to organise their time so that they could finish reading it and exercise by the next Thursday. In other words, they had an opportunity to plan, monitor their study and regulate their time and environment, all of which are categorised as metacognitive skills.

I did not find this method ideal because I originally wanted students to establish their study routine on their own accord. So, I wanted to give students choices to a certain degree even though I was taking initiative in this approach. In class and during interviews, I asked them if the material was too easy or difficult, if they liked the topic of the material and so forth. As the first homework, I chose a reading task about illegal migrants. I found this material on the website for English learners at the elementary level. In their feedback forms all of the students said that they wanted to do this activity, namely a discussion based on reading homework, again because it was important. Also, during the interview in the next day they made positive comments, such as they liked/needed it. They seemed happy with the material I chose and wanted to continue this practice until the ninth week, although some of them admitted that the homework was not easy for them.

We had a break from the homework in the fifth week because students looked so exhausted from the challenging homework that they needed time to recover. I also chose lighter topics than our usual current affairs at times. For example, students were required to select the best candidate for a scholarship in the class discussion after they had read the descriptions of each candidate as homework. The majority of the students gave me positive comments in the feedback forms and interviews every week and consequently we kept using this approach for eight weeks.

Due to this approach, most of the students started studying more and the discussion became more vibrant than before as students acquired the knowledge and vocabulary about the topic which enabled them to talk about it easily. Their improvement in reading skills was evident when they took a reading test before the term finished. Also, after the terms, four students sat for the admission test to the advanced course and passed it.

My concern about me taking initiative was not a problem for my students. They highly valued this practice and gave me positive feedback. One of them said, "I wanted to study at home, but didn't know what to do. So, I got lazy

and did nothing after all." Behaviour modification was successful in that it had students create study habits. If there had been more time, the prompt (homework) could have faded and eventually they might have learned to be autonomous learners.

As can be seen above, by and large my aim for this approach was achieved. Students made plans for a week to complete the homework, managed their time, and controlled their feelings. I was, however, left with one problem. I could not deal with the struggle of one student properly. In spite of Mather & Goldstein's (2001) claim, "Behaviour modification techniques never fail", they worked negatively on this student. Probably, if I had used a different kind of reinforcement, namely artificial reinforcement (Vockell, n.d.) such as extrinsic reward or more explicit punishment such as subtracting some scores from his overall assessment, he might have studied more at home. However, this is simply against development in autonomy.

Unsolved issues

This section discusses why the behaviour modification approach was not successful for this particular student. This student could never finish the reading homework. In the second week of the behaviour modification approach, he expressed strong dislike for the lesson in his feedback form. Obviously, he was extremely uncomfortable in class. Even so I did not want to stop the approach as (1) the other students were coping and (2) I believed he needed to establish his study habits. The reason why he studied English was that he wanted to study at a university in Australia. In order to reach that level, he definitely had to study outside the classroom unless he did not mind spending a couple of years for only studying English. However, he had a part-time job and worked six days a week. Once during the interview he clearly said, "I have to work. Now work is the first and study is the second." Not surprisingly, he hardly ever studied at home. Still, he did not lower his long-term goal, studying at a university.

The initial questionnaire showed that this student had positive attitude towards learning English; he made adequate effort and he had moderate desire to learn English. During the interviews over twenty weeks, he expressed strong desire to study but admitted that he did not make effort outside the class owing to heavy workload as a kitchen hand. The final questionnaire showed that his attitude had become less positive, his effort decreased, yet his desire increased. In the second section of the questionnaire, he stated that he did not enjoy studying English because it was boring. The behaviour modification approach clearly influenced his motivation negatively while the other students benefited from it.

One of the differences between this student and the others was the degree of development of metacognitive skills. His lack of the skills was behind his behaviours which sometimes puzzled me. He did not appear to understand himself as a learner. His assessment of his language skills was far from accurate. For example, he wanted to write his autobiography in English and publish it. Even though his writing skill level was not even intermediate yet, he believed

that he could do it. He did not understand what he should do to improve his English. Whenever he had spare time, he painted pictures instead of studying English because he wanted to sell them. Also, he innocently told me that he used computer translation software to do his writing homework. He did not realise that using the software blindly was not beneficial for writing skills. He also could not control his time and effort. He skipped my class to do his homework for another class.

Another difference was that his reinforcement to study English did not relate to his own effort, and was rather passive. During one interview session he said that he felt good or happy when I explained grammar rules and he understood them, whereas other students said that they felt happy when they managed to communicate with people either in or outside class, or when they did homework without many mistakes.

Lastly, he was performance-orientated and relative-performance focused (Ames, 1992; Pintrich, 1999), whereas other students were mastery-orientated. For example, he did not like taking a review test, and when we had a review test he compared himself with other students and often felt bad. Also, he was not interested in the feedback I gave after a listening test, while most of the students said the feedback session was useful to improve their listening. For him the test score itself was more important than how to improve listening skills.

For the above three reasons, this particular student could not start making more effort. He was simply not ready for it yet. He might have been motivated to learn English at least initially, but he was not motivated to learn metacognitive strategies for his language learning. His case shows how complex and multifaceted language learning is.

Limitations

There are several possible pitfalls to be noted in this study. First of all, twenty weeks may not be long enough for adult learners to develop autonomy. Also, most of the students were from Asian countries and their previous learning experience did not encourage them to be autonomous. Furthermore, I did not radically change our curriculum, namely I did not always set aside specific time to focus on learner autonomy. Rather, I used integrated instructions, therefore, not all students were able to learn or even notice what I intended to teach them.

Conclusion

Affective variables greatly influence learning (Gardner, 2001) and learners' environment has an enormous impact on their feelings (Stribling, 2003; Li, 2004). Therefore, what I found out in my students may not be true of other circumstances. Still, this study was significant and informative for me since I learned many things about autonomous learning and how to nurture it in my own class.

Many previous studies maintain that an autonomy supportive environment motivates students (for a recent summary on this issue see Benson, 2006 p. 29).

This was true of some of my students who were aware of their weaknesses and were keen on working on them, because the environment allowed them to make their choices and to take control over their learning, and they were able to focus on what they needed to do. For students who were not aware of their weaknesses, that is, for those who did not have well-developed metacognitive knowledge even though they were willing to make more effort to learn the language, behaviour modification was of use. Students needed scaffolding in order to make extra effort, such as appropriate level of homework and regular and consistent tasks and feedback. Time permitting, the scaffolding could have faded gradually until students learned to become autonomous learners.

Skills as autonomous learners definitely increased motivation to learn the language among my students. With well-developed metacognitive knowledge, learners can assess their skill levels and see the gap between their goals and their current level (Pintrich, 1999). That promotes their desire to study and encourages them to use other metacognitive skills such as planning, monitoring and regulating for language learning. Consequently, learners make more effort.

Behaviour modification failed on one student in this study. This can mean that if students have unrealistic goals, do not accurately assess their current skills, do not see a cause-effect relation (in this context the cause is effort and effect is improvement in language skills) and pay more attention to performance than mastery, then they are not ready for a behaviour modification approach. Especially in the case of adult learners, trying to change their perceptions on their learning is a delicate issue (Bernat, 2002). What I should have done to have all the students benefit from a behaviour modification approach is still unclear. What students need as preparation for behaviour modification should be investigated as a future research question.

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Appendix A: The Initial Questionnaire

Part A. Question: How much do you agree with the statements below? Please circle the number.

	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
• I want to spend more time learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
• I study English to talk with more and different people.	1	2	3	4	5
• I really have no desire to learn English.	1	2	3	4	5
• I really enjoy learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
• Learning English is really useful.	1	2	3	4	5
• I hate English.	1	2	3	4	5
• I like doing homework.	1	2	3	4	5
• Learning English is a waste of time.	1	2	3	4	5
• I speak English at home.	1	2	3	4	5
• I don't try to understand the more difficult English.	1	2	3	4	5
• I study English to get a good job.	1	2	3	4	5
• I study English at home everyday.	1	2	3	4	5
• I don't pay attention to the feedback from my teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
☺ Feedback means comments about your English from your teacher.					

Part B. What are your preferred ways of learning English?

How much do you like each activity in class? Circle the number which is the closest to your opinion.

	dislike very much	dislike	no opinion	like	like very much
Reading					
1. reading texts silently in class and do exercises	1	2	3	4	5
2. reading texts aloud in class	1	2	3	4	5
Writing					
3. writing short passages (less than one page)	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking					
4. talking in pairs (2 people)	1	2	3	4	5
5. talking in groups (more than 2 people)	1	2	3	4	5
6. giving oral presentation by yourself	1	2	3	4	5
7. whole-class discussions	1	2	3	4	5
Listening					
8. listening to teacher's instructions and explanations	1	2	3	4	5
9. listening to classmates giving oral presentations	1	2	3	4	5
10. listening to tapes and doing exercises	1	2	3	4	5
Feedback					
11. teacher giving feedback (oral/written)	1	2	3	4	5
12. classmates giving feedback (oral/written)	1	2	3	4	5
13. checking writing on your own.	1	2	3	4	5

	dislike very much	dislike	no opinion	like	like very much
Grammar					
14. doing grammatical exercises	1	2	3	4	5
15. listening to teacher talk about grammar	1	2	3	4	5
16. studying grammar by yourself	1	2	3	4	5
Participation modes					
17. working by yourself	1	2	3	4	5
18. working in pairs	1	2	3	4	5
19. working in groups	1	2	3	4	5
20. working as class and following teacher	1	2	3	4	5
21. working as class without teacher	1	2	3	4	5
Others					
22. playing language games	1	2	3	4	5
23. role plays	1	2	3	4	5
24. listening to and singing English songs	1	2	3	4	5
25. using a computer to study English	1	2	3	4	5

Do you want to do any other activities? Write them here.

Part C.

From Part B, please choose at least 3 activities you **like the most**. **Write the numbers** of those activities and give the **reasons** why you **like** them. *You can write in English or your own language.*

a. Activities I like the most ☺

Number _____, reasons:

Number _____, reasons:

Number _____, reasons:

From Part B, please choose at least 3 activities you **don't like**. **Write the numbers** of those activities and give the **reasons** why you **don't like** them. *You can write in English or your own language.*

b. Activities I like the least ☹

Number _____, reasons:

Number _____, reasons:

Number _____, reasons:

Appendix C: Observation form

Grouping arrangement P/G/C/I	Skills S/L/R/W, Stages	Time Spent	Engaged	Attentive	Co-operative	Risk-taking

Managing Bigger Classes: Creating Opportunities for Independent Learning through Collaborative Peer Evaluations

■ Norhayati Mohd Ismail & Ho Poh Wai
National University of Singapore

ABSTRACT: *Many institutions of higher learning have seen student enrolments increase with limited or no corresponding increase in faculty members. This leads to bigger classes, increased marking load, and understandably concerns on the part of most, if not all, educators about the effectiveness of teaching and learning that takes place in their classrooms. How can such concerns be addressed? One effective way is to create carefully crafted opportunities for independent learning by our students. In creating such opportunities, the tasks assigned to students should result in them taking greater responsibility for their own learning. At the same time, teachers should continue to exercise strategic control to ensure not only that their role remains challenging but also and perhaps more importantly that sound pedagogy can be achieved. In this paper, one such strategy put in place to better manage bigger classes in a communication skills course will be discussed. The strategy involves the use of collaborative peer evaluations in report writing which requires students to work in project teams to evaluate another team's draft report. Based on the feedback received through the written evaluation, students independently make revisions to their draft report, without any teacher involvement. The paper will present excerpts from students' peer evaluations and the corresponding changes that result in the final reports. The data will show such desirable learning outcomes that teachers may be interested to adopt the strategy in their classrooms. Some important considerations to achieve greater success in its facilitation will also be outlined.*

Introduction

In recent years, many institutions of higher learning have seen student numbers increase with limited or no corresponding increase in faculty members. This leads to bigger classes, increased marking load, and understandably concerns on the part of some, if not most, educators about the effectiveness of the teaching and learning that takes place. Creating opportunities for independent learning in our classrooms can help us not only to better manage our bigger classes but at the same time strive towards achieving more effective classroom teaching and learning.

While there are many differing viewpoints about what constitutes independent learning, there is a general acceptance of the importance of promoting independent or autonomous learning in higher education. In writing on student autonomy, Boud (1988, p. 22) highlights that there is “no absolute standard of autonomy ... what is important is the direction of change—towards student self-reliance—not the magnitude of it”. What this means is that there are degrees of learner autonomy which “for any given task will depend on a number of variables, including level of language competence, affective factors, prior learning and experience of the task, and the task itself” (Sinclair, 2000, p. 8).

One rather frequently cited definition of autonomy is “a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action” (Little, 1991, p. 4). Whichever way we define learner autonomy, it “can really only develop if you allow more room for learner involvement” (Scharle & Szabo, 2000, p. 5). What is important is that “students take some significant responsibility for their own learning over and above responding to instruction” (Boud, 1988, p. 23).

The aim of independent learning is not normally for students to simply work on their own and become isolated and individualistic but for students to become interdependent learners, working with and helping each other (Bawden, 1988; Boud, 1988; Goldschmid & Goldschmid, 1976). Learner autonomy also “does not mean that the teacher becomes redundant, abdicating his/her control over what is transpiring in the language learning process... learner autonomy is a perennial dynamic process amenable to ‘educational interventions’” (Candy, 1991; Thonasoulas, 2000). In fact, with learners taking greater responsibility for their own learning, it is incumbent upon the teacher to assume more the challenging role of a facilitator, exercising strategic control while creating opportunities and conditions for effective learning to take place.

In this paper, learners engage in collaborative peer evaluations, through the process of which they learn to (1) become more critical, recognising the strengths of another team’s work and pointing out areas where improvements could be made; (2) apply what they have learnt through the evaluation process to independently improve their own work; (3) make decisions about accepting/rejecting the evaluations of others; and (4) collaborate with others and help others learn.

Brief course description and rationale for collaborative peer evaluations

The collaborative peer evaluation activity was implemented in a Business Communication course which is a core module offered to mainly second-year undergraduates in the Bachelor of Business Administration programme at the National University of Singapore. Like most other business communication courses, the course includes letter writing, report writing, oral presentation, meeting, interpersonal and intercultural communication skills. The student enrolment per semester used to be approximately 160 (this has increased substantially to about 330), divided into smaller tutorial groups comprising

about 18 to 20 students per group, a significant increase from 12 a few years ago. There is no mass lecture; instead any explanation of key concepts or principles is done within the tutorial groups. In recent years, a number of initiatives have been taken to create opportunities for independent learning on the course in response to the increase in class size.

This paper focuses on one of such initiatives that involves collaborative peer evaluations in report writing, a key component of the Business Communication course. In teaching this key component, the teachers' aims are to help students internalise the fundamentals of the report writing process and develop the critical skills necessary to produce convincing written reports that are characterised by a sound and an interesting discussion of data, logical conclusions and feasible recommendations. The peer evaluation activity essentially requires students to work in their project teams in evaluating another team's draft report and, based on the feedback received through the peer evaluation, to make revisions to the draft report, without any teacher involvement. Students therefore had to make independent decisions about which of their peers' comments and suggestions for improvements to take on board to improve their reports and which to ignore.

In the past, the peer evaluation activity was carried out orally in class with teacher feedback. While many students carried out the activity fairly satisfactorily, it was felt that most, if not all, looked to the teacher as an authority figure whose feedback in their view would be more 'correct' and would matter more, hence decreasing somewhat their motivation to put in more effort into the activity. As a result, teachers had to do more of the work and students ended up not learning as much as they could have. However, with several reports to review within a relatively short time period, the teacher's ability to provide a comprehensive critique of each report was necessarily limited. This situation provided the impetus for the implementation of the peer evaluation activity. It is believed that, given the right guidance, students are capable of doing a good evaluation. In addition, without any teacher involvement, the students are also more likely to take the activity more seriously. Furthermore, by asking students to carry out the evaluation of their peers' work, we also show respect for learners' opinions (Hammond & Collins, 1991, p. 189). Ultimately, allowing room for more learner responsibility and involvement promotes independent learning (Boud, 1981; Scharle & Szabo, 2000; Sinclair, McGrath, & Lamb, 2000).

Key implementation considerations

In implementing the peer evaluation activity, a number of factors need to be given due consideration to create conditions that help to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning that takes place. In the case of report writing, it is important that students be given the necessary guidance in the earlier phases of the report writing process. In this peer evaluation activity, teacher input was given to the students in the planning stage right up to analysing data, organising and outlining of the draft report, after research on the project was completed. Secondly, to guide the students in their evaluation, a form containing questions

on key aspects of the report—organisation, content (introduction, findings, conclusion, and recommendations), language and presentation of the report—was made available to them. The questions were very specific to provide students with a clear focus. They were also open-ended, not simply rating-type questions, to generate a more substantive response from the students. In their evaluations, students were asked to cite examples from specific sections of the report and also suggest improvements, where appropriate. In sum, the form was designed to ensure that the feedback received was meaningful and could be acted on.

Thirdly, in anticipation of any feelings of resentment, apprehension, and/or lack of motivation on the part of the students in completing the activity, the aims were clearly articulated so that students could understand the rationale for the activity as well as the benefits they could gain from carrying it out. To motivate the students to put in more effort into their evaluation as well as to ensure that it was of quality and would prove beneficial to their peers whose report was being evaluated, 20% of the marks given on their final report was allocated to the quality of the evaluation. A good evaluation would be one that recognises the strengths as well as weaknesses of a report, with specific suggestions for improvement.

Fourthly, the activity required students to type their comments onto the soft copy of the evaluation form. The written nature of the evaluation was intended to give students more time to organise their thoughts and put their ideas across more clearly and coherently for the benefit of their peers. In addition, in the process of doing so, the evaluators themselves were likely to achieve greater clarity in their own thinking. Both the draft reports and peer evaluations were exchanged through the email, which was cc-ed to the teacher. To provide students with easy access to the reports of all other groups and their accompanying evaluations, a change was introduced recently which required students to upload their documents onto an online 'Workbin' in the university's Integrated Virtual Learning Environment (IVLE). The 'Workbin' thus becomes a ready pool of resources comprising students' own work, ranging from not so good to very good, from which they could learn.

Finally, the evaluation was completed collaboratively as a team, providing students with an opportunity to develop team working skills and making it easier for them to bounce ideas off each other and clarify any doubts they may have about certain aspects of report writing. According to Chickering & Gamson (1987, p. 4), "Learning is enhanced when it is more like a team effort than a solo race. Good learning like good work, is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated. Working with others often increases involvement in learning. Sharing one's ideas and responding to others' reactions improves thinking and deepens understanding".

Learning outcomes

In reviewing the students' evaluations, their draft reports and the resulting final reports, the tutors were pleased to note some very positive learning outcomes, which will be discussed in terms of general and specific observations.

General observations

Generally, it was found that students were capable of doing a good evaluation, often of the same quality or even better than what the teacher could have achieved, most likely because the students as a team were in charge of evaluating only one report, not several reports. In addition, without any teacher involvement, the students were also noted to take the activity more seriously. The quality of the peer evaluations often exceeded the teacher's expectations, in their accuracy, comprehensiveness and attention to detail. With the questions as a guide to point students to specific areas to focus on, comments were kept relevant and meaningful. Students were also usually able to point out the strengths or non-problematic areas of the report as seen in Example 1 below. They were also able to highlight many of the problematic areas and suggest appropriate improvements, examples of which will be discussed later under 'Specific observations'.

Example 1: Recognition of strengths

Question(s) in Peer Evaluation Form	Are the recommendations specific? Are they feasible?
Evaluators' Comments	Yes. Recommendations were specific.... Recommendations were mostly feasible, with the area of equipping employees with the necessary product knowledge emphasizing low costs, a plus point for any organization....

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Suggestions for improvements were usually taken up by the receiving group in order to improve their final report. However, a few good suggestions were sometimes ignored. One reason for this could be that the students receiving those comments really did not think there was anything wrong with how they had written their report in relation to that particular aspect. Another reason could be that they were not sure if the comments were correct and would prefer not to make any changes, in case doing so would only make the report worse. It was interesting to note, however, that when the comments were not accurate, i.e., when suggestions were made to change something already correctly or well done, in almost all instances the group whose report was evaluated would ignore the change suggested. Example 2 shows an instance of this.

It was also interesting to note that when an area for improvement was not highlighted, in some cases, appropriate changes would be made as students

Example 2: Suggestion to make unnecessary/incorrect change ignored

Question(s) in Peer Evaluation Form	Do charts and tables effectively complement the data description? Have specific references to charts and tables been made in the commentary?
Evaluators' Comments	... Specific references were made to the charts. If possible, should try to indicate the specific question number referred to.

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learnt how certain things could be done better through evaluating another group's report or reviewing other groups' reports available in the IVLE Workbin. This is a good indication that the students are learning to become better report writers through the peer evaluation process. A point worthy to take note of is that after the peer evaluation of the draft reports, it could be seen that in all cases, the quality of the final reports would improve; never would the final reports be worse than the drafts.

Specific observations

This section highlights excerpts from students' peer evaluation forms, along with the relevant excerpts from the draft report and the revised version in the final report (where applicable). The reports were based on the report writing scenario of improving customer service in various industries in a bid to move towards achieving service excellence.

In the peer evaluation form, the student evaluators were asked to focus on the report's overall organisation first. Most of the evaluating teams were able to comment on whether a report was well-organised or poorly-organised. When a report was considered poorly-organised, the evaluators often suggested changes to the subheadings to tighten the report's overall organisation or changing the headings to more accurately capture the commentary that followed. This is illustrated in Example 3.

Next, the peer evaluation focused on the content of the report, that is, the Introduction, Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations. Firstly, the Introduction involved analysis of the report's background information, purpose statement, research methodology, scope and limitations. Where background information was unclear, suggestions were made to add specific background information to enhance the reader's understanding, as can be seen in Example 4.

Example 3: Organisation

Question(s) in Peer Evaluation Form	Does the organisation reflect the purpose of the report? Are the relationships between main and sub-headings and within sub-divisions logical?
Evaluators' Comments	Yes, the organisation generally reflects the purpose of the report. Our group suggests that under 2.1.i. Staff Attitude and Product Knowledge should be separated. There is no purpose in consolidating the two unrelated parts together.
Relevant Excerpts from Draft Report	2. Findings 2.1. Evaluation of Service Quality i. Staff Attitude and Product Knowledge ii. Waiting Time
Revised Version in Final Report/Changes Made	... 2.1 Evaluation of Service Quality 2.1.1 Staff Attitude 2.1.2 Product Knowledge 2.1.3 Waiting Time

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Example 4: Content—Introduction

Question(s) in Peer Evaluation Form	Is there adequate background information (including a brief explanation of the circumstances that have led to the writing of the report, methodology, scope and limitations) for the reader to fully understand the report?
Evaluators' Comments	Yes. The group has given detailed background information on the services industry in Singapore which leads to the purpose of writing this report. However, they should try to cover information on the retail industry which is the emphasis of the report. Methodology stated is clear and sufficient but a copy of a questionnaire attached in Appendix should be stated. Scope and limitations have been stated but the report can list the various department stores in Singapore covered.
Relevant Excerpt from Draft Report	With regards to the country's Gross Domestic Product, the Service sector's share expanded from 62% to 77% from 2005 to 2006. This increase indicates that the economy relies on this industry heavily, and further shows that the service industry is booming and will continue to do so. <i>(Information on service sector in general given)</i>
Revised Version in Final Report/Changes Made	<p>The Service sector's share of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) expanded from 62% to 77% from 2005 to 2006. Specifically, the retail industry has been growing strongly over the years and it grew from 8.2% in the first quarter to 12% in the second quarter in 2006. This increase not only indicates that retail plays a large part in the consumer lifestyle we live in today, it also indicates that the economy relies on this industry heavily, and that the retail sector is booming and will continue to do so. <i>(More emphasis given to retail)</i></p> <p>... shopping in departmental stores is a common activity for both locals and tourists, so the impression of service provided plays a role in giving the customers a fulfilling shopping experience and boosting the retail economy. <i>(added)</i></p> <p>As big departmental stores such as Isetan, C.K. Tang, Takashimaya, Seiyu, Metro, Robinsons ... are easily accessible and have a large customer base, they are a good representative ... <i>(List of departmental stores given including the rationale for their choice)</i></p> <p>... A copy of the questionnaire and its results is attached in Appendix A. <i>(Reference to questionnaire added)</i></p>

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At times, the evaluators felt that the background information was too detailed or not entirely relevant, and made suggestions to place the information in the appendix. This often resulted in a better organisation of the final report when the receiving group accepted the suggestion and made the corresponding change.

Secondly, in the Findings section, the evaluators often highlighted problems in the sound interpretation of data, the objectivity of the commentary, or the effective use of charts and tables. In Example 5, problems with objectivity of the commentary were highlighted which resulted in the corresponding change that improved the commentary.

The third part of the content section involved the Conclusions. Generally, the evaluators were able to comment on whether the concluding statements were sound or convincing, whether all problematic areas were included, and whether

Example 5: Content—Findings

Question(s) in Peer Evaluation Form	Are there any statements that read like conclusions and recommendations?
Evaluators' Comments	In section 2.2.4.2 "Compromise of Safety", it seems the writers have already come to a conclusion before even presenting their findings for that section. The writers mentioned.... This statement is neither objective nor is it supported by relevant data. Also, the writers' preconceived notions could wrongly influence the reader ...
Relevant Excerpts from Draft Report	Taxi drivers view time as their priority as the taxi fares for each ride will be their income. Hence, naturally they have the tendency to speed often and even overtake cars in order to catch with time. However, the passengers may not feel safe and secure and sense of anxiety may arise during the ride as can be seen in the Chart 4 below.
Revised Version in Final Report/Changes Made	There may be times when the passengers feel that their safety are being compromised due to bad driving skills. Chart 4 shows ... <i>(Relevant statements taken out)</i>

Report on Improving Customer Service in Taxi Industry

Example 6: Content—Conclusion

Question(s) in Peer Evaluation Form	Do the concluding statements evaluate the data in terms of the purpose statement? Have all the problematic areas been accurately identified? Does the 'Conclusions' go beyond a summary of the key findings? Have the report writers provided their own evaluation of the findings...? Are the concluding statements convincing...?
Evaluators' Comments	... Problematic areas have not been accurately identified. The statements merely describing the key findings (with the percentage) and not the problems faced. Conclusions are merely the summary of key findings. Seriousness of problems and possible negative consequences are not highlighted. All the problems are described and treated with the same weightage. Readers could not see which problems are more severe and the potential benefits derived from making some changes.

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the significance of the data was highlighted. Example 6 highlights an evaluation that was rather perceptive.

As a result of this evaluation, the receiving group made significant changes to the conclusion in the final report.

It was interesting to note that the group which carried out the above evaluation did not write a very good conclusion for their own draft report. Their draft report was evaluated by another group, and the evaluation is given in Example 7.

This example shows the unedited version of this group's entire conclusion in their draft report. They subsequently re-wrote their conclusion which was a significant improvement over the draft report's.

It can therefore be seen that students were able to identify problems in other reports even when their own conclusions were poorly-written. Subsequently, they were able to make changes which showed significant improvement. Whether they were able to do this because of their peer evaluators' comments, or as a result

Example 7: Content—Conclusion

Question(s) in Peer Evaluation Form	Do the concluding statements evaluate the data in terms of the purpose statement? Have all the problematic areas been accurately identified? Does the 'Conclusions' go beyond a summary of the key findings? Have the report writers provided their own evaluation of the findings...? Are the concluding statements convincing...?
Evaluators' Comments	No, it does not. The conclusion was not inferred from the findings section. The conclusion appears to behave like general background information instead.... The conclusions do not reflect much of their findings as they appear not to be made based on the data and rather simply mere opinions of the writer. The conclusions do not seem to really reflect the purpose of their report too.
Relevant Excerpts from Draft Report	Good service is crucial whenever and wherever customer is at stake. It is especially true for a tourist-destination and service-oriented market like Singapore. Singapore merely has people as its main resource. Ironically, Singapore's service ranking has dropped significantly over the years. Research has been conducted to evaluate the country's service performance and issues affecting the standard have been identified. By and large, service level in Singapore is still acceptable by the majority of our respondents. However, there are many room for improvements as biasness towards customers of certain race, age and gender are observed.

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of what they had learned from their evaluation of another team's report, or a combination of both factors, is hard to ascertain but the result shows that students did make significant improvements in their final reports.

The last part of the Content section focused on the Recommendations. Here, students could comment on whether the recommendations are logical, feasible or too general; whether they were linked to earlier findings and conclusions; or whether they were persuasive or not. An example of this is shown in Example 8.

After evaluating the Content, the peer evaluators were asked to focus on the language of the report. The evaluation could be very detailed and specific, as illustrated in Example 9, or general and brief, as shown in Example 10. Most evaluating teams could point out errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation, the use of transitions as well as the conciseness, clarity and coherence of a report.

It was observed that the groups that gave very detailed comments on the language generally comprised one or more team members who were very strong in language. However, even teams who were weaker in their language were able to highlight problems in language even when they were not able to specifically point out what was wrong with a particular sentence.

The final section of the peer evaluation involved the overall presentation of the report. It was noted that students were very good at evaluating the mechanics and presentation of a report, for example, the inaccurate labeling of charts and axes, the over-use of charts and other graphics, the ineffective use of fonts and sub-headings, and the lack of clarity in the presentation of the data. Example 11 highlights an evaluation on the use of style and mechanics in the presentation.

Example 8: Content—Recommendation

Question(s) in Peer Evaluation Form	Do the recommendations follow logically from the findings and conclusions? Have they been written in line with the purpose of the report? Have all problematic areas been addressed? Is there any unexpected recommendation, i.e., one made for a problematic area that was not earlier highlighted in Conclusions?
Evaluators' Comments	The recommendations followed logically from the findings and conclusions in general... However, the issue of touting and hoarding of tables were not covered in the conclusions but were brought up in the recommendations. The problem of toilets was also not covered in the conclusions....
Relevant Excerpts from Draft Report	The above details were added to the conclusion.

Report on Improving Customer Service in Hawker Centres

Example 9: Language

Question(s) in Peer Evaluation Form	Is grammar correct, and spelling and punctuation accurate? Are transitional devices used appropriately to provide coherence to the whole report? Is the writing clear, direct and easy to read? Is the writing concise? Can unnecessary words/phrases be deleted?
Evaluators' Comments	Overall, the grammar, spelling and punctuation are correct, with the exception of a few slips as follows: In section 1.2, para 2, line 2, 'became' should be changed to 'become'. In section 1.2, para 4, line 1, 'along side' should be changed to 'alongside' Transitional devices used in the various sections of the report generally provided good linkage for the reader between different points. However, for the recommendations section, the writers have brought up new points after using the word 'Finally' in the third para. This word could be replaced with 'Also' to provide more coherence and ensure a smoother flow in the recommendations section. ...

Report on Improving Customer Service in Hawker Centres

Example 10: Language

Question(s) in Peer Evaluation Form	Is grammar correct and spelling and punctuation accurate?
Evaluators' Comments	Grammar is inconsistent with mistakes in form and sentence structure. Tenses are inconsistent as well. Punctuation and spelling are accurate.

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Another example of the presentation is given in Example 12. Here, the evaluators' comments on a particular bar chart resulted in a much clearer presentation of the data, with proper labeling of the X and Y-axes and percentages shown, as seen below.

These are just some examples of the comments given by the peer evaluators. The report writers made decisions on their own whether to accept or reject their peer evaluators' comments, without input from the teacher resulting in final

Example 11: Presentation—Use of style and mechanics

Question(s) in Peer Evaluation Form	Have mechanics been used effectively to differentiate headings of different levels?
Evaluators' Comments	Yes. The group uses bold and underline for the main heading and only bold for the sub heading, although we thought the group had forgotten to do so in the Introduction heading. The headings and subheadings are also very neatly differentiated by the numbering system. Headings and subheadings are parallel.
Relevant Excerpts from Draft Report	1. Introduction ... 1.1 Purpose of Report ... 2. Customer Expectations and Evaluation ... 2.1 Product Knowledge
Revised Version in Final Report/Changes Made	Change made to the Introduction heading.

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reports of better quality. Feedback is provided by the teacher on the final reports, through which students could see how well they have fared in their report writing and at the same time how well they have made use of the comments from their peers. If there are any areas for improvements not picked up in the evaluations of the draft reports (usually not many), these will be highlighted in the teacher's feedback on the final reports.

Implications

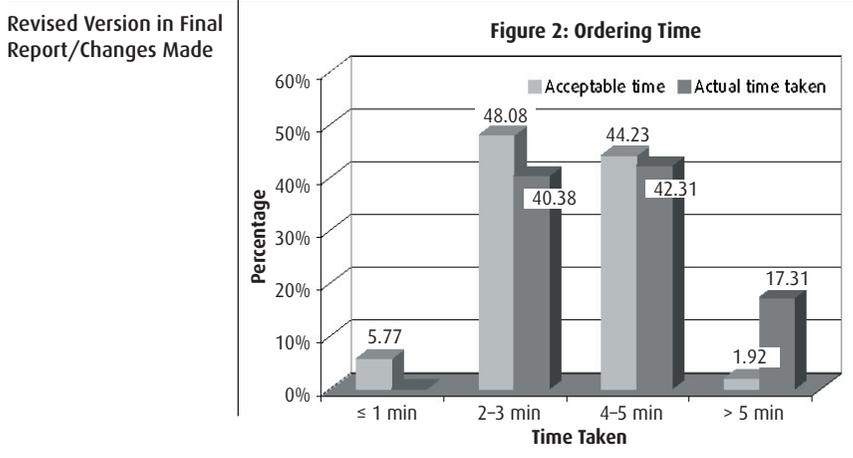
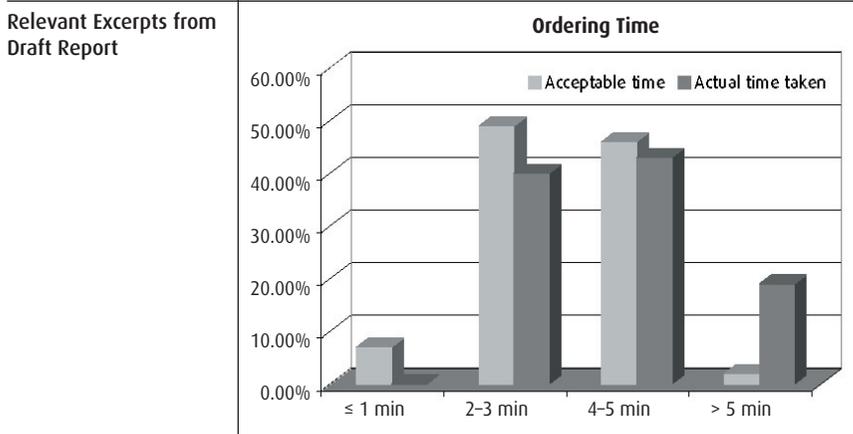
To conclude, it can be seen that in creating an opportunity for independent learning through this collaborative peer evaluation activity, learners are more actively engaged as they are given more responsibility that allows them to gain a greater sense of ownership for their own learning. In an article written on this collaborative peer evaluation activity (Ismail, Ho, & Tupas, 2005, p. 116), it was concluded that,

the specific questions addressed collectively by groups provide a space for students to independently identify and clarify problems in writing, some of which, in fact, may have been glossed over by the teacher. On the part of the teacher, the feedback process enables him or her to engage in less work, but effective teaching. The sort of student feedback we instituted in our class creates both opportunities for independent learning for students and sound pedagogical strategizing for teachers.

In creating opportunities for independent learning for our students, the challenge for us as teachers is perhaps in letting go of our students to work independently as naturally, there would be feelings of skepticisms about the students' ability to carry out certain tasks, at least initially. This becomes even more challenging when teachers then have to instill enough confidence in their students in undertaking their greater responsibility. This situation can be dealt with fairly

Example 12: Presentation—Labelling of charts

Question(s) in Peer Evaluation Form	Are charts and tables neat, attractive and easy to understand? Are they labeled appropriately?
Evaluators' Comments	They are neat; however, they are not consistent in design and should also have more labels for better understanding.... they could label each bar with the percentages for better viewing and understanding and could also label the axis to help readers understand what the figures on the axis mean ...



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effectively by teachers providing the necessary scaffolding and strategic guidance for the task to become more manageable, making students understand the rationale of what they are asked to do and helping them see the potential benefits they could gain, and providing encouragement as well as deciding on appropriate interventions, as and when needed. How much guidance, encouragement and intervention we provide will differ from one group of students to the next, depending on among other things their language competence, level of confidence, and any previous experience they have with the given task. Some teachers might

also feel a little uncomfortable with the shift from their traditional roles of transmitters of knowledge to managers and facilitators of resources. However, as can be seen, while the role of the latter is certainly more challenging, it is also a lot more rewarding in the greater effectiveness of teaching and learning that is achieved. What is important is for any opportunity for independent learning to be carefully thought through and smoothly integrated into the curriculum. Ultimately, it is hoped that such opportunities will help address the biggest challenge that many of us as educators face: how to manage our bigger classes and yet continually enhance or even maintain the effectiveness of the teaching and learning that takes place in our classrooms.

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Testing Language Understanding: Product and Process

■ Chitra Varaprasad & Leong Sau Funn
National University of Singapore

ABSTRACT: *This paper is based on the premise that in testing language, the focus can be on both students' products of understanding (their answers) and their understanding process. In testing understanding of grammatical structures, the focus generally has been on assessing students' products of understanding. Students' responses to different question types such as error correction, multiple choice, gap filling or completion exercises are generally graded. The focus of assessment is generally on students' 'performance', that is on their ability to produce language (Ellis as cited in Aebersold & Field, 1997) rather than on their 'competence'. 'Competence' indicates a conscious understanding of language rules that govern language production (Ellis as cited in Aebersold & Field, 1997) and assessing competence implies assessing students' understanding process which arises during their interaction with the assigned task. This study advocates that both products and processes of students' understanding be assessed. It will describe how an English for Academic Purposes Module (EA1101) for first year students from the Arts and Social Sciences faculty, National University of Singapore, evolved from testing students' 'products of understanding' (performance) to include testing their 'understanding process' (competence) as well. Pre- and post-test data will be shared to show the feasibility of such a procedure. Implications for testing, teaching and learning will be shared.*

Introduction

This exploratory classroom-based study arose out of an interest to find out the learning outcomes of a method used for testing grammar. This paper will describe how an English for Academic Purposes Module (EA1101), for first year students from the Arts and Social Sciences faculty, National University of Singapore, evolved from testing students' 'products of understanding' (their error correction answers) to include testing their 'understanding process' (explanation of their answer choice) as well. Pre- and post-test data will be shared to show the pedagogical implications of using such a procedure. Implications for testing, teaching and learning will be shared. Traditional terminology pertinent to the product and process approaches for testing grammar will be explained first.

Terminology and testing

A few theoretical concepts such as product/process, performance/competence, rules and reasons relevant to this study will be dealt with in this section, in the context of testing students' language understanding.

Product and process

The product/process dichotomy has been extensively used in the areas of teaching writing and reading, and also for testing reading. It is just as relevant in the areas of testing and teaching grammar. Testing students' products of understanding of grammatical structures implies mainly assessing students' written answers for being right or wrong. Generally using an answer sheet with possible answers to a testing assignment, students are mainly graded or not graded, depending on whether they have obtained the right answer. On the other hand, a process approach to testing would focus on their understanding process.

Performance and competence

Similar to the above concepts are the concepts of performance and competence borrowed from Ellis. The focus of assessment generally is on students' 'performance', that is, on their ability to produce language (Ellis as cited in Aebersold & Field, 1997) rather than on their 'competence'. 'Competence' indicates a conscious understanding of language rules that govern language production (Ellis as cited in Aebersold & Field, 1997) and assessing competence implies assessing students' understanding process which arises during their interaction with the assigned task.

Rules and reasons

One reason why assessing students has been focused on their 'products' of understanding is because the teaching of grammar has been rule-based, instead of being reason-based. As Freeman (2003, p. 49) rightly claims "the association between grammar and rules is powerful because the partnership has been fruitful". Rules capture generalizations and regularities in a language, giving learners useful guidance and a sense of security. They also enable teachers to present and teach language in a systematic and orderly manner, giving them a sense of control in the classroom.

Rules are also accuracy-based and it is this accuracy in their language production that is traditionally assessed. Mainly focusing on whether students have got their answers right or wrong in a grammar task implies looking at 'what' and 'how' they have corrected the errors in the task. Such an approach to testing is mainly "success oriented" (Ur, 1988, p. 13) or product-oriented. However, if students are asked to explain the 'reason' underlying their choice of answer, it is their understanding process that is assessed. The focus of assessment here is more 'process' or 'competence' oriented.

Testing of grammar: Product or process?

Traditionally, in testing understanding of grammatical structures, students' responses to different question types such as error correction, multiple choice, gap filling or completion exercises are generally graded. The focus of assessment, as mentioned earlier is on the 'product', 'performance' or on the application of 'rules'.

This paper is based on the premise that the focus can be on both students' products of understanding (their answers) and their understanding

process. While admitting that assessing students' performance for accuracy is understandable, this study will show that it is possible to assess their understanding process. One way to do this would be to ask students to explain their choice of answer, as this can provide insights into their reasoning process. Understanding the 'why', in addition to the 'what' and 'how', in their correction process can provide insights into their rationale for the corrections made.

More importantly, such an assessment procedure can empower students as learners, as grammar tasks will cease to be mechanical. Their cognitive processes will be activated and their understanding process further enhanced. Language exercises are no longer looked at as a mechanical, isolated activity, but as a process of inquiry. Students learn to "understand the internal logic of the language" (Larsen-Freeman, 2003, p. 51). Such an approach to assessment shows an attempt at "consciousness-raising" (Ellis, 2002, p. 169) and orientation towards "concept forming" (p. 169), facilitating the acquisition of knowledge about the underlying rules that govern grammatical structures. As can be seen, this paper advocates that assessment be both product and process oriented.

Background: Module and students

The EA1101 module is a English for Academic Purposes Module (EAP). The focus is on the teaching of reading, writing and language proficiency. The students are from the Arts and Social Sciences Faculty. These are students who were assigned to this module based on their Qualifying English Test (QET) performance. Students who obtained grade C5 and below for their General paper in the 'A' levels and all international students take this test. Using performance descriptors on a band of 6–1 (6 and 5 being the exemption bands), those with band scores of 3 and 4 are assigned to this module. It is a 12-week module with students attending two two-hour sessions per week. They get four hours of EAP sessions per week.

Since students are assigned to this module, they do not have a vested interest. They regard it as an imposition. There are a few who deem the module unnecessary. The weaker ones have very low expectations of improving, while others take on a resigned attitude. They just want to get the module out of their way. Students find it hard to manage the demands of this course with their main stream modules. It must also be added that that they do not get any credits for the module. It does not contribute to their Cumulative Average Points (CAP), as do their other content modules.

As such, attitude and motivation are a challenge. This problem is tackled by emphasizing the learning process. The relevance of this module is emphasized in terms of its usefulness in enabling them to cope with their academic reading, writing and language demands.

Testing of grammar

The module went through a few modifications in its testing approach.

Initially in the academic year 2002–2003, testing of grammar was mainly focused on product or form. Students were given an editing exercise with 20 errors. The number of errors in each paragraph was indicated. Students had to identify,

underline and correct each error. Each correct answer was accorded one mark.

Next, in the academic year of 2003–2004, testing also focused on identification of error type. Error type was included because students were not familiar with grammatical terms such as prepositions, articles or even parallel structure. So two marks were awarded; one mark for the right correction and one mark for the right type of error identified. It can be seen that testing in these academic years was still very product-based.

While keeping the product approach to testing, there was a strong need to include testing of students' understanding process because when students were asked to orally explain their corrections, their understanding seemed to lack clarity. Subsequently (2004 to the present), it came to be realized that in addition to testing students' ability to correct errors, their understanding process should be tested as well. As such, in addition to correcting their errors, students were asked to explain their choice of correction.

It was felt that including the explanation component for assessment would force students to reason out the error corrections they made. According to Ellis (2002, p. 168), getting learners to articulate or state the rule describing the grammatical structure is an attempt at consciousness-raising to help enhance students' understanding. The example below shows the gradual shift in the focus of the assessment procedure.

Example:

No American university has yet truly grasped how the revelations of science **touches** on history and art, philosophy and poetry, and it is on Summers' agenda that at least Harvard will try.

Initially (academic year 2002–03) students had to mainly correct *touches* to *touch* as indicated below.

Answer: **touch**

Subsequently (academic year 2003–04), both error correction and type of error came to be stated as:

Answer: **Touch**/Subject verb agreement

Presently, in addition to indicating the error correction as shown below

Answer: the revelations of science **touch** on....,

students provide an explanation in the form given below:

Explanation: Singular verb "**touches**" should be changed to plural verb "**touch**" to agree with plural subject.

As can be seen, the focus of testing grammar gradually evolved to include both their products and processes of understanding.

Teaching of grammar

Several approaches have been mentioned in the teaching of grammar. There has been the grammar translation method, the direct method, the audio-lingual

method, the cognitive code approach, Total Physical Response (TPR), the natural approach, Humanistic approach, the popular Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the so called eclectic approach. The last approach is based on the premise that there cannot be one single method for teaching, but that it has to respond to the changing needs of the learners. Described below are features of one such approach.

Since 2005, the focus of the grammar component of the module has been on nine grammatical items. See Appendix One for a list of these items. The teaching of grammar focused on awareness-raising tasks, followed by practice and reinforcement of the grammar items and concepts. Towards this end, students were asked to do three interactive quizzes on the IVLE (Integrated Virtual learning Environment), designed for this purpose, which focused on three grammatical items to begin with. The nine grammatical items were spread over three such quizzes over three weeks. These multiple choice quizzes were interactive and students were given feedback online on their choice of answers and explanations for the right choice were provided as well. This is in keeping with the characteristics of consciousness-raising tasks that Ellis mentions, as here there is an “attempt to isolate a few grammatical items for focused attention” (p. 168). In the given answers, students are also provided with an explicit rule which describes and explains the feature.

Simultaneously, students in pairs were asked to explore and do research on the underlying rules for each of the items and make a presentation in class. This is again in keeping with Ellis’ claim about consciousness-raising activity “where learners are expected to utilize intellectual effort to understand the targeted feature” (p. 168). The objective was also to promote and encourage independent learning and discovery. Clarification would be provided in class by the tutor wherever necessary.

Each of the quizzes was followed by three in-class editing exercises focusing on the three grammar items introduced in each of the IVLE quizzes. These exercises were done in groups and answers presented by groups, followed by class discussion and tutor input in the form of explanation of grammatical rules wherever required.

Two editing exercises based on all the nine grammar items were used for practice. It can be seen that the focus of the grammar component of the module was on a few items at a time, which was gradually extended to include all the nine items.

In addition to the above, ten exercises for practice and for paired oral presentation to further reinforce the grammatical concepts and their understanding also formed part of the assessment component. Students in pairs were assigned an editing exercise, which formed the basis for oral presentation. This was done a week before the post-test. This activity gave them an opportunity to further improve their presentation skills. It also helped reinforce some of the grammatical structures and their underlying rules as they had to share both their corrections and explanations underlying the rules. This session would be very interactive with some students identifying wrong answers and explanations and providing feedback to their peers.

Data collection

The number of participants who took part in the study was 35. A pre-test was given on the first day of the course. The test papers were collected and no feedback or comments were made regarding the test. On the eleventh week of the twelve-week module cycle, learners were given a post-test. They did not know beforehand that the test was exactly the same as the pre-test. A sample of the pre- and post-test can be found in Appendix Two.

In addition to the post-test, students were asked to fill a simple self-evaluation form. The objective of the form was to find out how they rated their progress. Their input would provide insights on how they felt about the course in general and the improvements needed.

Findings: Pre- and post-test

Improvement or increase in competence was measured both quantitatively and qualitatively. Improvements were measured in terms of differences in marks between the pre- and post-test.

Quantitative findings (1)

As can be seen in Figure 1, there was an average improvement by 5 marks per student which constitutes an average improvement of 25% of the total marks. Ellis (2002, p. 167) argues that “formal teaching of grammar has a delayed rather than instant effect”. If his argument holds, then our average improvement of 5 marks per student may be considered significant.

This is especially so if we take into account the fact that although we have a 12-week semester, there were in effect only 10 teaching weeks or 40 teaching hours. This is because the 1st week was used for the pre-test and administrative procedures and the last week was a conferencing week. Out of these 40 teaching hours, actual time spent on the grammar component in class amounted to only between 12 and 16 hours. This is because teaching of grammar is but one of three components in the module, in addition to the teaching of reading and writing strategies.

Quantitative findings (2)

Improvement was also measured by comparing the number of correct answers and explanations attained in the post-test with those attained in the pre-test. This is for all the nine categories of grammar errors. See Table 1.

This table attempts to give a more detailed picture of the learning process on how learners moved from wrong answers to correct answers but wrong explanations, and finally to correct answers and correct explanations. Progress was measured by comparing the number of correct answers and explanations provided in the pre- and post-tests for all the nine grammar items. For example, at the beginning of the course for question 1, which is a verb form error, five students managed to get the correct answer and explanation, 14 gave the correct answer but a wrong explanation and 16 gave a completely wrong answer. Comparing the progress made for this error, it can be seen that for the pre-

Figure 1: Quantitative findings: Pre- and post-tests

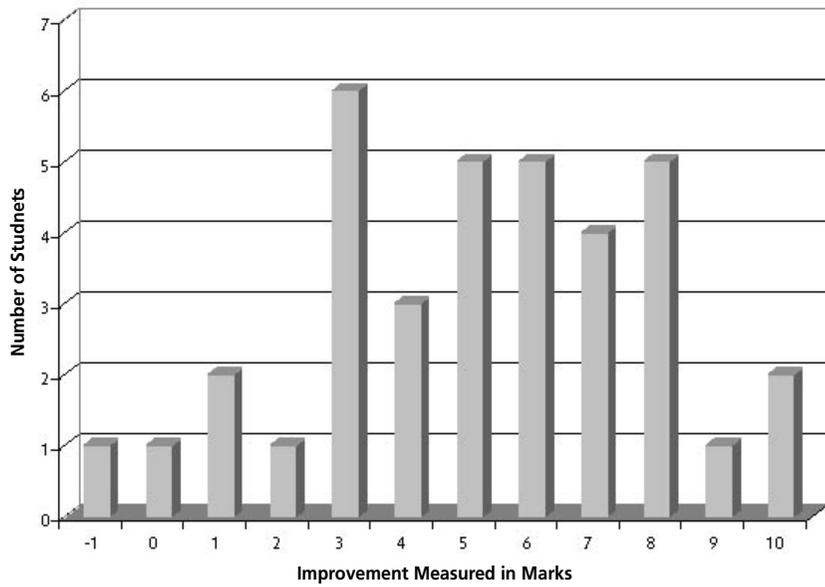


Table 1: Correct answers and explanations (N = 35)

Question No.	Error Type	Correct Answer & Correct Explanation					Correct Answer & Wrong Explanation		Wrong Answer	
		Pre-test		Post-test		% Difference	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
		No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%					
1	Verb form	5	14	26	74	60	14	4	16	5
2	Tense	24	69	32	91	22	8	1	3	2
3	Word form	0	0	5	14	14	0	4	35	26
4	Preposition	1	3	4	11	8	1	0	33	31
5	Parallelism	19	54	30	86	32	11	2	5	3
6	Noun form	0	0	13	37	37	6	3	29	19
7	Word form	4	11	6	17	6	1	2	30	27
8	Article	4	11	12	34	23	2	6	29	17
9	Pronoun	7	20	31	89	69	2	1	26	3
10	Subject verb	10	29	28	80	51	6	2	19	5

test, 14% of students managed a correct answer and explanation. For the post-test, 74% of students got the right answer and explanation. This means that an additional 60% of the sample size managed to get the right answer and explanation at the end of the course.

Looking at the 'Correct Answer and Correct Explanation Column', it can be seen that there is an overall improvement in students' ability to provide correct answers and explanations for all the nine categories of grammar errors presented in the tests. However, results seem to indicate that students found certain types of errors easier to identify, correct and explain. For example, at the end of the course, an additional 69% of the sample size stated the correct answer and explanation for the pronoun error (question 9). In contrast, for Question 8, an article error, only an additional 23% managed to give the correct answer and explanation. In addition, it was observed that students found certain questions particularly difficult. For example, in the pre-test, nobody got Question 3 (a word form error) correct. At the end of the course only five students gave the correct answer.

Similarly, only one student got Question 4 (preposition) correct in the pre-test and only four students managed the right answer at the end of the course. Are pronoun errors easier to learn to identify and correct? Why did the students find certain questions much more difficult than others? Is their difficulty confined specifically to the pre- and post-tests or did the students experience similar problems in the other grammar editing exercises as well? It is very hard to answer these questions, based on just one pre- and post-test. However, it is felt that these observations have raised questions that may have implications for teaching and testing. These questions could also form the basis for future study.

Qualitative findings: Self-evaluation exercise

As mentioned earlier, students were asked to fill a simple self-evaluation form at the end of the course. The aim was to find out how students rated their progress and attitude to the course and how they thought the course could be improved. In addition to numerical ratings for certain questions, they were also required to write their comments. In spite of the numerical ratings, we decided to categorize these findings as qualitative findings as they consisted of students' opinions and impressions.

It is interesting to note in Table 2 that the learners themselves reported a significant improvement in their standard of grammar. At the start of the course, only 23% felt they had a "good" standard of grammar; the majority of learners (71%) rated their grammar standard as "fair" and 6% felt that they had a "poor" standard of grammar.

However, at the end of the course, more than half (57%) rated their standard of grammar as "very good" and the remaining 43% felt that they now had a good standard of grammar. In addition, 54% felt that they now had a "very good" understanding of grammatical rules, while the remaining 46% rated their understanding of grammatical rules as "good". This means that towards the end of the course, all students felt they had a very good/good understanding of grammatical rules and a very good/good standard of grammar.

Questions 3, 4, 5 and 6 indicate how students felt about the independent learning they had to do in the course. From the ratings it can be seen that they were very positive about having to take on more responsibility for their own learning.

Table 2: Findings: Self-assessment exercise

Question	Rating				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. How would you rate your standard of grammar before the module?	0	0	8	25	2
2. How would you rate your standard of grammar after the module?	0	20	15	0	0
3. How would you rate the IVLE quizzes and notes provided?	0	19	16	0	0
4. Did the module provide you with sufficient practice?	5	18	9	3	0
5. Did you find the Self/Itself resources useful?	3	15	14	3	0
6. Did you find the other Internet grammar websites useful?	2	20	10	3	0
7. Do you think you have a good understanding of the different grammatical rules?	0	19	16	0	0
8. Did the explanation section in the editing exercise help to enhance your understanding of the different grammatical rules?	15	18	2	0	0

However, the most significant part of our findings is the fact that 94% of learners rated the explanation section in the grammar editing exercises as “excellent” and “very good” to indicate that the students have become very motivated learners, which is a complete change from what was perceived at the start of the course.

Student suggestions

Under suggestions for improvement given at the end of the evaluation form, students stated the following:

- Be more interactive
- Spend more time on oral presentations
- Need more grammar editing practice
- Need more grammar lessons

These statements seem to support earlier findings of a positive attitude change as students seem to be willing to reflect on their progress and needs.

Summary of findings

In summary,

- Pre- and post-test results indicate an average improvement by 5 marks per student, that is, 25% of the total marks.
- Students found certain types of errors easier to correct and explain than others.
- At the end of the course, students felt they had a good or very good understanding of grammatical rules and a good or very good standard of grammar.
- Learners rated the explanation section in the grammar editing exercises as “excellent” and “very good” for enhancing their understanding of the different grammatical rules (94%).
- All students wanted more engagement with the learning process.

Implications for testing, teaching and learning

Qualitative findings show that learner perceptions about their progress are generally positive, while the quantitative findings suggest that there is room for improvement. Both these findings have implications for testing, teaching and learning.

Testing

The findings show that the testing of grammar can continue to remain both product- and process-oriented, as students seem to find the explanation component of the testing procedure quite useful. However, fine-tuning the process part of the testing component in the assessment procedure is suggested. For example, students could be encouraged to give a more detailed explanation as to “why” an error is corrected.

Example:

No American university has yet truly grasped how the revelations of science **touches** on history and art, philosophy and poetry, and it is on Summers’ agenda that at least Harvard will try.

For example instead of explaining in general terms as

Singular verb “**touches**” should be changed to plural verb “**touch**” to agree with plural subject,

in the next academic year, students can be asked to be more specific and clear. Firstly, for example, they can be asked to identify the exact subject by underlining both the subject and the verb associated with it, as shown below:

No American university has yet truly grasped how the revelations of science (subject) **touches (verb)** on history and art, philosophy and poetry, and it is on Summers’ agenda that at least Harvard will try.

This is to confirm their understanding of the underlying rules and eliminate the element of guessing, if any. They can also be asked to write a more detailed explanation by stating the subject and explaining the change in verb in relation to the subject. The explanation can read something like this.....

Since the subject ‘the revelations of science’ is plural, a plural verb ‘**touch**’ should be used.

An alternative explanation such as: *Since the subject ‘the revelations of science’ is plural the verb cannot take an S and hence the verb touch should be used*, can also be accepted.

Students need to be mainly assessed for clarity in their understanding process represented in the explanation.

Teaching

One implication for teaching is that it can focus more on students’ understanding process. Bulk of the ‘consciousness-raising’ tasks such as the IVLE interactive quizzes and research for mini presentation on the grammatical items were assigned as out of class activities. Since students are asking for “interactive”

activities and for “more grammar lessons”, more classroom time should be devoted for these activities.

However, students are also asking for more practice in editing exercises. Considering that they are given three exercises with each focusing on all three grammatical structures and twelve editing exercises (including the ones for oral presentation), which focus on all the grammatical items, this request for more practice exercises sounds unreasonable. What they need perhaps is to be ‘more engaged in the learning process’, instead of being given additional exercises for practice.

How can teachers get their students to be ‘more engaged in the learning process?’ Will additional practice exercises help to achieve this end? This leads to a questioning of the traditional approach to teaching grammar, generally referred to as the PPP approach, where teachers present the grammatical structures and explain the underlying rules. This is followed by practice, wherein students are provided with more practice in the form of exercises of various kinds. Production follows practice, as students are now expected to produce the correct grammatical structures. The findings from this study show that mere practice may not really enhance students’ understanding process. What students need are more ‘consciousness-raising’ (Ellis, 2002) tasks. What are the differences between practice exercises and consciousness-raising tasks from a pedagogical point of view? See Table 3.

According to Ellis (2002), it can be seen that practice activities are very ‘product’ and ‘success’ oriented as the focus here is on obtaining the right answers. It is also a ‘behavioural’ activity as students do them as a mechanical task, without a spirit of inquiry. Such activities have no psycholinguistic validity as teachers have no idea about what goes on in students’ minds.

‘Consciousness-raising’ activities, on the other hand, are more ‘concept- or process-oriented’ as the focus here is on the ‘understanding or learning’ process. When students are engaged in such activities, their learning processes are activated. As opposed to being mechanical activities, students’ cognitive abilities are challenged and tested. More importantly, teachers ‘can influence what goes on inside the learner’s head’ by designing tasks or creating an environment in the classroom where such learning takes place. This implies that tutors should aim to teach less, observe and facilitate more, as and when the need arises. This also calls for a shift in focus from a more teacher-centred to a more learner-centred approach. Such an approach has implications for materials development.

Table 3: Practice vs. consciousness-raising (Ellis 2002)

Practice	Consciousness-raising
Success-oriented	Concept/Process oriented
Focus on production	Focus on understanding/Learning process
Behavioural activity	Cognitive activity
No psycholinguistic validity	Teacher can influence what goes on inside the learner’s head

Teaching materials or learning materials?

Teaching materials are obviously teacher-initiated and the focus is on what teachers think their students need. Learning materials are still teacher developed, but with the learner as the main focus. The materials will be designed to activate learners' understanding and learning processes. One way to do this would be to develop inductive consciousness-raising tasks for all grammar items. In such activities, students are exposed to a data set of sentences focusing on a particular grammatical structure and asked either individually or in groups to deduce the grammatical rule. Such activities will trigger their thinking and engage them in the learning process.

Table 4 is an example of a consciousness-raising task taken from Ellis (2002, p. 172). This inductive task is designed to raise learners' awareness about the grammatical difference between the preposition-in-time expressions "for" and "since", by getting students to notice the grammatical rule.

It can be seen from the above task that as a first step, students are provided some background information to the task. Next, they are given a set of data to get students to notice the target grammatical structure. Responding to the data set pattern, students have to discover the rule for themselves. In step 3, the task helps to further reinforce their hypothesis about the grammar item, by identifying which of the sentences are grammatical or ungrammatical. In step 4, students consolidate their learning, by explicitly stating the rule, while in the final step, they learn to apply the rule, based on their derived understanding.

Since students are asking for more interaction in the classroom, it may be useful to design such tasks as group activities in the classroom. These activities will facilitate more interaction not only among students, but also between tutor and students. These tasks will also encourage the students to be more engaged in the discovery and learning process and to take charge of their own learning. The tutor can always resort to explicitly stating and teaching grammar rules as and when the need arises.

Conclusion

Both quantitative and qualitative findings indicate that testing of grammar in this module should continue to be both product-oriented and process-oriented. In the case of teaching, the focus initially can be on activating students' understanding process and then gradually move on to introduce practice or production exercises.

Since students seem to want more interactive sessions in the classroom, one suggestion would be to have a database of 'inductive' consciousness-raising tasks (Ellis, 2002, p. 172) for all the grammatical items. Since this study shows that students have problems with some of the items, a database such as this will also provide teaching resources for all tutors involved in teaching the module.

It must be remembered that this study was not meant to be a correlation study as the purpose was not to establish a cause-effect relationship between the testing/teaching methods and learning outcomes. However, it set out to explore the learning outcomes as a result of an assessment procedure introduced. In the

Table 4: An example of a consciousness-raising task taken from Ellis (2002, p. 172)

1. Here is some information about when three people joined the company they now work for and how long they have been working there.

Name	Date Joined	Length of Time
Ms Regan	1945	45 yrs
Mr Bush	1970	20 yrs
Ms Thatcher	1989	9 mths
Mr Baker	1990 (Feb)	10 days

2. Study these sentences about these people. When is 'for' used and when is 'since' used?
 - a. Ms Regan has been working for her company *for* most of her life.
 - b. Mr Bush has been working for his company *since* 1970.
 - c. Ms Thatcher has been working for her company *for* 9 months.
 - d. Mr Baker has been working for his company *since* February.
 3. Which of the following sentences are ungrammatical? Why?
 - a. Ms Regan has been working for her company *for* 1945.
 - b. Mr Bush has been working for his company *for* 20 years.
 - c. Ms Thatcher has been working for her company *since* 1989.
 - d. Mr Baker has been working for his company *since* 10 days.
 4. Try and make up a rule to explain when 'for' and 'since' are used.
 5. Make up one sentence about when you started to learn English and one sentence about how long you have been studying English. Use 'for' and 'since'.
-

process, the significant implication for teaching and learning is that grammar can be taught as a process of discovery through 'consciousness-raising' activities. To quote a Chinese proverb "Tell me and I will forget; teach me and I will remember; involve me and I will learn" and what students need perhaps is to be involved in the learning process.

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Appendix One

EA1101: Grammar Items

Item	Notation	Explanation / Examples	Notes
Subject-verb agreement	SVA	Make a verb agree in number with its subject; errors occur when one uses long noun phrases and collective nouns; check the subject (head noun) e.g., a vase of flowers makes the room attractive; the president , <i>along with</i> many senators, opposes the bill. (<i>as well as, together with</i>); 'either or', 'neither nor'—check the noun next to verb; uncountable noun—singular verb—news, advice is	
Nouns	N	Plural of a noun—usually add s to the singular (chairs, the last 30 years; one of the most important factors); Uncountable nouns—certain words are always singular e.g., advice, luggage, scenery; information; some nouns can be determined as countable or uncountable only in the context of the sentence in which they are used.	
Pronouns	PRO	If more than one possible antecedent for a personal pronoun appears in a sentence or passage, a pronoun must refer unambiguously to only one of them. Check: <i>its</i> and <i>it's</i> ; Examples of pronouns are he, him, his (personal pronouns) this, that, these, those (demonstrative pronouns) and who, which, that (relative pronouns)	
Tenses	T	The term tense is the correspondence between the form of the verb and our concept of time (past, past perfect, past progressive/continuous, present, present perfect, present progressive, future, future perfect, future progressive,)	
Verb form	VF	Basically there are five forms for every single verb: Pre-sent (e.g., take/takes) Past (e.g., took) Past Participle (e.g., taken) Pre-sent Participle (e.g., taking) Infinitive (e.g., take/to take)	
Word Formation	WF	Parts of speech or word classes—noun, adjective, adverb and verb. They are the basic units which form sentence elements. You need to determine the correct word form in a given context—e.g., Should it be a noun "disappointment" or adverb "disappointedly"? Note the root word "disappoint" is the same but you creatively use affixes to hit the correct word form.	
Parallel Structure	PS	Parallel, balanced constructions are used to express a similarity or contrast between two or more related ideas. Match nouns with nouns, adjectives with adjectives, phrases with phrases, and clauses with clauses.	
Articles	Art	Definite (<i>the</i>) and Indefinite (<i>a</i> and <i>an</i>); a countable singular noun never stands alone; uncountable nouns are never used with <i>a/an</i>	
Prepositions	PR	Use appropriate ones and avoid redundancy. In phrasal verbs, the preposition forms part of the meaning of the verbs.	

Appendix Two

EA1101: Pre-/Post-test

1. There are TEN (10) errors in the following text.
2. Identify and underline the error in the numbered sentence, and then write your correction in the numbered blank space on the right side of the text.
3. After your correction, give a brief explanation of the type of error: noun, pronoun, subject-verb agreement, word form, verb form, tense, preposition, article or parallelism.

Women and Sexism in Scientific Fields

Martin Peretz

There are many iconic photographs of Marie Curie, especially those early on with her husband, Pierre, with whom she shared the first of her Nobel Prizes. After his death, the photographs were mostly of her standing alone with her instruments in the laboratory. But there are other, more telling, images as well, where she was always the lone woman. In a 1911 photograph, she is surrounded by 23 men at the Solvay physics conference in Brussels. In a photograph at Lausanne, she sits, front-row, dead center, between Einstein and Fermi in a constellation of perhaps 80 or 90 men. (1) This was the real, very sexist, world of physics, as explain in *Madame Curie*, the biography written by her daughter, who also happens to be my mother-in-law, Eve Curie.

(1) _____

In 1911, Marie Curie was denied membership in the French Academy of Sciences. Her opponents were traumatized that a foreigner, a Pole, might be admitted. But this obscured the real prejudice, for no woman had entered the sanctum of the Academy of Sciences. Those were the stakes.

Madame Curie came to the United States ten years later. (2) Lawrence Summers, the president of Harvard, compared her to Isaac Newton but does not award her an honorary degree because the Physics department opposed it.

(2) _____

The leading physicist, was Bertram Boltwood, who had applauded the university's decision not to bestow the same doctorate on Albert Einstein because he was a Jew, also opposed one for Curie. Nonetheless, her national tour was such a success that *The New York Times* fretted that it would provoke too many women to enter science. It claimed that more men than women had the power of viewing facts abstractly rather than relationally.

Curie's casket joined her husband's in the cemetery at Sceaux on July 6, 1934, and they stayed together undisturbed until 1994, when Francois Mitterrand decided her remains should be transferred to the Pantheon, where not a single woman lay. (3) What a vivid symbol with which to break France's sexual image and to join in another one of the U.N.'s periodic jamborees, the International Year of the Woman! Mitterrand contacted my mother-in-law, Eve. She immediately asked whether the president intended that her father's bones also be moved. Maybe Mitterrand had not contemplated the query. But Eve took the fumbling as a "no," a reverse piece of sexism. And so, she did not give her consent.

(3) _____

The next year, the president asked again, this time making clear that he envisioned the reburial as a ceremony for husband and wife. The president of France had his ceremony.

(4) Tens of thousands passed by the coffins as Pierre and Marie Curie lay at state in the Pantheon.

(4) _____

I have been thinking of Madame Curie ever since Harvard President Lawrence Summers stirred a commotion with his remarks about women in the sciences. (5) It has been 45 years since I came to Harvard as a graduate student and 39 years since I join the faculty. At that time, there was just one female tenured full professor, Cecelia Payne-Gaposchkin, an astronomer who filled the singular Radcliffe chair designated for a woman. My friend Agnes Mongan, who had probably taught more museum curators than anyone else in the United States, served as acting director of the Fogg for years, an incomprehensible indignity.

(5) _____

(6) No one can deny that Harvard has changed, and not only in regards to gender. Today, more than 25 percent come from homes where English is a second language. Summers does not want to stop that change; he wants to accelerate it.

(6) _____

(7) No one serious has called Summers a sexist, which is appropriate, since sexism had nothing to do with his controversy statements. What must have led him to wonder whether there may be small genetic variations between men and women in quantitative capacity, I suspect, is his genuine surprise that women have not risen in the fields of physics, engineering, and mathematics as fast as he thinks they could and should. (8) He is not in least bit oblivious to the lingering prejudices against women in the academy. After all, his mother is a retired professor of public policy at the Wharton School of Business and his "significant other," Elisa New, is a professor of English at Harvard.

(7) _____

(8) _____

(9) Summers's "problem" is that he submits every argument, that has a grain of evidence behind it to serious and scrupulous scrutiny. And this scares our supposedly daring academic culture, that lives in fear of what it refuses to know. As yet another of Curie's biographers suggested, "She had survived because she had made men believe that they were not just dealing with an equal, but with an insensitive equal." Summers knows that the age of such painful self-denial is gone. Still, the academy is the academy; it is not a community center. Students ought to know more than they do, and it is on Summers' agenda that they will.

(9) _____

(10) No American university has yet truly grasped how the revelations of science touches on history and art, philosophy and poetry, and it is on Summers's agenda that at least Harvard will try. Now his enemies will see a chance to counterattack. Let us hope they fail and he succeeds.

(10) _____

Adapted from "Women and sexism in scientific fields." The New Republic. (Feb 14, 2005): 38. Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center.

The Influence of Materials on L2 Learners' Ability to Contextually Process Verbs

■ Christopher D. Gabriel

De la Salle University at Dasmariñas, Philippines

ABSTRACT: *This paper initially assesses materials used by English language teachers at selected private tertiary-level institutions in Dasmariñas, Cavite, Philippines in approaching the teaching of verbs. It then proceeds with an administration among students from institutions selected of a test-retest procedure—using a paragraph excerpted from an authentic text that features a combinatorial use of tense and aspect verbs to describe actions as a test prompt—to determine students' ability to appropriately use verbs at the discourse level. Retrospection analysis is likewise employed where student-respondents are required to infer their own mental processes which could have led them to choose tense over aspect distinctions or vice versa of a set of verbs in the prompt. This paper attempts to outline the influence of a piecemeal approach to teaching verbs on second language learners' interlanguage phenomena. It establishes the notion that, by way of examining second language learner's thought processes relative to tense and aspect interlanguage, current teaching materials appear to deskill learners' language processing particularly when teachers' language teaching perspectives conform to the commonsensical belief that verbs are time-dependent. Results arrived at could serve as base points for redesigning materials for teaching verbs to primarily infuse and consequently strengthen the teaching of verb's aspect distinction. Consider that, to date, very few local grammar textbooks provide a comprehensive yet realistic discussion on the aspect—a common feature of verbs that bears discourse and cultural implications as advanced by applied linguists and English language teachers.*

Introduction

For nearly five decades, researchers have been postulating critical views on how language lessons bring about a more definitive approach to approximating language learning, teaching, and testing in the classroom. The emergence of a number of approaches to teaching and learning grammar (functional approach, Halliday, 1973; communicative language teaching, Littlewood, 1981; genre-based approach, Swales, 1990; discourse grammar, Celce-Murcia, 2001) shows the nature of language as a dynamic tool for generating meaning and language learning as an area where the use of grammar rules is appropriately put in context. Along this pedagogic framework, learners must engage in

opportunities that permit communicative use of the English language where separate structures are integrated into a creative system of expressing meaning. Teachers, on the other hand, are compelled to address learners' needs by designing tasks and/or classroom activities directed toward creating context for language use. Similarly, materials specialists are driven to re-plan textbook specifications particularly on structural features that do not equal a learner's ability to acquire skills in manipulating different rules of language. In the area of testing, teachers as language testers work on test items that intend to measure students' performance in language classes. Teaching strategies are enhanced and lessons are modified to address the implications testing has for both language learning and pedagogy. Having said these, studies on how learners' knowledge of grammar relates to the ability to use grammar have already been extensively carried out (Nunan, 1990; Schmidt, 1990; Ellis, 1993; Van Patten, 1996; Spada, 1997).

Still, within the Philippine context, an attempt at outlining learners' thought processes in studying tense and aspect distinction and, consequently, applying such distinction to real-life communication context, barely exists. Most local grammar books used in the tertiary-level institutions (Habana, et al., 1998; Allam, et al., 1998; Baraceros, 2000) contain a discussion of rules for forming the simple tenses and perfect and progressive aspects. These rules are followed by "doctored" texts to fit the limiting structuralist perspective on these language units. In this light, a study of the influence of materials on L2 learners' ability to contextually process verbs is put in place. By contextually processing verbs, I mean learners' ability to think of which appropriate verb type to use based on an event or action to be reported. As verbs are processed by way of retrospection, students indicate their level of awareness of and ability in using tense and aspect verbs appropriately in context.

Review of related literature

Studies on second language acquisition and learning have been carried out to document the problems learners encounter once the perfect tense is introduced at an earlier or later stage of the learning process. In particular, the sequencing of structures concerning verbs may involve the tendency to situate the teaching of the perfect at a rather premature or late stage. A cogent example is that of the resultative perfect's aspectual system.

As Comrie (1976) points out, the resultative perfect (a way of viewing events separate from their time orientation) is often regarded as an optional alternative to the simple past. Operating within the confines of error analysis, the statement *Yesterday, there has been a commotion in this theater*, can be classified as an overgeneralization (Jakobovits, 1969). Such an error may have stemmed from the notion that the resultative perfect is a relative substitute for the simple past (but in some cases not absolute). Table 1 explains this relative substitution¹.

The above sentences are in general acceptable representatives of standard

¹ Adapted from Richards, J.C. (1995).

Table 1: The resultative perfect as relative substitute for the simple past

Resultative Perfect	Simple Past
What has happened to you?	What happened to you?
The president has said something about this.	The president said something about this.

English containing verbs that, although dependent on how the writer-reader shapes the context, validly exist. In introducing the perfect therefore, one has to examine the availability of contexts that are antipodes of those where the past is used, i.e., states leading up to the present (occasionally highlighted by adverbial time markers, habitual or repeated events).

The difficulty in the processing of the perfect has been reported in the language teaching literature. Leech & Svartvik (1994) maintain that, since tense is so closely interwoven with aspect that no account of tense alone can adequately account for the use of verb forms, tense and aspect relate the happening described by the verb to time in the past, present, or future. According to them, English has two simple tenses, the present tense and the past tense, and two marked aspects, the progressive aspect and the perfective aspect. On the other hand, Bardovi-Harlig (1992) reports that second language learners' interlanguage of tense and aspect system shows high formal accuracy but lower appropriate use. Analyzing the corresponding implicated meaning of the perfect in both the grammatical and lexical aspects, Yule (1998) stresses that these aspects influence the overall effect of a particular implied meaning. He further adds:

... the internal view stands in a closer relationship to the activity (i.e., the verb) being described than does the external view. The external view is tied more closely to tense and the situation of utterance. It may be this feature, the connection between situation of utterance and marking a retrospective view of an event, [that] leads to the common observation that the present perfect in English often seems to describe 'a past event with current relevance' (p. 68).

Given an English grammar syllabus, it is highly likely that the present and past tenses may be presented such that they extend contending strands (perfect and perfect progressive and simple, progressive, perfect, and perfect progressive respectively) as they sandwich a range of intervening grammatical features. By doing so, a teacher's attempt to situate a clear-cut connection between perfect and the simple past may be derailed. A teacher may be confronted with certain pedagogic decisions about the place of present perfect in the learning continuum. Students, likewise, experience difficulty in fastening the communicative functions of the simple past on the present perfect given the length of instructional time frame several grammar points may require. Moreover, students' ability to retrospectively look at the communicative function of the present perfect's linguistic form may be distorted in that the high density of other structures antecedes the teaching of the simple past.

Consider that within the framework of communicative language teaching (CLT), the teaching of structures and the plotting of communicative functions

of these structures involve laying out authentic activities that enable teachers to identify learners' weaknesses in performing a communicative situation. The learners too become sensitive to their linguistic needs. This reduces the prescription of pedagogic time frame long enough for the teacher and learners to realize the linguistic and communicative functions of a single grammar point. Therefore, to generalize that students can readily comprehend present perfect–simple past relation upon a teacher's explicit instruction of rules is rather fixated and selectively esoteric only to those whose communicative competence may be at a higher level compared with the rest of the learners. For one, Bardovi-Harlig (1995) notes that students find less difficulty in forming the morphological structures of tense and aspect but are unable to establish the form-meaning associations of these structures.

Statement of the problem

Having presented the influence of teaching and learning the verb's aspectual system on the learner, this paper attempts to outline the influence of a piecemeal approach to teaching verbs on second language learners' interlanguage phenomena. It establishes the notion that, by way of examining second language learner's thought processes relative to tense and aspect interlanguage, current teaching materials appear to deskill learners' language processing, particularly when teachers' language teaching perspectives conform to the commonsensical belief that verbs are time-dependent.

Specifically, the following questions will be answered in the study:

1. What are the teachers' view of communicatively teaching the simple present and simple past tenses and the present perfect?
2. What are the students' view of appropriately using the simple present and simple past tenses and the present perfect?
3. To what extent do materials used for teaching these forms influence students' ability to appropriately use verbs at the discourse level?

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework was initially premised on the study of Nuttal (1982) as she views reading as an interactive process, as shown in Figure 1. Through this process, she expounds on the interaction between the text and the reader as effectively establishing a common ground, given that conditions for the text and the readers are met. Lorente (2000) further explains that establishing a common ground demands that the text be considered comprehensible to the students as well. The students should have the necessary skills to process the meanings residing in the text for the interaction to happen.

The present study brings such a view of reading process to yet another dimension by looking closely into how readers try to process the way the author describes the events in a text. Figure 2 shows that when the author of a text and his/her intended readers view events differently, then different meanings are likely to be arrived at. When different meanings are generated, it is apparent that the text appears as not "reader-friendly" (Lorente, 2000) or that the readers

Figure 1: The interactive view of reading

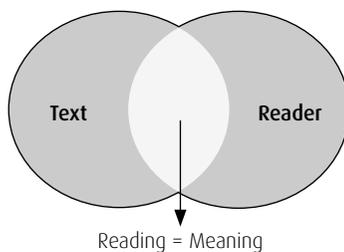
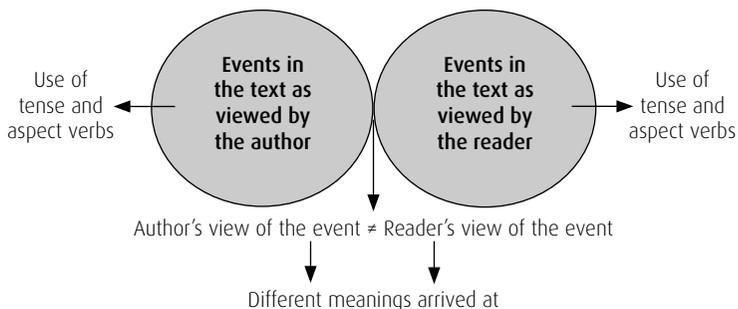


Figure 2: Events in the text as viewed by the author and the reader



do not have the necessary skills for them to understand the text and treat it as being not reader-friendly.

Furthermore, certain language structures could precisely allow authors and readers alike to determine how unfolding events are described. Adverbial time markers and varying types of verbs are the principal structures which authors and readers use in describing appropriate and contextual actions. More importantly, the context of one situation cannot be explicitly mapped out when verbs are not made available. Yet, since individuals—either as authors or readers—treat the nature of an action depending on how they view that action in a particular situation or context, description of an event becomes overwhelmingly different as it is entirely dependent on who is seeing and/or looking at an event anyway. The differences in describing events become even more complex particularly when the form-meaning association skills of students—as readers—are limited. It is therefore undeniably logical to say that different meanings are indeed created by the students themselves given the limited language resources they have. This could have been brought about by the kind of tutored setting they have been exposed to.

The teaching of grammar in the Philippines

Generally, the teaching of grammar at the tertiary level in the Philippines follows the General Education Curriculum. The Commission on Higher Education

(CHED) mandates all higher education institutions (HEIs) to implement this curriculum to all incoming first-year students. Within an interdisciplinary perspective, students get to enroll in four major disciplines namely, Language and Literature, Mathematics and the Natural Sciences, Humanities, and Social Sciences. Under language and literature, students who failed the English Language Placement Examination are required to take and pass a non-credit course entitled “English Plus”, which will cover grammar, before they can be allowed to take English 1. At the end of the course, it is hoped that students will be able to engage in real-word communication situations by applying English language rules to appropriate situations. This ability may enable students to comprehend content-area courses that they are likely to encounter in the degree they intend to specialize in.

The two universities involved in the present study vary in approaching this CHED mandate. One made the enrolment in the English Plus compulsory to all incoming first-year students, while the other preferred to screen the students. Yet, a close reading of the two syllabuses would suggest that both appear similar at the outset as they claim that their English Plus aims to equip their students with the ability to:

- distinguish the uses of the parts of speech in a given type of discourse.
- write grammatically correct and meaningful sentences following the principles of unity, coherence, and emphasis.
- use words, phrases, or expressions in appropriate situations.
- apply language rules to related communicative conventions to initiate and sustain conversational movement.
- express ideas intelligibly by reflecting on the mutual relationship between the rules and function of the language.
- increase awareness of the social meaning of the English language.
- develop skills and strategies for using language effectively in concrete situations.

Initial documents forwarded by participating faculty revealed that the two syllabuses aim at developing students’ communicative competence. However, classroom observations and thought processes of students reveal otherwise. Dealing with the specifics of each of the syllabuses, one (Institution A) attempted at establishing a relationship between reading and the grammar points students need to learn (presented below is the segment that presents the tense and aspect verbs).

Midterm Institution A	
<i>Reading Skills</i>	<i>Grammar Points</i>
Predicting outcomes	Future Tense
Interpreting non-prose	Present Tense (Present Perfect Tense and Present Progressive Tense)
Paragraph of definition	Present tense and Subject-Verb agreement
Narrative paragraph	Past Tense (Past Perfect Tense and Past Progressive Tense) and Subject-Verb agreement

The other (Institution B) sequenced the grammar points in this manner:

Midterm (Institution B)

Grammar Points

Simple Present, Simple Past, Simple Future Tenses

Present Progressive, Past Progressive, Future Progressive Tenses

Present Perfect, Past Perfect, Future Perfect Tenses

Present Perfect Progressive, Past Perfect Progressive, Future Perfect Progressive Tenses

The research study

This study was carried out during the midterm period of the first semester, school year 2006–2007. The purposive sampling procedure was employed in determining the participants (faculty and students) for the study. The participants come from two (2) private tertiary-level institutions in Dasmariñas, in the province of Cavite, Philippines. These institutions were selected because they have operated as a tertiary-level educational institution, having been accorded a university status for more than ten years. This premise, as a basis for selection, could mean that they have established and/or have been consistently subscribing to pedagogic principles in carrying out “English Plus” or intensive English classes following a particular development plan. However, considering the nature of this research as highly descriptive where findings could reveal the status of English pedagogy in these institutions, it is certainly important that the names of the institutions, faculty, and students are withheld. The faculty and students concerned were likewise assured of the confidentiality of the results.

Description of the participants

A total of four (4) faculty members (two from each of the schools selected handling two (2) English Plus or intensive English classes) turned in the top ten (10) students (based on students’ preliminary period performance average) of each class. They were also requested to provide a copy of the course syllabus and lesson plans on the present and past tenses and present perfect. Of the four (4) faculty members involved in the study, one (1) completed a graduate degree, the other was at the initial stage of post-graduate studies leading towards a doctorate degree and the other two were still working on their graduate degree. A classroom observation on the teaching of these verb forms was then carried out with each faculty member. This was to determine each faculty’s rationale behind the strategies employed, the designed activities believed to have elicited learners’ awareness of the appropriate use of the verb forms, and the expected learning outcomes. Specifically, the observation was based on how the teaching of the verb forms was sequenced (motivation, language focus, content focus, practice and/or production), the materials used in order for students to meaningfully apply the forms (re)introduced, and how the students responded to the tasks.

A four-item test using a set of paragraphs excerpted from an authentic text

as a prompt was administered among 80 first-year students who belonged to the high performing group based on performance records. Their average age was 17.5. The test was administered before the types (where these verb forms fall) were discussed in class. After a four-week period—during which these verb forms should have been taught already—a retest using the same prompt was administered involving the same set of participants. All the students were then interviewed as part of the retrospection analysis following a set of questions the researcher prepared. The retrospection with students lasted from 15 to 20 minutes. The retrospection questions focused on the thoughts students had which could have led them to think of using one verb form over the other/s. To facilitate ease in comprehending the ideas raised to the students, each question was translated using the native language, *Filipino*. The students were also allowed to speak in *Filipino*. They were not given a time limit in responding to the questions and there was little intervention on the part of the researcher.

Description of the test prompt

The text is an excerpt from one of the advertorials published in *Men's Zone*, Vol. 5, No. 6, December 2006 and was used in this study as a test prompt. Appropriate verb forms in the first and second paragraphs were not deleted so that the context governing the discourse of a print advertisement could be initially established. In doing so, the components of the written discourse apparent in the excerpted text were well presented to the students. The same text treatment also allowed students as testees to easily figure out what is being talked about in the advertisement and to efficiently extract the required information. Items tested were found in the third paragraph, all of which aimed at outlining the skills applied by the students in using appropriately simple present and past tenses over the present perfect and vice versa. The test prompt was so designed such that the meanings conveyed by the author were taken as they were by intended readers. As students processed the appropriate verb forms in completing the text, they were likely to interact in some ways with the author who described the events in the text.

At the outset, processing which appropriate verb forms to use seems rather too linguistic or discrete. However, as discussed in the conceptual framework, authors are likely to describe events through use of appropriate verbs. This authorial perspective allows for reporting situations as either remote, non-remote, factual, or nonfactual (Yule, 1998). Furthermore, the test prompt follows the view of Nuttal (1982, as cited in Lorente, 2000) of reading as an interactive process where the author's thoughts as printed in the text and that of the readers' interact with each other thereby creating meaning. Thus, as readers attempt at finding themselves into a text's thoughts as shared by the author, a common ground is established. Hence, when participants tended to use verb forms different from that of the author's, establishing a common ground could not be achieved, to a certain extent, since the perspective of the author did not conform to the readers' perspective—given that verbs are used to describe events.

Following is a text titled, *Longines: Elegance is an Attitude* which advertises the timepiece Longines (answers have been supplied):

To convey its message of elegance around the world, Longines has turned to personalities who embody to perfection the spirit of it and its products represent. The better to express its approach to time, that the past is inextricably linked to the present in building the future, it has drawn on the undying charisma of two legendary film stars whose popularity has remained intact over they years.

The icons of yesterday were Humphrey Bogart and Audrey Hepburn, two superstars of the silver screen, larger than life even in today's eyes, admired for their effortlessly stylish way of life. Today, it is Alina Kabaeva and Qu-Ying, a multi-awarded Russian gymnast and talented Chinese model/actress respectively, who both epitomize grace and unspoilt charm. Both move easily, elegantly across the contemporary world stage, displaying innate distinction and natural radiance.

Longines acquired the services of reputed Swiss fashion photographer Michel Comte to shoot its worldwide advertising campaign. Familiar with the ins and outs of the fashion world, he has worked for many a number of well-known couturiers and designers, not the least of which are Ungaro, Chanel, Armani, and Dolce and Gabbana. He expresses Longines Time with the innate grace and natural distinction of his models that, in Longines words, elegance is, supremely, an attitude.

Classroom observation

Listed below are the points noted during the classroom observations carried out with the four faculty from the two institutions. The institutions are labeled A and B; the faculty, from 1 to 4. The points are categorized based on how the lesson was designed as follows: motivation; content focus; language focus; and practice and/or production.

Institution A

Faculty 1 and 2: Teaching the simple present, past, and future tenses

- *Motivation:* The teacher wrote a question on the chalkboard for students to activate schema on the term Shock. Next, the students shared opinions on what they know about the term. The students were then tasked to read the text about shock.
- *Content focus:* The students were required to complete a teacher-made paragraph using words found in the input as part of the comprehension check. The students were then tasked to answer the questions related to the input; still part of the comprehension check.
- *Language focus:* The students were tasked to group the sentences found in the input according to sentences that use present, past, and future tenses.
- *Practice and/or Production:* The students were tasked to summarize the input in not more than seven sentences.

Faculty 1 and 2: Teaching the present perfect tense

- *Motivation:* The teacher presented different images of pain to the students and then asked them to identify the pain each image shows. The students then identified the pain manifested in each image. The students were then tasked to read the text *Effects of Pain on Other Needs*
- *Content focus:* The students were required to complete a two-column table on cause and effect as part of the comprehension check. The students were also tasked to match the word in Column A with the correct meaning in Column B, as part of the comprehension check.

Column A	Column B
___ 1. Persistent	a. Opposite
___ 2. Focal	b. Fundamental
___ 3. Disrupt	c. Double
___ 4. Appetite	d. Change
___ 5. Retard	e. Visible
___ 6. Atrophy	f. Self-respect
___ 7. Disturbance	g. Mental
___ 8. Progressive	h. Obstruction
___ 9. Interference	i. Severe
___ 10. Psychology	j. Interruption
___ 11. Self-esteem	k. Decrease in size of a part or tissue
___ 12. Evident	l. Delay
___ 13. Alter	m. Natural desire
___ 14. Compound	n. Double
___ 15. Basic	o. Continuing

- *Language focus:* The students were tasked to change the form of the verb in the sentences taken from the text. The teacher then provided the students with a sample set of sentences.

Text sentence: Alfie suffers from backache.

Sample set:

- A. Alfie has suffered from backache.
- B. Alfie is suffering from backache.
- C. Alfie suffers from backache.

The teacher provided a discussion on the differences among simple present tense, present perfect, and present progressive.

- *Practice and/or Production:* The students were tasked to come up with a list of steps expressing intent to alleviate one's suffering from a particular pain.

Institution B

Faculty 3 and 4; Teaching the simple present, past, and future tenses

The students were earlier required to read the Indian tale, *The Lion Makers*.

- *Content focus:* In class, the students were asked several questions about the tale (comprehension check).

- *Language focus:* The teacher then discussed the simple present, past, and future tenses and rules of agreement. The teacher tasked the students to answer the questions based on the Indian tale. The students were also reminded to use the simple present, past, and future tenses appropriate to the questions raised and to observe rules of agreement.

Faculty 3 and 4; Teaching the present perfect tense

The students were earlier required to read the D' Artagnan and the Musketeers.

- *Content focus:* In class, students were asked several questions about the story (comprehension check).
- *Language focus:* The teacher then discussed the uses of the present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect. The teacher tasked the students to fill in the blanks with the present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect form of the verbs. The sentences come in three sets; a set for each of the perfect types. The students were also reminded to use the present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect based on the uses discussed earlier.

Pre- and post-tests

Scores in both pre and posttests do not show significant difference in students' ability to appropriately use verbs as shown in Tables 2 and 4. The same set of students was able to get the correct answer in items one and three (*acquired* and *expresses*). Yet, a reference to their responses to retrospection questions² would suggest a quite different view of using verbs correctly and/or appropriately.

Tables 3 and 5, on the other hand, present the varying students' responses during the pre- and post-tests. Students' responses in the pre- and posttests do not vary even after a discussion on verb types has been made.

Discussion: Result of classroom observation

The primary aim of teaching tenses and the present perfect at both institutions was to develop students' knowledge of these grammar structures. In the case of Institution A, despite the teachers' attempt to provide students opportunities for them to relate to the topic by starting off with a motivational activity, the language focus part was mechanically designed. The lessons mainly provided practice in manipulating structures based on how these structures would appear. On the other hand, while institution B had for its goal an interface of language and literature, the same substitution drills served as the key component in the study of the grammar structures. Note as well that teachers from these institutions introduced three tense types in the study of English verbs. This did not follow the fact that only two tense systems are available in the English language—present and past tenses.

² A detailed presentation of students' responses to retrospection questions can be found elsewhere in this paper, viz. Table 9.

Table 2: Students' scores in the pre-test

Item (right answer)	Number of students who got the right answer*	Percentage	Number of students who got the wrong answer*	Percentage
1 (acquired)	50	62.5	30	37.5
2 (has worked)	0	0	80	100
3 (expresses)	30	37.5	50	62.5
4 (is)	80	100	0	0

N = 80

* Right and wrong answers are determined based on how the verb forms are used in the text.

Table 3: Varying students' responses during the pre-test

Item	Response	Number of students who responded		Percentage
		A	B	
1	Acquired	30	20	62.5
	Acquires	10	20	37.5
2	Worked	30	20	62.5
	Works	10	20	37.5
3	Expressed	30	20	62.5
	Expresses	10	20	37.5
4	Was	0	0	0.00
	Is	40	40	100.00

N = 80

Table 4: Students' scores in the post-test

Item (right answer)	Number of students who got the right answer*	Percentage	Number of students who got the wrong answer*	Percentage
1	50	62.5	30	37.5
2	0	0	80	100
3	30	37.5	50	62.5
4	80	100	0	0

N = 80

* Right and wrong answers are determined based on how the verb forms are used in the text.

Table 5: Varying students' responses during the post-test

Item	Response	Number of students who responded		Percentage
		A	B	
1	acquired acquires	30	20	62.5 37.5
		10	20	
2	worked works	30	20	62.5 37.5
		10	20	
3	expressed expresses	30	20	62.5 37.5
		10	20	
4	was is	0	0	0.00 100.00
		40	40	

N = 80

This classroom setup does not conform to what the institutions claim as their pedagogic approach, the communicative language teaching. While students are made to interact with the text, only their comprehension skills are being practiced. Examining the language units at the discourse level is not certainly carried out. Celce-Murcia & Olshtain (2000) consider discourse competence as the core or central component of the communicative competence since “this is where everything else comes together: it is in discourse that we can observe the operation of all the other components, and it is through discourse that all of the components should be taught, learned, and assessed” (p. 50).

Furthermore, perspectives on applied linguistics, anchored on the notion of communicative competence, clearly state that learners—at the level of discourse—build on a repertoire of structures in an unpredictable and non-linear manner. Discourse combines the formal and functional perspectives, that is, discourse is an instance of spoken or written language that has describable internal relationships of form and meaning that relate coherently to an external communicative function or purpose and a given audience/interlocutor. Similarly, Lightbown & Spada (1993) prefer the middle ground as tension build up between form and meaning, and accuracy and fluency. They further add:

[C]lassroom data from a number of studies offer support for the view that form-focused instruction and corrective feedback provided within the context of a communicative program are more effective in promoting second language learning than programs which are limited to an exclusive emphasis on accuracy on the one hand or an exclusive emphasis on fluency on the other (p. 105).

Another concern is the way grammar structures were treated in the study of the simple present, present progressive, and present perfect. The exercises proposed made use of “cueing” which when answered correctly by the students would not guarantee that they have achieved mastery of the appropriate use of the grammar structures tested. The sentences were basically not authentic and were doctored. The notions of meaningfulness and form could have been better

addressed had the teachers attempted at laying out how the verbs under study behave in the texts which students comprehended early on. Instead of merely using these texts as tools for gauging the level of comprehension of students, focusing on how the authors of these texts view an event could indeed have been very helpful. One way that this could occur was by allowing students to focus on the differing meanings that could be arrived at if verbs were changed. But before then, focusing on form must be made in relation to how verbs were used. Table 6 contains two versions of a text which I use in my intensive English class. Notice that the verbs are manipulated and that their corresponding meanings are provided.

By allowing students to study the variations in verb forms and the changes in meaning brought about by such variations, students are made aware of the subtle nuances of the language that go beyond the mechanical requirements of mere substitution drill. It is the discourse apparent in the situation where context is clearly mirrored as explained by Table 7 adapted from Yule (1996).

Table 8 contains a sample of an authentic text which teachers could use as a guide to providing students with the corresponding meanings of the verbs understudy.

The boxes and/or slides included made use of analysing the language items at the discourse level. They initially highlight the verbs to be examined and then provide the attendant discourse meaning that results from the use of these verbs.

In explaining the discourse meaning, a reference to Yule's (1998) speakers' perspective is made to logically set a divide between tense and aspect. It can be noticed that explaining the meanings of these verbs is dependent on their context of use and does not stop at merely discussing how the verbs are formed. The teacher may continue providing the discourse meanings of the rest of the verbs used to fully establish the general context of the text.

Table 6: Meaning based and structure laden discussion on verbs

<p>The students seriously <u>noted</u> the stick and ball representations of formaldehyde and acetone. Bearing in mind that aldehydes and ketones <u>do not contain</u> carboxyl ions, they carefully <u>counted</u> the number of carbons available. Dr. Samonte <u>came in</u> and <u>inspected</u> their notes.</p>			<p>The students seriously <u>noted</u> the stick and ball representations of formaldehyde and acetone. Bearing in mind that aldehydes and ketones <u>did not contain</u> carboxyl ions, they carefully <u>counted</u> the number of carbons available. Dr. Samonte <u>came in</u> and <u>inspected</u> their notes.</p>		
Verbs	Structure	Meaning	Verbs	Structure	Meaning
noted	→ Simple Past	→ Completed Action	noted	→ Simple Past	→ Completed Action
do not contain	→ Simple Present	→ Statement of Fact	did not contain		
counted	→ Simple Past	→ Completed Action	counted		
came in	→ Simple Past	→ Completed Action	came in		
inspected	→ Simple Past	→ Completed Action	inspected		
had commenced	→ Past Perfect	→ Climactic Signal	commenced		

Table 7: Meaning based discussion on verbs following Yule's (1998) proposition

<p>Bearing in mind that aldehydes and ketones</p> <p><u>do not contain carboxyl ions,</u> they carefully <u>counted</u> the number of carbons available.</p> <p>The time of utterance (speaker's now) is presented at the center of the narrative to describe an abstract generalization.</p> <p>The referenced situation (the act of carefully counting the number of carbons available) is viewed as extending in a different dimension of time or possibility away from the center.</p>	<p>Bearing in mind that aldehydes and ketones</p> <p><u>do not contain carboxyl ions,</u> they carefully <u>counted</u> the number of carbons available.</p> <p>The time of utterance (speaker's now) is presented at the center of the narrative to describe an abstract generalization.</p> <p>The referenced situation (the act of carefully counting the number of carbons available) is viewed as extending in a different dimension of time or possibility away from the center.</p> <p>Therefore, the widely used image of a time-line running from the past through the present through the future, is not, in fact, the basis of the grammatical category of tense.</p>
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A striking advantage of doing this scheme is that it allows the learners to be sensitive to the potential discourse choices that can be made available to them once a type of verb (say tense) is used over the other (aspect) or vice versa. It minimizes learners' attempt at assuming that an event and/or occurrence is entirely associated with time. However, this can only be realised once teachers provide ample opportunities for learners to reflect on how they view an event as somewhat remote or non-remote and factual or non-factual (Yule, 1998).

Table 9 (on page 228) reveals the striking results of the thought processes of the students on the appropriate use of the verbs taught to them over a period of one month. After a tutored-setting, students' ability to figure out which appropriate verb form to use still remained low. It is not surprising to generalise that the concepts shared with them by their teachers seemed rather wanting in the first place. The students' strong belief in observing tense consistency as something that holds water could have stemmed from the teachers' use of non-authentic texts where one form of the verb was consistently used all throughout a given text. Thus, students were likely to conform to this form of verb treatment.

Students likewise found the text unusual for it used a combination of tense and aspect verbs which were not given emphasis in school or did not come to the attention at all of their teachers. This holds true because, in the course of the classroom observation, the teachers were consistently applying the time-line perspective which was certainly different from the speakers' perspective proposed by Yule (1998). With this condition, students were left unaware of the difference between tense and aspect verbs; the former refers to a set of grammatical markings that are used to relate the time of the events described in

Table 8: Meaning based discussion on verbs using a non-doctored text

<p>Now as I (1) _____ to you, it (2) _____ in torrents and we (3) _____ the house against the thunder and lightning. It (4) _____ an unusual April, I (5) _____ you; we (6) _____ a dry season at all and everything (7) _____ fresh and green. The pink shower (8) _____ so lovely with its red and white blossoms. They (9) _____ as near as cherry or plum blossoms as anything tropical (10) _____. The golden shower (11) _____ with bright yellow sprays; only the jacaranda (12) _____. Like the tamarind, it (13) _____ a tree of character, and (14) _____ to the blandishments of a capricious weather. It (15) _____ its time, and when that (16) _____ and no sooner; it (17) _____ into bloom!</p> <p>Virginia Benitez Licuanan, from "Introduction" in <i>Paz Marquez Benitez</i> (1995).</p>	<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Verb</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Meaning</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1. write</td><td>Time distinction in the present</td></tr> <tr><td>2. is raining</td><td>On-going (speaker's perspective)</td></tr> <tr><td>3. have closed</td><td>Nearness (speaker's perspective)</td></tr> <tr><td>4. is</td><td>Historical Present</td></tr> <tr><td>5. told</td><td>Time distinction in the past</td></tr> <tr><td>6. didn't have</td><td>Time distinction in the past</td></tr> <tr><td>7. is</td><td>Historical Present</td></tr> <tr><td>8. has never been</td><td>Nearness and Temporality (speaker's perspective)</td></tr> <tr><td>9. must be</td><td>Degree of requirement</td></tr> <tr><td>10. can be</td><td>Degree of ability</td></tr> <tr><td>11. is covered</td><td>Statement of present fact</td></tr> <tr><td>12. is holding out</td><td>On-going (speaker's perspective)</td></tr> <tr><td>13. is</td><td>Historical Present</td></tr> <tr><td>14. will not yield</td><td>Possibility</td></tr> <tr><td>15. will bide</td><td>Possibility</td></tr> <tr><td>16. comes</td><td>Possibility signaled through use of <i>when</i> as time marker</td></tr> <tr><td>17. will burst</td><td>Possibility</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Verb	Meaning	1. write	Time distinction in the present	2. is raining	On-going (speaker's perspective)	3. have closed	Nearness (speaker's perspective)	4. is	Historical Present	5. told	Time distinction in the past	6. didn't have	Time distinction in the past	7. is	Historical Present	8. has never been	Nearness and Temporality (speaker's perspective)	9. must be	Degree of requirement	10. can be	Degree of ability	11. is covered	Statement of present fact	12. is holding out	On-going (speaker's perspective)	13. is	Historical Present	14. will not yield	Possibility	15. will bide	Possibility	16. comes	Possibility signaled through use of <i>when</i> as time marker	17. will burst	Possibility
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<p>Now as I (1) <u>write</u> to you, it (2) _____ in torrents and we (3) _____ the house against the thunder and lightning. It (4) _____ an unusual April, I (5) _____ you; we (6) _____ a dry season at all and everything (7) _____ fresh and green. The pink shower (8) _____ so lovely with its red and white blossoms. They (9) _____ as near as cherry or plum blossoms as anything tropical (10) _____. The golden shower (11) _____ with bright yellow sprays; only the jacaranda (12) _____. Like the tamarind, it (13) _____ a tree of character, and (14) _____ to the blandishments of a capricious weather. It (15) _____ its time, and when that (16) _____ and no sooner; it (17) _____ into bloom!</p> <p>Virginia Benitez Licuanan, from "Introduction" in <i>Paz Marquez Benitez</i> (1995).</p>	<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Verb</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Meaning</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. write</td> <td>Time distinction in the present</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The verb here views the statement of fact that deals with the act of writing itself and not the developing process of writing a letter. If it were set so (use of progressive aspect), then the way how the writer views the event needs to be changed which must result in the changes in the form-meaning relationship of the subsequent verbs.</p>	Verb	Meaning	1. write	Time distinction in the present																																
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<p>Now as I (1) <u>write</u> to you, it (2) <u>is raining</u> in torrents and we (3) _____ the house against the thunder and lightning. It (4) _____ an unusual April, I (5) _____ you; we (6) _____ a dry season at all and everything (7) _____ fresh and green. The pink shower (8) _____ so lovely with its red and white blossoms. They (9) _____ as near as cherry or plum blossoms as anything tropical (10) _____. The golden shower (11) _____ with bright yellow sprays; only the jacaranda (12) _____. Like the tamarind, it (13) _____ a tree of character, and (14) _____ to the blandishments of a capricious weather. It (15) _____ its time, and when that (16) _____ and no sooner; it (17) _____ into bloom!</p> <p>Virginia Benitez Licuanan, from "Introduction" in <i>Paz Marquez Benitez</i> (1995).</p>	<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Verb</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Meaning</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1. write</td><td>Time distinction in the present</td></tr> <tr><td>2. is raining</td><td>On-going (speaker's perspective)</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The verb here is used to narrate the experience of observing the fact that it is raining or that the rain is "on-going" while the writer is in the process of writing the letter.</p>	Verb	Meaning	1. write	Time distinction in the present	2. is raining	On-going (speaker's perspective)																														
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Now as I (1) **write** to you, it (2) **is raining** in torrents and we (3) **have closed** the house against the thunder and lightning. It (4) _____ an unusual April, I (5) _____ you; we (6) _____ a dry season at all and everything (7) _____ fresh and green. The pink shower (8) _____ so lovely with its red and white blossoms. They (9) _____ as near as cherry or plum blossoms as anything tropical (10) _____. The golden shower (11) _____ with bright yellow sprays; only the jacaranda (12) _____. Like the tamarind, it (13) _____ a tree of character, and (14) _____ to the blandishments of a capricious weather. It (15) _____ its time, and when that (16) _____ and no sooner; it (17) _____ into bloom!

Virginia Benitez Licuanan, from "Introduction" in *Paz Marquez Benitez* (1995).

Verb

1. write
2. is raining
3. have closed

Meaning

- Time distinction in the present
- On-going (speaker's perspective)
- Nearness (speaker's perspective)

The verb here is used to express how the speaker views the event as somewhat close to the context of the act of writing a letter. To a certain extent, this view emphasizes how fresh the event is in relation to the perspective of the speaker.

a sentence to the time of the utterance itself, while the latter gives information about the kind of event the verb refers to.

Teachers should be able to explain at the level of discourse the use of the present perfect and how it differs from the simple past. Students can be taught to use the present perfect if they view an act as completed by now. They can also be given the insight that the present perfect can be used when they are interested only in the act's present completed state and its relation to *now* and that they are not interested in reporting when exactly the completed act happens.

Richards (1995) proposes the use of the present perfect when writers or speakers describe situations that continue up to the present—where verbs such as *live*, *be*, *like*, and *know* supported by adverbial time markers *for* and *since* denoting a definite time span, fully describe states leading up to the present. Even repeated (habitual) events make use of the present perfect.

But what about the relationship between any knowledge the teachers may appear to have and the students' ability to engage in more realistic, discourse-based communication? Arguably, the limited exposure to the discourse features of the language was one factor in teachers' interest to try to further the process of language acquisition through teaching the formal aspects of the language being learned. What is clearly generalizable is that the kind of instruction the students were exposed to affected much of students' thought processes, particularly when asked about the meanings they associated behind the use of such verb forms.

Conclusion

To some extent, therefore, a relationship between what students appeared to know and their ability to use it was established in this study. Despite the limited number of participants where generalisability of the findings arrived at could not fully represent the language behavior of a larger population sample, the teachers' approach to teaching verbs seemed rather crude and incomplete. The design of materials should reconsider the meanings embedded in the text

Table 9: Students' responses to retrospection questions in reference to their answers (pre-test and post-test)

Question	Response	Number of students who responded
What made you decide to use the simple present tense <i>acquires</i> ?	The last two sentences of the paragraph before it are in the simple present tense. So, it should also be in the simple present tense.	25
	Until now, Longines has Michel Comte for its advertising campaign. You know, the author is telling a fact.	5
What made you decide to use the simple past tense <i>acquired</i> ?	Because Longines must first have Michel Comte before the shoot for a worldwide advertising campaign is made.	50
Can't we use <i>has acquired</i> ?	I think it's okay. But I have to make my answer for number 2 <i>has worked</i> to make the verbs consistent.	25
	No. The sentence is a completed action. I mean, there is no uncompleted action to be [finished].	5
	No, because <i>acquired</i> is different from <i>has acquired</i> . <i>Acquired</i> is completed and <i>has acquired</i> is not completed. It's what you call present perfect tense.	25
How about <i>works</i> for number 2?	The same thing, to make the verbs consistent.	25
How about <i>worked</i> for number 2?	Because Michel Comte worked with designers already.	50
	Yes. It's a completed action.	5
You think we should use <i>has worked</i> ?	Yes but number 1 must be <i>has acquired</i> .	25
	No because Michel Comte is no longer working with designers. [She's] working with Longines already.	25
You used <i>expresses</i> in number 3. Why?	The same thing, to make the verbs consistent.	25
	The author is telling a fact just like in number 1.	5
You used <i>expressed</i> in number 3. Why?	It's a completed action.	20
	Michel Comte already said something about Longines.	30
Can't we use <i>has expressed</i> ?	Yes. But all the verbs should be in present perfect also.	25
How about in number 4, you wrote <i>is</i> ?	Again, to make the tense consistent.	25
	It's a statement fact.	55

introduced to the students. Language and content foci should not plainly rest on what is readily seen at the outset but on the potential yet rich form-meaning associations apparent in the use of varying verb types. Such an approach very well influenced students' ability to contextually process verbs.

It is also suggested that research along this area be carried out across larger population samples to determine the generalisability of the findings. With the kind of materials used in the classroom, it is likewise important to establish whether these materials assist in the process of second language acquisition as involving ongoing restructuring, a process that is discontinuous and qualitative, rather than a quantitative or incremental one (McLaughlin, 1990). The need to engage learners in less controlled activities where they are encouraged to draw on the language they have acquired from different input sources must be recognized. Doing this would allow students not to rely solely on language practised in teacher-controlled conditions. Thus, an interactive approach to reading is realistically met and meaningfully observed where the thoughts of the author, that is, the way the event is viewed, interplay with the readers' thought processes.

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The Production of English Sentential Complements by EFL Persian Learners

■ Ahmadreza Ashrafologhalaei

Imam Sadiq University, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

ABSTRACT: *Most EFL students have difficulties in their written English production. Some parts of these go back to their production of English Sentential Complements (ESCs). Recently, many studies have been conducted to investigate factors leading to ease or difficulty in the production of ESCs in different countries. This study aims to investigate EFL Persian learners' problems in producing ESCs. The following are discussed: errors made by these learners, the hierarchy of difficulty order in processing ESCs, and probable interference of the learners' mother tongue in producing these sentences. After giving a placement test to 1,200 Shiraz university freshmen in various fields of study, 50 subjects of intermediate proficiency level were chosen to participate in a one hundred-item test including five different production tasks on 12 sub-categorization and five syntactic rules of ESCs. To work out the sequence of difficulty, the Ordering-Theoretic Method developed by Bart & Krus (1993) was utilized. The findings reveal a difficulty order, in which the Infinitive-END/ Gerund and Infinitive-END/That are the easiest, while For/To, Raising, Possessive and Tense-Sequencing are the most difficult types of ESCs. The results also show that there are some prerequisite relationships among complement categories. Yet, ESCs parallel to their Persian equivalents are easier to produce than contrasting structures. These findings indicate that certain factors leading to ease or difficulty of the production of ESCs include: Economy Strategy, Native Language Transfer Strategy, and Environment (i.e., NP or END) of the verbs in the given context.*

Introduction

Complement structures vary to a great deal in English and Persian. There are more complementation structures in English than in Persian and a complement structure in Persian might have more than one equivalent in English. Producing complement structures (CSs) in English are very difficult for native speakers of Persian, especially in an EFL context. Some studies done in this field such as that of Hart & Schacter (1986) on subjects with diverse linguistic backgrounds such as Persian, Spanish, Arabic, Japanese and Chinese (Schwarte, 1992), Anderson's (1993) study on Spanish and Persian learners learning English as a second language, and Sepassi & Marzban (2005) support this fact that Persian native speakers have many difficulties in handling English Complement (EC)

constructions. Based on the analysis of ESL/EFL learners' errors, researchers have attempted to see if the learning sequences of ECs hold true in more complex sentences (i.e., relativizations and complementation) among learners from different language backgrounds.

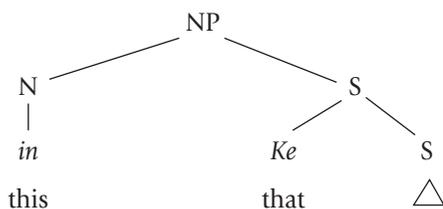
The most outstanding approaches to ESCs fall into three major categories: Traditional, Structural and Generative Transformational approaches. Generally, among these three different approaches used in studies on complementation in either English or Persian, the transformational approach has shown its merits over the others. Within the generative transformational framework presented by Chomsky (1957), sentential complementation is a unified syntactic phenomenon whose various surface forms are all derived from the same underlying grammatical structure. According to Chomsky, English complementation has been defined as a process whereby sentences are embedded inside other sentences.

In Persian, complements are given two names: "motammem" (something which finishes part of a sentence), and "mokammel" (something which completes a sentence, excluding infinitival sentence complementation). Moreover, in this language, complements may be subordinated to subject, object, verb, or adjective of the main clause and they vary from one-word items to multi-word combinations. Tabaian (1975), an Iranian transformationalist, believes that complement clauses in Persian serve as "a supplement to the verb of the principal clause" (p. 131). He has categorized three types of complements in Persian which are explained below and indicated by page numbers: the complement clause occurring with impersonal verbs (sentence number 1), intransitive verbs (sentence number 2), and transitive verbs (sentence number 3).

1. momken ast ke emshab bārān biyāy-ad.
Possible is that tonight rain come + sub.
*It is possible that it will rain tonight. (p. 141)
2. man yaqyn dār-am ke emshab bārān miāy-ad.
I certainly have + sub that tonight rain come + sub.
*I am sure that it will rain tonight. (p. 142)
3. man be minā dastur dād-am ke berav-ad.
I to Mina order gave + sub that go + sub.
*I ordered Mina to go. (p. 143)

Soheili-Isfahani (1976), another transformationalist also argues and shows that *NP* complements in Persian are generated proverbially in the deep structure. These are indicated below with page numbers. He also produces some arguments to show that "... the phrase structure rule for *NP* complementation should be postulated as: $NP \rightarrow N(S)$ " (p. 25).

In this phrase structure rule, the *N* is always realized as a word whose equivalent is "it" in English; and the *S* is always introduced by *Ke*, which is a universal "subordinator" for both relative and complement clauses in Persian. The deep tree structure for this *NP* complement structures in Persian is:



Soheili-Isfahani also states that all *NP* complements in this language occur to the right of their head noun which is either the pronominal head noun *in* “it” or a lexical item.

4. *in ma‘lum shode ast Ke dar kore-y māh hayāt nist.*
 it clear become is that in planet moon life not + is.
 *It has become clear that there is no life on the moon. (p. 32)

Most English sentences can be complemented in different ways and there are more complementation structure types in English than in Persian. This indicates that a complementation structure in Persian may have more than one equivalent in English and vice versa (sentence number 5).

5. *man enkār mi – konam Ke mojrem hast – am.*
 I deny do that criminal is.
 a. I deny being a criminal.
 b. I deny that I am a criminal.

However, two English complementizers, “that” and “for-to”, have direct equivalents in Persian (sentences 6 and 7).

6. *raftane – e shomā be tehrān zarury ast.*
 to go you to tehran necessary is
 *For you to go to Tehran is necessary.
7. *Zarury ast ke shomā be tehran beravid.*
 necessary is that you to Tehran sub + go.
 *It is necessary that you go to Tehran.

In addition, it should be mentioned that in Persian, complement structures (CSs) are more frequently introduced by the *ke* complementizer, and the postposition *rā* is used as a case marker for complements. Of course, the postposition *rā* comes in those sentences that include object complements (sentence number 8).

8. *man khordan – rā dust dār-am*
 I eating + obj like have + sub.
 *I like eating. (p. 139)

Significance of the study

Although some similar studies have been done by investigators (i.e., Anderson, 1986; Hart & Schacter, 1986; Schwarte, 1992; Sepassi & Marzban, 2005), the present study differs from theirs in a number of aspects. In this study, the

scope of the investigation will be limited to the production of two types of complementation rules: The first is the subcategorization rules (i.e., *Infin-END/Gerund*, *Infin-End*, *Infin-NP*, *Infin-END/That*, *Prep+Gerund*, *Gerund*, *That*, *Gerund/That*, *Infin-NP/That*, *Poss-ing*, *That* and *Prep+Poss-ing*), which state what complementizer change rule can be used with a certain verb. These rules are used to ensure the correct selection of complement-types that each verb allows. The second is the syntactic rules (i.e., *To-Deletion*, *Tense-Sequencing*, *Raising*, *Possessive* and *For-To*) that account for the correct representation of the complement-types.

Objectives

Based on the hypotheses made, the following research questions are pursued in this study:

1. What is the hierarchy of difficulty for the production of ESCs by adult speakers of Persian?
2. How does the difficulty ordering to be established for Persian speakers compare with those of other language groups learning ESCs?
3. Does the learners' native language interfere with their production of ESCs?

Material and method

Study setting

The study reported in this article was conducted at Shiraz University in the south of Iran. To select subjects with the same level of proficiency in English, a placement test was administered to a group of about 1,200 Shiraz University freshman students majoring in different areas of study such as sciences, arts, engineering and agriculture. Based on the results of this placement test, 50 subjects who scored more than 65% were asked to participate in this study. Among the 50 adult Persian native speakers, there were 13 females and 37 males. They ranged in age from 18 to 40, the average age being 22 years. The average number of years of studying English was 5.5 years and their acquisition context was varied.

Testing procedure

The types of sentences and items tested (see appendix for details) were arrived at by incorporating ideas from Anderson's (1986) and Schwarte's (1992) research. They have followed the Generative Transformational model in their studies. This test including two types of complementation rules, subcategorization and syntactic rules, consisted of five activities: translation, multiple choice, sentence completion, transformation and substitutional drills. These were designed to investigate subjects' mastery of English complements and the extent to which their native language interfered with their production of ESCs. It was administered in two sessions.

In the first session, a thirty-item translation test was given to the subjects and they were allowed 25 minutes to translate the items from Persian into English. The stimulus sentences of this test included common words that the subjects could be expected to know. So, this test emphasized syntactic rather than lexical translation. In addition, some of the main verbs that were not among the high frequency vocabulary were given in both English and Persian. In order to measure the subjects' knowledge of those ECs which are optional (i.e., Poss-ing/That), six of the items that were given for translation task had two possible correct answers such as:

Examples:

9. I deny being a criminal.
10. I deny that I am a criminal.

These items can also test the influence of the learners' mother tongue on their production of ECs.

In the second session, a seventy-item test including three production tasks (sentence completion, transformation and substitutional drills) and some multiple choice questions, was given to the subjects and who had 75 minutes to complete the items. This test contained EC structures (i.e., Poss-ing, Prep+Gerund, Tense-Sequencing, Raising...) that were difficult to elicit through translation.

Tables 1 and 2 represent the two types of English complementation rules that are used in this study.

Table 1: Samples of verbs used with EC sub-categorization rules

Categories	Examples	Verb(s)
That	Tom thinks that Bill is intelligent.	think, know, believe, notice, admit
Infin-NP	He wanted her to wash the windows.	promise, want, order, allow
Infin-END	I want to go to New York.	want, try, hope, forget, decide
Poss-ing	The people enjoyed Parisa's singing.	enjoy, dislike, resent, appreciate, prevent (from)
Gerund	I enjoyed smoking cigarettes.	enjoy, finish, deny, stop, avoid, dislike, quit
Prep + Gerund	I am thinking about going on a trip.	think about, to be interested in, believe in, plans on
Prep + Poss-ing	Mary thought about her playing the piano.	thought about, forget about
Infin-NP/That	Reza expected Ali to sell his car./ Reza expected that Ali would sell his car.	expect, hope demand, persuade promise, believe
Infin-END/That	He hopes to find the keys./ He hopes that he finds the keys.	hope, decide, promise, plan decide, forget
Gerund/That	I deny being a criminal./ I deny that I am a criminal.	deny admit
Infin-END/Gerund	He stopped to play tennis./ He stopped playing tennis.	stop remember.

Table 2: Samples of verbs used with EC syntactic rules

Categories	Examples	Verb(s)
To-Deletion	He let the girl leave.	let make
For-To	For Ali to be angry is bad.	to be bad to be necessary
Possessive	They enjoyed Parisa's singing.	thought about, enjoy, resent, dislike, prevent, appreciate, suggest, forget about
Tense-sequencing	I know that he bought a book.	suggest, know, think, believe, hope, resent, decide, deny, admit, promise, persuade, forget, plan, demand, expect, notice, appreciate
Raising	John is likely to go to the U.S.A.	likely

Data analysis

To determine the hierarchy of difficulty for the 17 complementation categories and logical relationship among a set of items acquired together, the 'Ordering-Theoretic Method' introduced by Bart & Krus (1993) was used. As the origin of this method is in mathematical tree theory, it is also called the 'Tree Method'. A binary coding is necessary in the data analysis for the 'Tree Method' and any array of bivalued item data can be analyzed to determine the item hierarchy structure.

However, the data was analyzed in the following way: at first, each of the 50 participants in the study received a percentage score on each of the sub-categorization and syntactic categories being investigated. Then, the percentage scores on each of these categories for each of the subjects was converted into the binary scores of either "0" or "1". It means that a "1" was assigned to a category for a subject if that subject received a score of eighty-five percent or higher and a "0" was assigned to a score below eighty-five percent. It should be stated that the percentages were determined by dividing the number of correct items answered by each individual by total number of items for that category.

In the next step of the procedure, the response patterns for all possible pairs of structures for all subjects were counted. See Table 3.

The response pattern '10' for individual (01) indicates that the learner learned 'That' before he learned 'Poss-ing', and it is called "confirmatory". But, the response pattern "01" for subject (03) indicates that he learned 'Poss-ing' before 'That' and it is called "disconfirmatory" because it disconfirms that 'That' is a prerequisite to 'Poss-ing'. It means that success on 'That' complement category is a prerequisite to success on 'Poss-ing' category if and only if the response pattern (01) for 'That' complement and 'Poss-ing' complement does not occur. So, the response patterns (00), (10) and (11) are called "confirmatory", and the response pattern (01) is called "disconfirmatory" with respect to the two-sequential orderings assuming that 'That' is a prerequisite to 'Poss-ing' category.

The third step involved counting the number of disconfirmatory answers for each possible pairs of categories. In the fourth step, the number of discon-

Table 3: Response patterns for all possible pairs of structures for all subjects

Subjects	Categories		
	That	Poss-ing	Infin-END
01	1	0	1
02	1	1	1
03	0	1	1
04	1	0	0
.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.
16	0	0	1
.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.
36	0	0	1
.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.
46	0	0	4

firmatory responses for each pair was divided by number of individuals in the study and multiplied by one hundred. According to ordering theoretic method, only disconfirmatory response should be counted in order to establish the sequential relationship among all structures that should be presented in a Matrix of Disconfirmatory Responses. Therefore, in the final stage, these percentages for the disconfirmatory responses will be presented in a matrix that displays the results of the findings too.

Results and discussion

To answer the first and second research questions of this study, the data were first analyzed and the ranking for the 12 subcategorization categories based on the percentage of correct response for each category is displayed in Table 4 and the ranking of the percentage of correct responses for the five syntactic categories is presented in Table 5.

The sequential relationships established among all of the complement structures in production, based on the Ordering Theoretic Method developed by Bart & Krus, are illustrated in the Matrix of Disconfirmatory Responses (Table 6). A tolerance level of five percent showing performance errors is considered for this study. In this matrix, the structure displayed by the row is acquired before the structure showed in the column if the disconfirmatory responses do not exceed five percent.

To facilitate the reading of the matrix, a circle has been drawn around the percentages that indicate a prerequisite relationship among complement structures.

As reflected in Table 6, complement structures can be placed in groups. Based on this matrix, a tree diagram with arrows will be drawn in order to designate sequential relationships among all complements (see Figure 1 on Page 240). This diagram clearly illustrates groups of complement structures that are acquired at the same time.

Table 4: Sub-categorization categories

Ranking	Percentage of Correct Responses	Category
1	91.33	Infin-END/Gerund
2	90	Infin-END
3	88.40	Infin-NP
4	88.25	Infin-END/That
5	87	Prep + Gerund
6	86.28	Gerund
7	81.73	That
8	72.80	Gerund/That
9	71.90	Infin-NP/That
10	52.33	Poss-ing
11	25.66	Poss-ing/That
12	1.0	Prep + Poss-ing

Table 5: Syntactic categories

Ranking	Percentage of Correct Responses	Category
1	82.50	To-Deletion
2	32.20	Tense-Sequencing
3	22.23	Possessive
4	2.0	Raising
5	0.00	For-To

As this 'tree' shows, in all instances subcategorization categories are prerequisite to all of the syntactic structures except for deletion category. So, it can be concluded that for Persian students, the production of subcategorization rules are easier than the syntactic rules of ECs. Based on these findings, a comparison can be made among the hierarchy of difficulties for subcategorization and syntactic rules of ECs compiled for the adult Persian speakers and those derived by Anderson (1986) for Spanish speakers and Schwarte (1992) for Finnish Speakers.

This comparison reveals that there are six subcategorization categories (i.e., That, Infin-END, Infin-NP, Gerund, Poss-ing and Prep+Gerund) common in these three studies. Table 7 displays all cases of agreement and no agreement between these six subcategorization categories that are common in the three studies.

Factors involved in the difference among the results of these studies may be related to:

- the use of different verbs in the common categories,
- the type of tests used in each study,
- the subjects' proficiency level, and
- environment (i.e., NP or END) of the verbs in the given context.

For investigating the influence of different environments on the type of subcategorization and syntactic categories three important points were considered:

Table 4: Sub-categorization categories

	Infin-END/ Gerund	Infin-END/ That	Infin-END	Gerund	That	Infin-NP	To-Deletion	Prep + Gerund	Infin-NP/ That	Gerund/ That	Poss- ing	Poss- ing/ That	Prep + Poss-ing	Tense- Sequencing	Possessive	Raising	For-To
Infin-END/ Gerund	---	12.0	12.0	14.0	16.0	14.0	12.0	16.0	4.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Infin-END/ That	6.0	---	6.0	14.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	12.0	4.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Infin-END	16.0	16.0	---	18.0	16.0	16.0	14.0	18.0	10.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Gerund	24.0	24.0	18.0	---	16.0	16.0	8.0	10.0	10.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
That	38.0	36.0	34.0	34.0	---	32.0	16.0	32.0	12.0	4.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Infin-NP	26.0	24.0	24.0	24.0	20.0	---	14.0	26.0	12.0	6.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
To-Deletion	38.0	40.0	30.0	32.0	26.0	28.0	---	26.0	14.0	6.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Prep + Gerund	24.0	26.0	22.0	12.0	18.0	22.0	12.0	---	10.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0
Infin-NP/ That	48.0	54.0	50.0	52.0	32.0	44.0	32.0	46.0	---	32.0	4.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0
Gerund/ That	52.0	56.0	48.0	46.0	30.0	42.0	30.0	46.0	14.0	---	4.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0
Poss-ing	68.0	74.0	72.0	66.0	50.0	58.0	46.0	58.0	28.0	24.0	---	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0
Poss- ing/ That	76.0	80.0	70.0	72.0	52.0	64.0	48.0	66.0	32.0	26.0	8.0	---	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0
Prep + Poss-ing	76.0	82.0	72.0	72.0	50.0	64.0	50.0	68.0	32.0	28.0	8.0	2.0	---	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0
Tense- Sequencing	76.0	82.0	72.0	72.0	54.0	64.0	50.0	68.0	32.0	32.0	8.0	2.0	0.0	---	0.0	2.0	0.0
Possessive	76.0	80.0	72.0	72.0	50.0	64.0	50.0	68.0	32.0	32.0	8.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	---	2.0	0.0
Raising	74.0	80.0	72.0	70.0	50.0	66.0	48.0	66.0	32.0	32.0	8.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	---	0.0
For-To	76.0	82.0	72.0	72.0	50.0	64.0	50.0	68.0	32.0	28.0	8.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	---

- complement selection when two types of complements are allowable,
- type of errors in complement choice, and
- the role of transference in using a complement.

Transfer is “the influence of the stimulus sentence on the response” (Schwartz, 1992, p. 86) and transference phenomenon is defined here as the type of complement in the stimulus sentence and its influence on the corresponding answer in English which is considered as a possible determinant of complement choice. In Persian ‘Ke’ is the equivalent complement of “That” in English. So, the task of producing a clausal complement in English is less difficult when there is a ‘Ke’ complement in the stimulus sentence and it is the evidence of positive transfer. Likewise, when the stimulus sentence contains an infinitive, the task of producing infinitives in English is more facile. So, it can be concluded that the form of the complement in the stimulus sentence can have a decisive effect on the facility with which the correct form of a complement is produced in English.

On the other hand, if the stimulus sentence contains a ‘Ke’ complement,

Figure 1: Hierarchy of difficulty for subcategorization and syntactic categories combined

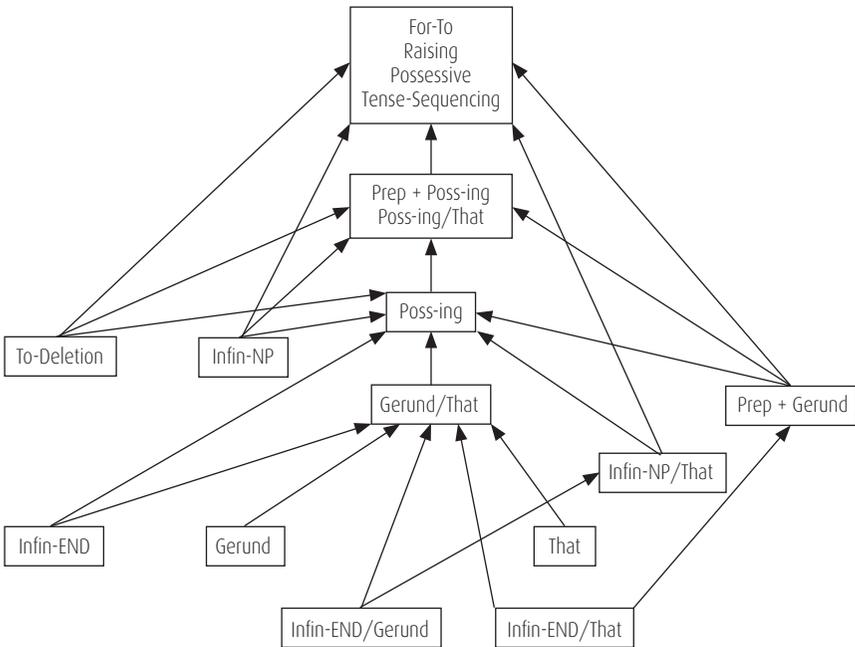


Table 7: Cases of agreement and no agreement among the common categories in the present study, Anderson's and Schwarte's

Categories	Anderson (1986)	Schwarte (1992)	The Present Study
That and Poss-ing	Agreement	No Agreement	Agreement
*Infin-END and Poss-ing	*Agreement	*Agreement	*Agreement
Infin-NP and Poss-ing	*Agreement	No Agreement	*Agreement
Gerund and Poss-ing	*Agreement	No Agreement	*Agreement
That and Prep + Gerund	*Agreement	No Agreement	*Agreement
Infin-NP and Prep + Gerund	*Agreement	No Agreement	*Agreement
Infin-NP and Gerund	*Agreement	No Agreement	*Agreement
Infin-NP and That	*Agreement	No Agreement	*Agreement
Prep + Gerund and Gerund	*Agreement	No Agreement	*Agreement
Prep + Gerund and That	*Agreement	No Agreement	*Agreement
Gerund and That	*Agreement	No Agreement	*Agreement
Gerund and Prep + Gerund	Agreement	Agreement	No Agreement
Poss-ing and Prep + Gerund	Agreement	Agreement	No Agreement

*The only case of agreement among these studies.

but its correct output is an infinitive, there is the possibility of negative transfer. As the examples for positive and negative transference indicate, learners can produce those types of complement structures that have parallel forms easier than those which have contrasting forms. Moreover, for selecting a complement, the second language learners have also adapted the communication strategy based on "Economy Principle". According to this strategy, he/she encodes information in the fewest possible morphemes because he/she is not very proficient and tries to facilitate the burden of communication by producing the most economical or the shortest structures.

Conclusions

To solve the problems that Persian learners of English may face in their written production of English sentential complements (ESCs), certain factors (i.e., economy strategy; native language transfer strategy and the environment (e.g., NP or END of the verbs in the given contexts), leading to the ease or difficulty of the production of these sentences in English, should be taken into account. Moreover, it can be concluded that English complementation is rule governed and the types of complementizing rules that a particular verb allow must be learned for each verb (Schwartz, 1992, p. 43).

With regard to the influence of the role of the learners' native language transference, the results of the data analysis indicate that although subjects' native language transfer could not predict the overall relative difficulty of the different complement forms, complement structures that were parallel to their Persian equivalents were often easier to produce than contrasting structures.

Pedagogical implications

As there are more complementation structures in English than in Persian, a complement structure in Persian might have more than one equivalent in English and Iranian language teachers may encounter many difficulties in the teaching of this grammatical point. To solve this problem and to facilitate the method of teaching, in some cases, findings in this study might be helpful to teachers for applying the use of the similarities and differences between the Complement Structures in English and Persian. So, it seems that classification of the EC structures into different levels is the most important factor in their teaching. Therefore, simple short complement structures should be taught before long complicated ones.

With regard to these findings, a contrastive analysis of English and Persian Complement Systems may contribute to the teaching of those EC structures (i.e., Poss-ing, Prep+Gerund, Tense-Sequencing, Raising...) which have already proven to be difficult and are in contrast with Farsi complement structures.

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Appendix

The tests administered to investigate the EFL Iranian learners' problems in the production of ESCs.

قسمتی از ترجمه هر یک از جملات فارسی در مقابل آنها نوشته شده است، لطفاً ترجمه انگلیسی آنها را تکمیل کنید.

Part I

۱- من می دانم که او یک کتاب خرید.

1. I know _____ a book.

۲- آنها سعی کردند درب را باز کنند.

2. They tried _____ the door.

۳- او فکر می کرد که من یک ماشین می خرم.

3. She thought _____ buy a car.

۴- من معتقدم که او خوب انگلیسی حرف می زند.

4. I believe _____ English well.

۵- از او خواست که پنجره ها را بشوید.

5. He wanted _____ the windows.

۶- من از سیگار کشیدن لذت می برم.

6. I enjoy _____ cigarettes.

۷- او اجازه داد که آن دختر برود.

7. He let _____ .

۸- به او دستور دادم که ظرف ها را بشوید.

8. I ordered _____ the dishes.

۹- من از پیانو زدن لذت می برم.

9. I enjoy _____ the piano.

۱۰- او نوشتن کتاب را تمام کرد.

10. She finished _____ the book.

۱۱- از او می خواهد که به شاگردان کمک کند.

11. She wants _____ the students.

۱۲- از صحبت کردن آنها در کلاس خوشم نمی آید.

12. I dislike _____ in the classroom.

۱۳- او به ما اجازه داد که مدرسه را زود ترک کنیم.

13. She allowed _____ school early.

۱۴- او مرا وادار کرد که به مدرسه بروم.

14. He made _____ to school.

۱۵- از کمکی که به او کردید قدردانی کرد.

15. He appreciated _____ him.

۱۶- می خواهم کتاب ها را بخرم.

16. I want _____ the books.

۱۷- از قرض دادن کتاب هایتان به من ممنونم.

17. I appreciated _____ your books.

۱۸- او می دانست که من نامه ها را خواندم.

18. He knew _____ the letters.

۱۹- او بازی تنیس را متوقف کرد.

19. He stopped _____ tennis.

۲۰- او امیدوار است که کلیدها را پیدا کند.

20. He hopes _____ the keys.

۲۱- از اینکه این کار را می کند متنفرم.

21. I resent _____ that.

۲۲- من باعث شدم که بچه گریه کند.

22. I made _____.

۲۳- او اجازه می دهد که مدرسه را زود ترک کنیم.

23. He lets _____ school early.

۲۴- شما فراموش کردید نامه ها را بفرستید.

24. You forget _____ the letters.

۲۵- شما به من قول دادید که می آئید.

25. You promised _____.

۲۶- شما مرا ترغیب کردید که خانه را ترک کنم.

26. You persuaded _____ the house.

۲۷- من تصمیم گرفتم که روز شنبه بروم.

27. I decided _____ on Saturday.

۲۸- من انکار می کنم که مجرمم.

28. I deny _____ a criminal.

۲۹- او تصدیق کرد که این کار را انجام داده است.

29. He admitted _____ it.

۳۰- من معتقدم که او مرد باهوشی است.

30. I believe _____ an intelligent man.

Part II

Draw a circle around the letter next to the correct answer.

Example: Ali _____ a good student.

- a. are b. am c. is d. be

1. You promised me _____ .
a. come b. came c. had come d. to come
2. She finished _____ the letter.
a. to write b. writing c. write d. wrote
3. I know _____ a car.
a. him to buy b. be buying c. that he bought d. his buying
4. You persuaded _____ the house.
a. that I should leave b. I do leave c. me to leave d. that me should leave
5. I resent _____ that.
a. him to do b. his doing c. him do d. that he does
6. I want _____ the books.
a. I buy b. buying c. buy d. to buy
7. I believe _____ English well.
a. him to speak b. his speaking c. that he speaks d. him speak
8. I resent _____ in the classroom.
a. their talking b. them to talking c. they talking d. them to talk
9. I enjoy _____ cigarettes.
a. to smoke b. smoking c. I smoke d. smoked
10. I decided _____ on Saturday.
a. go b. going c. to go d. went
11. I deny _____ a criminal.
a. to be b. I was c. being d. am
12. He admitted _____ it.
a. that he did b. that he does c. did d. do
13. She made _____ to school.
a. me going b. I go c. me go d. I went
14. She allowed _____ school early.
a. us leaving b. we left c. our leaving d. us to leave
15. She thought _____ a car.
a. me to buy b. me buying c. that I would buy d. that I buying
16. He hopes _____ the pictures.
a. to find b. finding c. find d. found
17. I believe _____ an intelligent man.
a. him is b. that he is c. that him is d. that he to be
18. I made _____ .
a. cry the child b. the child cry c. crying the child d. the child to cry
19. He lets _____ school early.
a. us to leave b. we left c. our leaving d. us leave

20. You forget _____ the letters.
a. sending b. to send c. send d. sent
21. He wanted _____ the windows.
a. she wash b. her washing c. her wash d. her to wash
22. I ordered _____ the dishes.
a. he washed b. his washing c. playing d. he washing
23. I enjoy _____ the piano.
a. to play b. opened c. playing d. open
24. They tried _____ the door.
a. to open b. opened c. they opened d. open
25. She wants _____ the students.
a. he help b. him helping to c. him to helping d. him to help
26. I appreciate _____ your books.
a. your lending me b. you to me lent c. your me lending d. you to lend me
27. He stopped _____ tennis.
a. playing b. played c. plays d. he play
28. He knew _____ the letter.
a. that I read b. I reading c. me to read d. my reading
29. He appreciated _____ .
a. your him helping b. you to help him c. your helping him d. you to him helped
30. He let _____ .
a. the girl leaves b. the girl to leave c. the girl leave d. the girl leaved

Part III

Complete the sentences below by using the sentences in the parentheses. Be sure to make all the necessary changes.

Example: Mary hated eating fish. (Mary ate fish)

1. I want _____ . (I go to New York).
2. Alice must remember _____ . (Alice returns the money)
3. We noticed _____ . (The cat ate the mouse)
4. Our parents avoid _____ . (They are angry)
5. They have finished _____ . (They built a house)
6. Mary promised _____ . (Mary went)
7. Bill had thought _____ . (John bought a car)
8. Tom decided _____ . (Me broke the cup)
9. Ali admitted _____ . (He broke the cup)
10. She forget _____ . (She told him a lie)

Part IV

Combine the following sentences to form a sentence according to the VERB of the first sentence such as one of the sentences in the example.

Example: Mary stopped it. Mary was reading a book.

1. Mary stopped reading the book.
OR
2. Mary stopped to read the book.
1. Bob wanted it. Sam did pass his exam.
2. Ali denied. Ali didn't steal the money.
3. Ziba planned it. Ziba went to Shiraz.
4. It was necessary. Pasi did pass her exam.
5. Mary prevented it. Bill wanted to buy a new car.
6. Tom thinks it is so. Bill is intelligent.
7. I am thinking about it. I want to go on a trip.
8. Ali demanded it. Ziba returned home.
9. Mina is interested in it. Mina plays the piano.
10. Reza expected it. Ali sold his car.
11. Mary resented it. Sam won the prize.
12. Mary hopes it is so. John will buy a new car.
13. The people enjoyed it. Parisa sang yesterday.
14. The Iranians suggested it. The Iraqis surrender.
15. It is likely. John will go to the U.S.A.
16. It is bad. Ali is angry.

Part V

Substitute the following VERBS into the sentences above them. Be sure to make all the necessary changes.

Example: John loves to go finishing.

John hates going finishing.

1. Mary likes to play the piano.
Mary dislikes
Mary wants
Mary stopped
Mary believes in
Mary hopes
Mary plans on
Mary finished
Mary enjoys
Mary admits
Mary expected
Mary thought about
Mary decided
Mary forgot about
Mary quits

How do Taiwanese Learners Benefit from Morphological Awareness During the Lexical Process of Chinese and English?

■ Shihyao Chen

Cheng-Shiu University, Kaohsiung, Taiwan

ABSTRACT: *Taiwanese students' knowledge of derivational affixes (e.g., electric, electricity) and inflectional affixes (e.g., run, running) during EFL learning seem to fall far below teachers' expectations. This may be related to the nature of word formation in Chinese, an analytic language in which there are far fewer derivational and inflectional morphemes. A number of studies have focused on English native-speaking learners' acquisition of morphological awareness; however, few crosslinguistic studies have shown that morphological awareness could be flexible if used across languages. This study tried to explore whether, as a result of receiving morphological instruction, morphological awareness could be acquired by Chinese-speaking EFL learners in the context of a language system different from English. The study also tried to examine to what extent morphological awareness could be a predictor of vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. Two groups of Taiwanese college students were tested. Firstly, the results indicated that learners who received morphological instruction outperformed the other group when asked to (1) discriminate meanings and functions of morphemes; (2) select correct words to complete a passage; and (3) identify derivationally complex words. Secondly, the data indicated that the ability of word identification makes a significant contribution to learners' reading comprehension. Lastly, Taiwanese learners, in L1 lexical processing, were adept at extracting clues from semantic roots of Chinese characters and integrating them with contextual information; nevertheless, their L2 processing of morpheme decomposition was found to have more influence than their L1 on the acquisition of L2-specific properties.*

Introduction

One of the major differences between adults learning a second/foreign language and children acquiring their first language is that the former have a fully developed language system before they start to learn a second language. Thus, one of the important issues concerning second/foreign language learning for high school and college students is the extent to which L1 has an impact on their acquisition of L2. For the past few decades, much research has drawn attention to this issue, and a number of results have proven that the first language does

play a role in second/foreign learning and processing (e.g., Dulay & Burt, 1974; Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982). Many previous studies involving L1 reading have produced strong evidence of a direct correlation between reading ability and vocabulary recognition skills, from the early stages of reading in children to advanced levels of reading in adults (Cunningham, Stanovich, & Wilson, 1980; Stanovich, 1982, 1991a, 1991b).

In contrast to the schema-theoretic, top-down processing of reading dominated reading research during the 1970s and '80s, recent research in the area of word recognition has shifted the essential role to bottom-up and word inference based on morphological information for successful L2 reading (Chikamatsu, 2003; Grabe, 1991; Haynes & Carr, 1990; Koda, 1992, 1994, 1996). There are many words in English (as in other written languages) whose spellings cannot be predicted from phonology but are entirely regular if analyzed into morphemes; thus, many studies have started to conduct examinations of cross-linguistic differences, and have shown significant degrees of morphological awareness in the recognition of words. In the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) environment, such as in Taiwan, students' acquisition of derivational and inflectional morphology in English seems to fall far below teachers' expectations. This might be related to the nature of word formation in Mandarin Chinese, which is an analytic language in which there are far fewer derivational and inflectional morphemes than in the English spelling system. Based on EFL learners' L2 morphological awareness in the lexical processing involving transferring L1 morphological knowledge, which differs from L1 native speakers', two specific hypotheses are formulated in this study. (1) In the EFL setting, apart from the variables of phonological and morphosyntactic processing, morphological awareness has a consistent correlation with the learners' ability of word recognition in the target language. (2) As a result of morphological component instruction, the higher the acquisition of morphological awareness in EFL learners' word decomposition and inference, the better their lexical processing in reading comprehension will be.

Accordingly, the present study addressed developmental issues of the awareness of the internal structure of English words with regard to EFL learning, and examined the correlation between contextual passage reading comprehension and context-free word decoding ability, as well as the impact on their morpheme recognition, as a result of intensive morphological instruction.

Research questions

The research in the literature has provided evidence that morphological awareness plays a critical role for native speakers of English with regard to the acquisition of vocabulary and reading. However, it has not yet been fully examined whether morphological awareness is an important issue for EFL students' reading proficiency. This study is designed to investigate the following research questions:

1. Is the nature of morphological awareness contributing to EFL students' language processing in reading comprehension?

2. To what extent can morphological awareness be a predictor of vocabulary knowledge, apart from other skills such as phonological and syntactic processing?

Literature and theoretical background

In recent years, the role of metalinguistic awareness in the literature has attracted attention among psychologists and reading researchers. To understand the segmental nature of words, linguists in cognitive reading have emphasized the efficiency of 'bottom up' acquisition. Studies have promoted approaches to word learning, and further, to the decoding of written texts. Hence, metalinguistic awareness research has evolved through the experience of exploring learners' language learning processes (e.g., Bowey & Francis, 1991; Perfetti, Beck, Bell, & Hughes, 1987; Vellutino & Scanlon, 1987).

Cross-linguistic variations in morphological awareness between Chinese and English are structurally and functionally incomparable. In concatenative languages such as English, morphological formation generally entails affixes (e.g., prefixes, infixes and suffixes) in a linear system. Intraword information integration in English is an essential ability required to recognize a word, while Chinese semantic information in each logographic character depends on multiple representational levels to be retrieved, rather than on affix analysis (Koda, 2000). It has been further hypothesized that, among Chinese-speaking learners, the utilization of morphological awareness in L2 can be a great challenge, if there is no morphological instruction or treatment provided in the EFL classroom.

Morphological awareness

Morphological awareness is the ability to combine familiar spoken units of meaning or morphemes to create new meanings that can be used as an indicator of reading development (Charlisle, 1995). From a broader perspective, morphological awareness refers to a learner's grasp of morphological structure, as well as his or her capability of using the knowledge during morphological processing in visual word recognition (Koda, 2000). In English, the equivalent important skill for reading proficiency is phonological awareness, the ability to make words from different combinations of phonemes, or speech sounds. The prevalent belief about children's L1 morphological awareness relating to vocabulary acquisition and word recognition is that children who are knowledgeable about morphology are able to decompose unfamiliar words into familiar meaningful units—prefixes, roots, and suffixes—and then derive the meanings of the words by combining the units. However, the differences among languages in terms of orthographic "type"—the representational units, such as alphabetic, syllabic, or logographic units, have also contributed to different degrees of phonemic awareness in the transfer from L1 to L2 (Akamatsu, 1999; Haynes & Carr, 1990; Koda, 1999; Wang, Koda, & Perfetti, 2003). Thus, many studies have been conducted to examine the cross-linguistic differences, and have shown significant degrees of morphological and phonological awareness in word recognition. However, it is difficult to draw a uniform conclusion from

previous studies in which they have focused extensively on native English-speaking children; while paying only scant attention to EFL college or adult learners who have started learning L2 during their late childhood, such as the case for learners in Taiwan, who started their English language learning after the age of ten.

Morphological awareness and vocabulary acquisition

It has long been believed that morphological awareness is important in vocabulary growth. For example, Charlisle (1995) proposed that morphological awareness might be particularly important because “morphological decomposition and problem-solving provide one way to understand and learn the large number of derived words used in the books they read” (p. 205). Thus, the increase in knowledge of derived words is more likely to reflect a process of the acquisition that depends heavily on morphological analysis.

This process of morphological awareness enables children to figure out the meanings of newly encountered words, and may enhance their retention of words. Thus, morphological awareness is considered an important factor in children’s rapid vocabulary growth (Nagy & Anderson, 1984; Tyler & Nagy, 1990; White, Power, & White, 1989). English taught at schools contains morphologically complex words with a wide range of semantic transparency. Nagy & Anderson (1984) found that many complex words in school English have meanings that are ‘totally predicable’ (p. 310) from constituents (e.g., *senseless, senselessly*). At the other extreme are words in which there is “no discernible semantic connection” (p. 311) between a constituent and the whole word (e.g., *consider, considerable*). Charlisle (1988) and Leong (1989) categorized derived words into four types, depending on their orthographic or phonological change from the bases. They are (1) zero change (e.g., *care, careful*), (2) orthographic change (e.g., *begin, beginner*), (3) phonological change (e.g., *electric, electricity*), and (4) both orthographic and phonological change (e.g., *deep, depth*). Student made the least errors when producing derived forms which did not require either orthographic or phonological changes. For the same reason, can a language of logographic characters, such as Chinese, be acquired through morphological analysis? Are Chinese-speaking learners able to infer and recognize the meanings of unfamiliar words through morphological awareness? A number of scholars (Hatano, Kuhara, & Akiyama, 1981; Hoosain, 1992; Shu, Anderson, & Zhang, 1995; Tang, 1988) believe that morphological awareness plays an important role in Chinese (and Japanese) reading; however, very limited systematic research has been reported in the literature. A Chinese character usually corresponds to a single morpheme, and characters are the blocks of building longer, more complex words. Shu, Anderson, & Zhang’s cross-cultural study (1995) of how Chinese children learn unfamiliar words from context compared to how American children do, found that Chinese children were more likely to learn the meanings of morphologically transparent words than of morphologically opaque words, implying that Chinese children make more use of morphological analysis to infer word meanings.

Awareness of morphological structure and meaning

Research on the organization of the mental lexicon and on aspects of lexical access has led the morphological processing working toward the corpus of computing meaning from the constituent elements (Schreuder & Bayen, 1995). Structural analysis alone may be misleading because words can sound alike without being morphological relatives (e.g., *bear* and *beard*). Derwing (1976) found that semantic similarity was more important than phonetic similarity, but that phonetic similarity was more likely to influence judgments of relatedness by elementary children than high school students or adults.

Morphological awareness, as it contributes to reading, includes the ability to parse words and analyze morphemes to construct meaning. In line with this expectation, some developmental increases in the awareness of morphological structure and its link to word meanings have been examined. Freyd & Baron (1982) found that the students they studied were likely to define words from base forms with no regard to the affixes. In order to gather more direct evidence related to awareness of structure and meanings of morphologically complex words, their study included tasks of both structural analysis (decomposition and derivation of forms) and definition. The assumption was that the derivation task would be more closely related to the students' cognitive ability, based on their age, to define morphologically complex words than would the decomposition tasks, because the former may involve analysis of the meanings and the grammatical roles of the morphemic constituents. Windsor (1994) found that older students are significantly better than younger ones in terms of their morphological knowledge and the production of derivational suffixes. According to Templeton & Scarborough-Franks (1985), younger students are likely to read high frequency words more accurately than they do low frequency words, regardless of the familiarity of the base forms. Older students, on the other hand, might have sufficient experience with orthographic representation in reading for it to have an effect on their reading accuracy of low frequency words. After the effects of age and receptive vocabulary were accounted for, the most important component to be observed and explored in the EFL setting is the L2 lexical process, in contrast to undergoing the phonological and orthographic changes in the L1. The best-known example is the transfer of the L1 logographic effect observed in L2 alphabetic languages (Akamatsu, 1999; Wang & Geva, 2003).

Morphological awareness among L2 learners: Hypotheses

It has been found that in the absence of morphological awareness, learners are seriously handicapped in extracting even partial information from unfamiliar words while reading. In other words, the lack of analytical competence, in turn, restricts learners' lexical inference, retention and reading effectiveness (Parel, 2004). Based on the research cited, the present study hypothesized that (1) In the EFL setting, apart from the variables of phonological and morphosyntactic processing, morphological awareness has a consistent correlation with learners' ability to recognize morphologically derived words. (2) As a result

of morphological component instruction, the higher the acquisition of morphological awareness of word decomposition and inference by EFL learners, the better their reading comprehension will be.

Method

Participants

A total of 99 Taiwanese college students from two classes participated in this study. They were non-English majors, aged 19–21, and were considered to have intermediate proficiency in English based on the Intermediate General English Proficiency Exam held by the college administration as a placement test, at the time of their enrolment. Class A, consisting of 55 second-year college students majoring in business, was involved in an intervention program in one of their English reading courses that focused on morphological derivation, and thus they had experience with the analysis of morphological structure and the identification of derivational affixes in words. The duration of the intervention program was three hours per week for eighteen weeks within one semester. Class B, consisting of 44 second-year students with the same major, took the same English course with the regular English reading instruction, but with no additional instruction on morphology.

Intervention program

The students in class A were involved in an intensive program that focused on developing an understanding of morphology and orthographic knowledge. One approach applied in each session of the instruction was to demonstrate an inventory of derivational words that represented target morpheme patterns and structures containing compound words or base words attached with affixes. The instructional techniques were targeted on the development of stronger mental representations of lexical and morphological complexity. One of the requirements for students to fulfill was to use the knowledge they had acquired to infer or decode unfamiliar derivational morphemes within context, and to use cognitive strategies, such as orthographic rules, in their reading. It was noticed that proficiency was not exhibited until three to four weeks after students were exposed to and became aware of the relationship between functions and meanings of base words and their derived forms. At times, the pace of instruction was adjusted depending on the students' progress.

Measures

Three tests were developed to assess different aspects of morpheme identification, passage comprehension, and derivationally complex word recognition, respectively.

- **The Morpheme Discrimination (MD) Test**

This test was designed to determine whether a word part or derivational morpheme might have different meanings or word categories. The vocabulary items used in this test were extracted from the *Scholastic Aptitude English Test* (SAET). The test listed 15 groups of words. Each group consisted of four words that had the same affixes. Three words in each

group (question) shared a similar category of meaning or function (e.g., *best, smartest, strongest, harvest*). The first three words in the example refer to the same suffix *-est* for superlatives; but the *-est* in *harvest* is a part of the base word and has no specific meaning of its own. Word items in the test were rated for learners' sensitivity to morphemes with different meanings or functions.

- **The Passage Comprehension (PC) Test**

Participants in this test were required to read two short passages and choose a correct answer to fill in the blank of the given sentence (e.g., *For a few months in 1987, it_____ [seems, seem, was seemed, seemed] the world was about to change.*) This cloze test was chosen from the Reading Section of the intermediate level General English Proficiency Test (GEPT), and was designed to measure the learners' knowledge of morphemes and their decoding ability within context.

- **The Derivation Analysis—Word Identification (WI) Test**

The purpose of this test was to assess the students' ability to analyze and identify morphologically complex words. Two groups of words were given in two columns. Column A was made up of 15 base words which were chosen from the *Standard Frequency Index* (Carroll, Davies & Richman, 1971) and the *Scholastic Aptitude English Test* (SAET), and which were high-surface-frequency and productive words (e.g., *electric, appear*). Column B was made up of another 15 derivationally complex words, derived from the base words in Column A, with morphological affixes attached, and with changed meanings. They included nouns (e.g., *-ance, -ion, -ity*, etc.) and adjectives (e.g., *-al, -able, -sive, -ous*, etc.) which had either high or low frequency. All words in Column A had transparent relations with Column B. (e.g., *cycle-recycle, sense-sensation*)

Analysis

Table 1 summarizes the means and standard deviations for all the data, and shows the performance of the two classes of college students for all measures. The independent variables in the three measures were the MD test and the WI test, and the dependent variable was the PC test. In the MD test, the difference between the average raw scores of class A and class B was 32.18 points (71.11/38.93), while the scores of the two classes for the PC test were within 11.8 points (55.75/43.95) of each other, indicating a distinct effect of the semester's morphological instruction; see Table 1. The scores of the MD and the PC tests for the two classes, showed a significant difference in the performance between class A and class B ($p < .01$) (see Table 1); that is, class A, as a result of the morphological instruction, greatly outperformed class B on both the morpheme discrimination test and the passage comprehension test.

Correlational analyses involving the MD, PC, and WI Tests

Intercorrelations among all measures included in the present study are displayed separately for class A and class B in Tables 2 and 3. As indicated in these tables,

Table 1: Means and standard deviations for classes A and B (Standard deviations are in parentheses)

Measures	Class				t-Test
	Class A		Class B		
	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)	
MD (independent variable)	(71.11)	13.47	(38.93)	12.75	12.07**
PC (dependent variable)	(55.75)	21.04	(43.95)	13.36	3.40**
WI (independent variable)	(46.69)	15.58	(42.98)	13.87	1.21

Note: ** $p < .01$

Table 2: Class A. Correlations among 3 measures of morphological awareness (n = 55)

	Morpheme Discrimination	Passage Comprehension	Word Identification
MD (Morpheme Discrimination)	–		
PC (Passage Comprehension)	.20	–	
WI (Word Identification)	.30*	.51**	–

Note: Reported values are Pearson correlation coefficients

** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

Table 3: Class B. Correlations among 3 measures of morphological awareness (n = 44)

	Morpheme Discrimination	Passage Comprehension	Word Identification
MD (Morpheme Discrimination)	–		.24
PC (Passage Comprehension)	.09	–	.41**
WI (Word Identification)	.26*	.41**	–

Note: Reported values are Pearson correlation coefficients

** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

correlations for class A and class B both appear below the diagonal. For class A, the table showed that the measures had moderate to higher inter-correlations. Given the similar level of English language proficiency of the students in the two classes, the WI (derivational word identification) test scores for class A were strongly associated with the scores of the MD test and PC test ($r = .20, p < .05$) (see Table 2). Simultaneously, the WI (derivational word identification) test scores were also significantly correlated with the PC (reading comprehension) scores for class B ($r = .30, p < .05$). The strength of the linear associations among these variables suggests that the ability to identify derivationally complex words has a direct influence on learners' reading proficiency and the capability of discriminating morphemes in words (see Table 3). As expected, a significant

relationship was found between the identification of derivationally complex words and reading comprehension (WI and PC) but not between morpheme discrimination and reading comprehension (MD and PC) for both classes.

It is reasonable to assume that learners who are more skilled in identifying the meaning of complex words are also better in the comprehension of text. Table 4 indicates that the Word Identification test was more predictive in terms of reading comprehension for both class A and B, i.e., variation of word identification (WI), rather than morpheme discrimination (MD), can be a better predictor for reading comprehension. (adjusted $R^2 = .08$, class A, adjusted $R^2 = .13$, class B) (see Table 5). A less expected result from both class A and B was the non-significant correlations between reading comprehension and the ability to identify meanings and functions of morphemes. It appears that learners' reading comprehension depends greatly on word identification, but less on being able to distinguish morphemes.

Linear model

Table 5 indicates that the ability to discriminate derivational morphemes is more predictive for word identification for class A, which suggests that the ability to recognize morphemes may influence word identification in a predictable way. Chart 1 is a scatter diagram displaying the relationship between the MD and the WI by plotting the value of bivariate observations. The trend roughly following the linear indicates the best fit of the output, that is, the more the learners' morphological awareness is developed, the more the interaction between the morphological sensitivity and their receptive vocabulary knowledge background is processed. Charts 2 and 3 also represent the regression lines for the variables of the WI and the PC between classes A and B, respectively. In Table 4, linear regression analyses predicted PC from the MD and WI tests by using the enter

Table 4: Linear regression analyses predicting passage comprehension from the MD and WI by using Enter Method for variable selection for classes A and B

Predictor	PC (Class A)				PC (Class B)			
	B	SE B	β	T	B	SE B	β	T
MD (Morpheme Discrimination)	.08	.19	.05	.43	-.28	.15	-.02	-.15
WI (Word Identification)	.67	.17	.49	3.95**	.40	.14	.42	2.86**

Note: ** $p < .01$, Adjusted $R^2 = .24$ (class A), Adjusted $R^2 = .13$ (class B)

Table 5: Linear regression analyses predicting word identification from the MD for classes A and B

Predictor	WI (Class A)				WI (Class B)			
	B	SE B	β	T	B	SE B	β	T
MD (Morpheme Discrimination)	.35	.15	.30	2.32*	.28	.16	.26	1.72*

Note: * $p < .05$, Adjusted $R^2 = .08$ (class A), Adjusted $R^2 = .04$ (class B)

method for variables within both classes A and B. It is apparent from the table that the ability to identify morphologically complex words based on given base words reveals a consistent dependence of learners' reading comprehension performance. These outcomes also indicate that Taiwanese learners of English as L2, despite the dissimilarity between English and Chinese in acquiring word formation, have benefited greatly, not only from the acquisition of morphological awareness skills, but also from the increase in morphological awareness cross-linguistically.

Chart 1: Class A—Scatter diagram of the relationship between MD and WI

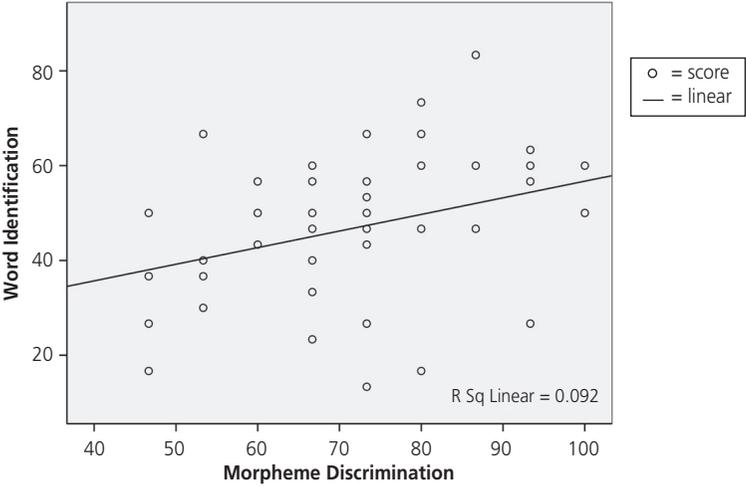


Chart 2: Class A—Scatter diagram of the relationship between WI and PC

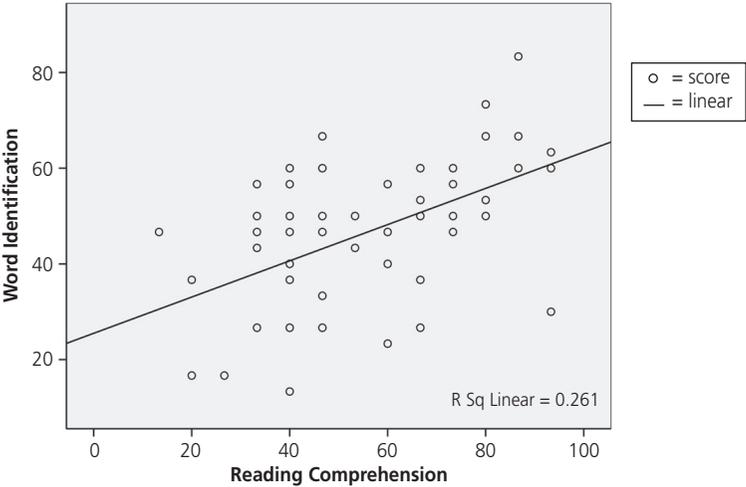
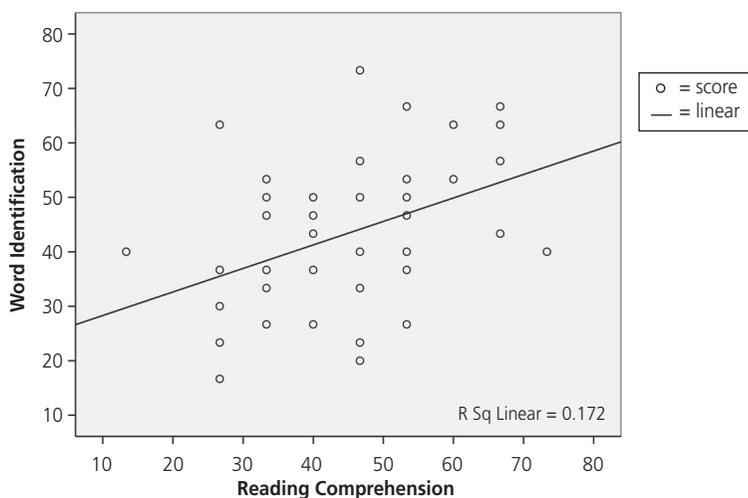


Chart 3: Class B—Scatter diagram of the relationship between WI and PC



Results

In order to test whether the three morphological awareness skills uniquely explain variance in the three measures, regression analyses were performed to explore the extent to which morphological awareness made a contribution to the EFL learners' reading comprehension, based on two tests conducted in two groups of second-year college non-English major students. Since it is generally accepted that morphological awareness facilitates lexical processing and acquisition, its relation to L2 vocabulary knowledge was explored through correlation analysis. Three variables were entered: (1) analysis of the efficiency of morpheme discrimination; (2) a cloze test for passage comprehension; (3) word component identification—recognition of derivationally complex words. Correlation analyses are listed respectively in Tables 2 and 3, together with scatter diagrams in Charts 1 and 2.

In this study, the students who were involved in the morphological instruction program demonstrated clinically significant growth in morphological awareness, orthographic knowledge, and reading comprehension. The significantly higher scores of class A, as shown in Table 1, indicate that class A outperformed class B. Across groups, the three morphological awareness measures were associated with one another either moderately or highly. The data demonstrated a positive correlation between reading comprehension and word identification, suggesting that being more able to identify morphological components in words contributes to learners' reading proficiency. It also suggests that Taiwanese learners in their L1 Chinese learning are adept at extracting clues from semantic roots and integrating them with character-external information, which might be in contrast to their L2 processing experience; nevertheless, L2 morphological awareness accordingly can be acquired without the process of L1 transfer or interference taking place. Interestingly, this might explain the

non-significant relationship between the ability to distinguish derivational affixes and to recognize lexical items. In the present study, the base words in the learners' mental lexicon played a vital role as their fundamental linguistic background for further morphological decomposition and form-to-function mapping in the processing; that is, without the knowledge of core (or base) word information equipped, morpheme awareness may not be effectively and sensitively learned and acquired. It therefore follows that, in an EFL setting, morpheme discrimination in orthographic properties may be less influential on learners' expansion in vocabulary. The results give rise to a specific theoretical possibility. On the one hand, the contrast between L1 and L2 processing experiences may determine the extent to which the L2 morphological awareness is, without L1 transfer, shaped by L2 processing, such as decomposition of words; on the other hand, provided EFL learners have a richer L2 lexical background, morphological awareness such as form-to-function affixes will be acquired more easily and will further strengthen their reading comprehension.

Conclusions

The results of the study found that morphological awareness in lexical processing makes a great contribution to vocabulary recognition and reading comprehension for those who receive morphological instruction. It was also found that there are both similarities and dissimilarities between EFL learners and English native-speaking learners in the acquisition of developmental morphological awareness, as reflected in the current theories and research.

This study observed three different types of lexical processing that support the hypotheses:

1. In an EFL setting, morphological awareness can be acquired during lexical processing, to some degree, if learners are provided with proper morphological instruction. Accordingly, learners' morphological awareness becomes more distinct as their vocabulary expands. There is also good evidence that the knowledge of morphological properties indicates and predicts reading comprehension performance, in spite of the fact that most attention has been given to the top-down conceptualization characteristic of L2 reading studies.
2. For EFL learners, the raising of morphological awareness has a consistent correlation with the ability to recognize derivational affixes, which is a similar effect to what has been proven for L1 native-speaking learners. The results of the present study also clearly demonstrate that the examination of morphological awareness is separable from learners' mental lexicon knowledge in predicting simultaneously measured recognition of morphologically complex words.
3. Such a program provides direct and focal instruction in the realization of English morphological derivation, despite the dissimilarity of acquisition processes between two typologically unrelated languages.

These preliminary results may facilitate, among researchers, more postulations for understanding interactions between learners' morphological

awareness and vocabulary growth, particularly in the EFL context. Given the concerns about wide gaps between different lexical backgrounds existing in EFL learners' language knowledge, a continued exploration of the value of morphological awareness for future vocabulary development and inference of unknown lexis is worth pursuing, particularly in the EFL setting.

However, the items used in the tests were admittedly not ideal. A few of the vocabulary brought together for the tests were not seen very often in the EFL textbooks, which were deliberately used merely for their morphological derivational construction (e.g., No. 1, 4, 14, and 15 in the MD test, and No. 7, 8, 12 in the WI test). These shortcomings of the present study lead to recommendations that future research may consider these variations more systematically. Apart from the limitations mentioned, the study has highlighted the importance of cognition in morphological instruction for EFL learners, and may hold promise to facilitate morphological skills to advance orthographic knowledge, decoding abilities, and reading skills. Such findings may have further implications and applications for future language research.

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Effects of Pronunciation Instruction with a Focus on Rhythm in EFL Classes

■ Kuo-Chan Sun

The State University of New York at Buffalo

ABSTRACT: *This study investigated whether or not pronunciation instruction with a focus on English rhythm can improve Taiwanese EFL learners' pronunciation. Two intact groups of high school students at intermediate proficiency level participated in the study. The experimental group received the pronunciation instruction with an emphasis on English rhythm, while the instruction for the control group focused on vowels and consonants. Both groups of learners were asked to complete these tasks: reading a list of English words, phrases, sentences and passages before and after 10-week consecutive instruction, and their speeches were recorded. All speech samples were submitted to native speakers for an impressionistic evaluation of learner's pronunciation. Results showed that (1) the experimental group made statistically significant progress in the overall performance, especially in the Word List and Passage Reading tasks, (2) lower proficiency learners in the experimental group made significant progress in overall pronunciation whereas higher proficiency learners showed the least improvement; however, no significant improvement was found in the control group, and (3) males in the experimental group progressed significantly better than the females; however, there was no significant improvement found for both females and males in the group that received segmental instruction.*

Importance of pronunciation instruction

It has been commonly recognized that teaching pronunciation is not an easy task. Since 1969, when Scovel claimed that native-like pronunciation could not be achieved and was an unrealistic objective, the goal of teaching pronunciation has rarely aimed at making English learners sound like native speakers of English (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2000). Except for a few highly gifted and motivated individuals, most learners have been trying to achieve a more modest and realistic goal—to prevent their pronunciation from becoming an obstacle to communication. Consequently, in the past few decades, teaching methods such as the Direct Method and comprehension-based approaches have been proposed under the assumption that “errors in pronunciation were part of the natural acquisition process and would disappear as students gained communicative proficiency” (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2000, p. 5). Other methods and approaches (e.g., grammar translation and reading-

based approaches) have either ignored pronunciation or taught pronunciation through imitation and repetition, or through imitation supported by analysis and linguistic information (i.e., Audiolingualism) (Larsen-Freeman, 1986).

With the introduction of contrastive analysis hypothesis, which claims that the acquisition of second language is filtered by the learner's first language, the notion of interference of first language on second language acquisition has been widely discussed; many studies (Broselow, Hurtig, & Ringen, 1987; Sato, 1987; Tarone, 1987) showed that this interference is particularly observable in the acquisition of intonation and rhythm. In addition, with the growing importance of communication in language teaching, using language to communicate becomes central in language classrooms. Since some studies (Johnson & Newport, 1989; Bongaerts & Summeren, 1997) indicate that there is a threshold level of pronunciation for non-native speakers of English, the focus on language as a communication tool brings renewed urgency to the teaching of pronunciation. Thus, if one falls below this level, s/he will have oral communication problems no matter how excellent and extensive his or her control of English grammar and vocabulary might be (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2000). Pronunciation is the primary medium through which one brings his or her use of language to the attention of other people. It is also this indispensable role of pronunciation in communication that makes the speaker vulnerable to his or her listeners. Therefore, pronunciation is very important in language teaching and learning.

Importance of rhythm

Learning to speak a foreign language involves learning another phonological system. Learners who fail to overcome the barrier of the sound patterns of the native language when speaking the target language may not be easily understood. Native speakers often regard this type of speech as a "foreign accent." Although an accent may not cause misunderstanding, it may sometimes hinder communication in one way or another. The question of how their speech can sound natural, therefore, is an important task for language learners.

According to Fries (1954), rhythm is one of the essentials of good pronunciation. Studies have shown that rhythm and intonation are very critical for judging good pronunciation, and many teachers of English pronunciation have called attention to rhythm and have placed the need for accurate rhythm above the need for accurate individual sounds (Anderson-Hsieh, Johnson, & Koehler, 1992; Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2000). Thus, both the language teachers and learners should pay attention to rhythm in addition to the sound segments.

Second or foreign language learners with a good command of the sounds of the language may still be frustrated when speaking with native speakers. Sometimes they find it difficult to make the listeners understand what they want to express even with the combination of correct vocabulary and grammatical structure. Sometimes they may miss or misunderstand some intended meanings of native speakers. These problems that language learners face are directly or

indirectly associated with unfamiliarity with the rhythmic patterns of English.

Recently, more and more researchers have confirmed the importance of rhythm in pronunciation (Anderson-Hsieh, Johnson, & Koehler, 1992; Kuo, Chiang, & Wang, 2000). Much evidence has also shown that learning to manipulate the rhythm of the language will improve not only learners' speech, but also learner's comprehension of spoken English because rhythm is extremely important as an organizing principle of speech (Adams, 1979). Thus, more emphasis should be placed on the rhythmic features of the English language.

Purpose and research questions

The traditional way of teaching English pronunciation focuses on individual sounds—vowels and consonants; however, is mastering individual sounds of English enough to acquire good English pronunciation? The answer is probably NO! Studies in Chinese EFL learners' pronunciation have shown that though many learners have a fairly good pronunciation of individual sounds, their speaking of English sounds is unnatural and sometimes incomprehensible (Kuo, Chiang, & Wang, 2000). This problem is primarily due to faulty speech rhythm. It is the main purpose of the study to investigate whether or not pronunciation instruction with a focus on English rhythm can have a better effect on the overall impression of the Chinese EFL learners' pronunciation. Hence, an experimental teaching in pronunciation was conducted, and the following research questions were addressed:

1. Is there any relationship between two types of pronunciation instructions (one emphasizing sound segments and the other focusing on speech rhythm) and scores judged by native speakers?
2. Which categories of pronunciation (word list, phrases, sentences, a passage) do learners show more improvement in after receiving pronunciation instruction?
3. Does the degree of improvement of English pronunciation correlate with learners' language proficiency and gender?

The study

Participants

Seventy students from two classes at a senior high school, Taiwan, R.O.C. participated in this study. Before the experiment began, a background questionnaire and an English proficiency test were given to the students of both classes¹. All participants in the study were native speakers of both Mandarin Chinese and Taiwanese. The subjects' ages ranged from 16-18 years. Of the two classes, one class (Class A) consisted of 32 students, among whom 18 were male and 14 were female and another class (Class B) consisted of 38 students, with 24 males and 14 females.

¹ The proficiency tests were students' first mid-term exams.

According to the background questionnaire, all the participants reported that they had studied English formally for about 4–5 years in junior and senior high schools in Taiwan. They attended regular English classes for 5–6 hours a week, which constituted a formal language learning setting. None of them had studied abroad or learned other foreign languages. Neither of the classes had received specific and systematic training in English pronunciation. The reports of English proficiency tests indicated that before the experiment was conducted, the mean score was 53.47 in Class A and 66.89 in Class B.

The two classes were randomly assigned to the two teaching method groups, with class A as the experimental group receiving pronunciation instruction with an emphasis on English rhythm, and class B as the control group receiving pronunciation instruction with emphasis on individual consonant and vowel sounds.

The pre- and post-test tasks

The main concern of this study was the comparison of the two instructional treatments on overall impressions of English pronunciation, with one treatment focusing on segmental features and the other on English rhythm. In order to evaluate these treatments, the production materials included four major categories: a list of English words, phrases, sentences and a passage.

In order to make the interpretation of the experimental results more objective, the selection of words for production tasks covered a wide range of aspects in English pronunciation. The six common English word stress patterns, as shown in Table 1 were selected as a framework for choosing words in the word list, ●, ●●, ●●●, ●●●●, ●●●●, and ●●●● where ● represents a stressed syllable while ● represents an unstressed syllable.

In order to avoid frequency effects, the words, phrases and a passage chosen to appear in production tasks were taken from English textbooks, which both groups of participants had used when they were in the first year of senior high school. Thus, all subjects were familiar with the words, phrases, sentences and the passage they read.

Table 1: Six common English word stress patterns chosen in production tasks

- a. ● : how, lunch, ring
- b. ●● : better, yo-yo, window
- c. ●●● : today, alone, employ
- d. ●●●● : animal, medium, Germany
- e. ●●●● : dishonest, allowance, fantastic
- f. ●●●● : disagree, interrupt, afternoon

Rating scale²

A rating scale was designed for impressionistic evaluation of English pronunciation. The scale was divided into 10 points. The higher the score a participant gained the better pronunciation s/he had. Each point was followed by a descriptor specifying the detailed pronunciation problems (both segmental and suprasegmental features). In order to facilitate the rating, a few simple words in parentheses for describing speech and evaluating the way it affected communication were also included. For instance, words “Not bad, but not impressive” described a participant who gained score 5 on the pronunciation performance. Finally, the rating scale was also submitted to raters for getting raters’ opinions on how to enhance inter-scoring reliability.

Listener-raters

The 5 raters who participated in assessing the students’ pronunciation were all American English native speakers. Of the 5 raters, 3 were university professors, and 2 were senior high school English teachers. The scoring was done impressionistically. Each rater rated each speech sample for an overall impression on a 10-point scale ranging from “1” (extremely bad) to “10” (native-speaker fluency). All raters rated every single speech and the final score for each speech sample was the average of the 5 scores given by each of the raters. In order to make scoring consistent and have all raters gain a clearer picture of the scoring procedure, three sample speeches were selected, and each was rated as 3, 5 and 7 respectively. In addition, the judgments of each speech sample in the categories of word list, phrases, sentences and a passage were rated by using the same scale.

Instructional materials

The instructional materials were categorized into two parts. As for the experimental group, a wide range of supplementary materials such as *Targeting Pronunciation*, Miller, 2000; *Clear Speech*, Gilbert, 1993; *Jazz Chants*, Graham, 1978 was used. Each aspect of suprasegmentals covered in the materials—syllable stress, word stress, sentence stress, linking and reductions—were used in this experimental teaching. For the control group, the materials such as *Pronunciation Pairs*, Baker & Goldstein, 1990; *Accurate English*, Dauer, 1993 included two major aspects: vowels and consonants. All exercises presented to both groups were primarily extracted from various pronunciation textbooks and used in the experimental teaching for listening, identification, perception, repetition practice or other speaking activities.

Instruction intervention

The subjects in the experimental group received 10 to 15 minutes of pronunciation instruction in each period, four periods a week (for a total of approxi-

² The design of rating scale in the present study was based on Professor John Truscott’s rating scale for scoring at the recommendation admissions oral interview in National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan R.O.C.

mately one hour per week). The duration of the experiment was 10 weeks consecutively. The amount of time spent on teaching pronunciation was limited to 10 to 15 minutes in each class for two reasons. First, language should be learned as a whole of which pronunciation is but a part. Language learning should integrate the four skills—listening, speaking, reading and writing. Each area of language skills is equally important, and spending 10 to 15 minutes on pronunciation teaching within the limited class time is appropriate. It is also more practical to have 10 to 15 minutes for pronunciation work in class because the learners would be more motivated to practice English pronunciation when they do not have to concentrate on a specific language skill for too long.

In the experimental group, the teacher made no attempt to focus on individual consonant and vowel sounds; instead the teacher emphasized the patterns of English rhythm through extensive use of supplementary materials, explicit instruction of suprasegmental features such as rhythm, word stress and sentence stress and the use of visual cues such as color-highlighting, hand-raising and clapping.

Students in the control group received the same amount of time of instruction. The teacher focused on the English consonants and vowels, recognizing the segmental properties and differentiating between sounds and modeling the ways of producing sounds.

Procedures

In the study, a questionnaire and an English proficiency test were administered before the instructional treatment began. This served to establish an understanding of the students' English learning background and their level of English proficiency. In addition, a pre-test was designed to provide comparison with a post-test, which was administered immediately after the experimental treatments.

The pre-test was in the form of oral production, the results of which were tape-recorded to be submitted to the five raters. It was conducted one week before the instructional treatment began. The implementation of the pre-test was to understand students' current pronunciation performance and served as a baseline for comparing their performance after the 10-week pronunciation instruction.

Before the recording of the speech, in order to familiarize the subjects with the production materials, all the words, phrases, sentences, and passages were read once before the beginning of the recording. The speech samples were collected from all 70 Chinese EFL participants and recorded on a Sony CFS B11 recorder, an Aiwa JS 489 recorder, and two Sony CFS E105 recorders. Both groups of students were asked to read the complete list of items aloud (including the list of English words, phrases, sentences and the passage).

Instructional syllabi and lesson plans were designed for both groups. In addition, a teaching log was kept to record students' learning process, improvements in pronunciation and responses to the instruction.

After a 10-week instruction, a post-test in the same form as the pre-test was given to the subjects. Both groups of participants were asked to read the

Table 2: Mean scores, standard deviations, and minimum and maximum values for two groups at the pre-test and post-test

	Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum Value	Maximum Value
Pre-test	Experimental	32	4.17	1.68	1.00	7.60
	Control	38	4.72	1.37	2.00	7.00
Post-test	Experimental	32	4.81	1.37	1.00	7.40
	Control	38	4.74	1.05	2.80	7.00

same items as those in the pre-test, and their readings were also tape-recorded. All speech samples including pre-test and post-test were later submitted to five native speakers for their assessment of students' pronunciation. The improvement of each group on pronunciation scores was examined, and the data was analyzed statistically.

Results and discussion

The overall pronunciation performance

Before starting the statistical analysis through SPSS, inter-rater reliability was calculated using the procedure described in Hatch & Lazaraton (1991). The results showed that correlations among the raters were highly significant, and the results discussed in the following chapters are based on the collapsed scores from these five raters³.

The statistics of the pronunciation performance of the pre-test and post-test are presented in Table 2. The results showed that, in the pre-test, the experimental and control groups were rated 4.17 and 4.72 respectively on average for the overall pronunciation performance. In contrast, in the post-test, the mean score for the experimental group was higher than that of the control group (the average scores for the experimental and control group were 4.81 and 4.74).

However, the differences of mean values on the improvement of pronunciation performance between the experimental and control groups were not sufficient to indicate whether the total 10 weeks of pronunciation instructions affected students' overall pronunciation performance. Therefore, a non-parametric statistical analysis was conducted in order to see if the improvement reaches a significant level after the instruction.

In order to determine whether the subjects of the two groups had similar performance in the pre-test, a statistical test was run. The results showed that there were no significant differences between the two groups of subjects ($Z = -1.200$, $p > .05$ for the Word List Reading task; $Z = -1.509$, $p > .05$ for the Phrases Reading task; $Z = -1.794$, $p > .05$ for the Sentences Reading task; $Z =$

³ The correlation yielded Pearson coefficients (r) of .738 and .732 (indicating a moderate level of inter-rater agreement) on the pre-test and post-test on overall pronunciation performance, separately.

-1.431, $p > .05$ for Passage Reading task; and $Z = -1.395$, $p > .05$ for overall impression of speakers' pronunciation). Therefore, participants in both groups had approximately the same level of pronunciation performance before the instructional treatment began.

To establish the statistical significance of the mentioned improvement, another statistical test was run using the gain scores of the subjects between pre-test and post-test. The results showed that the subjects in the experimental group made statistically significant progress in their overall performance, $Z = 2.275$, $p < .05$.

The results of the present study echo those of previous studies, which support the positive effects of focusing on global production skills. Like those in Derwing, Munro, & Wiebe's (1997) and Perlmutter's (1989) studies, students who received pronunciation instruction with a focus on suprasegmental features produced significant improvements in intelligibility and comprehension. In the present study, both groups of students showed improvements as a result of instruction; however, only the experimental group performed significantly better with production tasks on the post-test compared with the overall impression on the pre-test ($Z = 2.275$, $p < .05$). This suggests that pronunciation instruction with a focus on rhythm plays a role in explaining the overall pronunciation progress of the students in the experimental group.

In addition, the results of the present study also indicate that the suprasegmentals of a stress-timed language such as English can in fact be learnt by L2 adult learners with a syllable-timed native language such as Chinese. Although a number of studies (Johnson & Newport, 1989; Patkowski, 1990) have shown the disadvantages of adolescents and adults in learning new sound system, the present study shows that with systematic instruction and sufficient practices, adult learners can still have significant improvements on overall pronunciation performance.

Apart from significant pronunciation improvements in the experimental group, the classroom observation showed that the students in the experimental group seemed to show greater motivation in learning than those in the control group, especially when the experimental group learned nursery rhymes in the classroom. One possible explanation is that perhaps by learning the rhymes, the learners were not only playing with their teacher and classmates, but also realizing how they were "empowered" in gaining control over the language. In other words, the learners gained psychological relief and increased confidence. The students' responses also support this account. Many students in the experimental group reported that they felt it was fun to learn rhymes, and rhymes were easier to remember and easier to say. Also, they could control the variation: by a slight change of letter or word, a new structure was created. For example, "Humpty Dumpty," can be changed into "Turkey Lurkey" with a slight alteration of sounds. This also reflects the fact that the affective factor is very important for second language learners.

Moreover, both the four production tasks (Word List, Phrases, Sentences, and Passage Reading) and the focus of the pronunciation instruction have an influence on the findings, and these are discussed in the next section.

The effects of instruction on four production tasks in the two groups

In an attempt to examine the effects of the two types of pronunciation instruction on the reading of the word list, phrases, sentences and passage production tasks, a series of statistical tests were carried out comparing the subjects' performances between pre-test and post-test. The results showed that the experimental group showed significant improvements in the Word List and Passage production tasks ($Z = -2.33, p < .05$ for Word List task and $Z = -3.62, p < .05$ for Passage task). However, the control group showed significant improvement only on the passage production task ($Z = -2.37, p < .05$). As in the passage production task, both groups showed a significant improvement after the 10-week pronunciation instructions. A Mann-Whitney U test was carried out to determine whether, indeed, there was a significant difference in the mean scores of the Passage production task between the experimental and control groups. The result showed there was no significance, $Z = 1.86, p > .05$. These results are summarized in Table 3.

As shown in Table 3, in the control group, the only clear evidence of improvement was in the Passage production task ($Z = -2.37, p < .05$). However, participants in the experimental group showed significant improvements in Word List and Passage Reading tasks ($Z = -2.33, p < .05$ for Word List task and $Z = -3.62, p < .05$ for Passage reading task). Although the significant improvements in the experimental group were found only in the Word List and Passage Reading tasks, there was a trend in a positive direction for two other production tasks (Phrase and Sentence Reading tasks); i.e., participants' intelligibility and comprehensibility scores at post-test were higher than those at pre-test.

The results suggested that pronunciation instruction with a focus on English rhythm was effective not only in segmental features but also in suprasegmentals. The outcome is congruent with previous findings that rhythmic patterns, including the location of stress in word rhythm and the number of intervening unstressed syllables in the flow of speech, are very crucial elements in intelligible pronunciation (Anderson-Hsieh & Venkatagiri, 1992; Derwing, Munro, & Wiebe, 1997; Perlmutter, 1989). Therefore, Chinese students can benefit from receiving instruction in the management of English speech rhythm and improve their English pronunciation. Apart from confirming the efficacy of the teaching of English rhythm, no significant change was found in the Word List production task in the control group, which lends further support for the claim

Table 3: Effects of pronunciation instruction on four production tasks in the two groups

	Experimental group (N = 32)			Control group (N = 38)		
	Pre-test	Post-test	Sig.	Pre-test	Post-test	Sig.
Word List	4.26	4.94	$Z^* = -2.33$	4.72	4.65	$Z = -.55$
Phrases	4.59	4.87	$Z = -.932$	5.11	4.77	$Z = -2.68$
Sentences	4.30	4.71	$Z = -1.67$	4.90	4.44	$Z = -3.29$
Passage	3.82	4.71	$Z^* = -3.62$	4.33	4.78	$Z^* = -2.37$

* $p < .05$

that mastering individual sounds of English does not guarantee that a student's pronunciation is good (Derwing, Munro, & Wiebe, 1997).

One interesting finding is that both pronunciation-specific groups evidenced significant improvements in the passage production task. A possible explanation for this phenomenon may be due to the listeners' point of view. In the Passage production task, compared with the Word List and Phrase Reading tasks, listeners might have been better able to notice errors made by the speakers in the Word List and Phrase Reading tasks, but tend to neglect the errors in the Passage production task. This is because the possible number of errors was relatively small, and listeners could comprehend the speech by the context. Therefore, a segmental error was likely to be more salient in a single word or phrase than in a 2-minute-long sample of speech (such as Passage Reading task) containing many errors and error types (grammatical, phonological, fluency, discourse, etc.). Munro & Derwing's study (1995) supports this account. They found that there was a significant correlation between the phonemic and phonetic errors and the perceived comprehensibility, and that listeners sometimes rated utterances as heavily accented when they were able to transcribe the words perfectly.

The relationship between language proficiency and pronunciation performance

Tables 4 and 5 represent a statistical comparison between three-language proficiency levels in the experimental and control groups, respectively.

Tables 6 and 7 present pronunciation performances in the three language proficiency level groups. In the experimental group, intermediate proficiency groups showed significant improvement on Sentences and Passage production tasks ($Z = -2.637, p < .05$ for Sentences production task and $Z = -2.094, p < .05$ for Passage production task). The significant improvement in the low proficiency

Table 4: Comparative statistics of three language proficiency levels in the experimental group

Proficiency Group	N	Mean	Minimum Value	Maximum Value
Low	11	27.36	9	47
Intermediate	11	57.90	49	69
High	10	77.30	70	86
All	32	53.47	9	86

Table 5: Comparative statistics of three language proficiency levels in the control group

Proficiency Group	N	Mean	Minimum Value	Maximum Value
Low	13	48.77	20	66
Intermediate	14	71.00	67	75
High	11	82.36	76	93
All	38	66.89	20	93

group existed only on the Passage production task ($Z = -2.553, p < .05$).

In the control group, high proficiency group showed significant improvement on Phrase and Sentences Reading tasks ($Z = -2.505, p < .05$ for Phrase Reading task and $Z = -2.655, p < .05$ for Sentences Reading task), and the intermediate proficiency group showed significant progress on Sentences Reading task ($Z = -2.924, p < .05$).

These results showed that participants in the experimental group showed much greater improvement than the ones in the control group. If we look at the performance of the different proficiency groups, the lower, intermediate and higher proficiency students in the control group showed no significant improvement in overall impression of pronunciation performance, while the intermediate proficiency experimental group improved significantly. The results are consistent with the findings of previous studies that found that after receiving suprasegmental instruction, lower proficiency learners made

Table 6: Pronunciation performance in high, intermediate and low proficiency groups in the experimental group

Proficiency Group	High (N = 10)			Intermediate (N = 11)			Low (N = 11)		
	Pre-test	Post-test	Sig.	Pre-test	Post-test	Sig.	Pre-test	Post-test	Sig.
Word List	4.88	5.38	Z = -.491	4.33	5.16	Z = -1.800	3.60	4.31	Z = -1.530
Phrases	5.08	5.32	Z = -.211	4.75	5.06	Z = -.665	3.96	4.27	Z = -.669
Sentences	4.88	5.24	Z = -.594	4.58	5.02	Z = -1.073	3.51	3.91	Z = -1.190
Passages	4.67	5.26	Z = -1.051	4.06	5.15	Z = -2.637*	2.82	3.78	Z = -2.553*
Overall Impression	4.89	5.38	Z = -1.067	4.42	5.15	Z = -2.094*	3.33	3.96	Z = -1.327

* $p < .05$

Table 7: Pronunciation performance in high, intermediate and low proficiency groups in the control group

Proficiency Group	High (N = 11)			Intermediate (N = 14)			Low (N = 13)		
	Pre-test	Post-test	Sig.	Pre-test	Post-test	Sig.	Pre-test	Post-test	Sig.
Word List	5.64	5.24	Z = -1.227	4.80	4.83	Z = -.316	3.86	3.95	Z = -.350
Phrases	5.11	5.75	Z = -2.505*	5.16	4.77	Z = -1.889	4.51	4.49	Z = -.154
Sentences	4.95	5.53	Z = -2.655*	4.36	5.07	Z = -2.924*	4.19	4.11	Z = -.312
Passages	5.33	5.53	Z = -.281	4.37	4.74	Z = -1.829	3.46	4.18	Z = -1.871
Overall Impression	5.58	5.38	Z = -1.251	4.87	4.73	Z = -.760	3.83	4.20	Z = -1.367

* $p < .05$

significant progress in overall pronunciation performance whereas higher proficiency learners made the least improvement (Derwing, Munro, & Wiebe, 1997, 1998; Kuo, 1997).

However, when considering performance in specific production tasks, it is worth noting that although students in the lower and intermediate proficiency experimental groups in the present study improved significantly, parallel to Kuo's (1997) findings in the suprasegmentals group, the pattern of pronunciation performance in the control group deviates from that of Kuo's results, in that the lower, intermediate and higher proficiency levels showed no significant improvement in the group who received the traditional pronunciation instruction. The plausible explanation for this difference, according to Kuo, would be the existence of a ceiling effect. Higher proficiency level students who showed no significant change in pronunciation performance had already reached a certain level of pronunciation performance; therefore, there was no significant improvement found in the post-test data. However, in Derwing, Munro, & Wiebe's (1998) study, which hypothesized that global production skills in pronunciation for ESL students were essential in the improvement of comprehensibility and fluency, the results still showed that both the global and segmental groups showed improvement in the Sentence Reading task. In the present study, as shown in Table 7, the results showed that students in the control group with high proficiency level still had significant improvement in the phrase and sentence production tasks. Therefore, the results of the present study are not strongly in favor of the abandonment of a segmental focus in pronunciation teaching. Instead, the attention to both rhythm and segmental concerns benefits Chinese EFL students.

The relationship between gender and pronunciation performance

Tables 8 and 9 present the comparison of pronunciation performance between female and male groups. A series of statistical tests was conducted and the results showed that only males in the experimental group had significant improvement on pronunciation performance ($Z = -2.797, p < .05$ in Word List production task; $Z = -2.200, p < .05$ in Sentences production task; $Z = -3.270, p < .05$ in Passage production task; $Z = -2.719, p < .05$ for overall impression on pronunciation performance).

As shown in tables 8 and 9, there is a relationship between gender differences and pronunciation performance. Overall, male participants in the experimental group progressed significantly more than females; however, there was no significant improvement found for both females and males in the group that received segmental instruction. This result echoes the finding that students who received instruction with a focus on English rhythm had noteworthy progress, while ones who received segment-based pronunciation instruction did not. Moreover, further comparison between the two groups of participants who received rhythm instructions (female and male groups) in the four production tasks shows that the differences are statistically significant in the Word List, Sentence and Passage Reading but not in the Phrase Reading. One possible explanation for no significant improvements in pronunciation performance

Table 8: Pronunciation performance in female and male groups in the experimental group

	Female (N = 14)			Male (N = 17)		
	Pre-test	Post-test	Sig.	Pre-test	Post-test	Sig.
Word List	5.35	5.40	Z = -.045	3.33	4.58	Z = -2.797*
Phrases	5.45	5.36	Z = -.737	3.86	4.49	Z = -1.735
Sentences	5.25	5.20	Z = -.157	3.52	4.32	Z = -2.200*
Passages	4.89	5.37	Z = -1.766	2.89	4.20	Z = -3.270*
Overall Impression	5.23	5.41	Z = -.560	3.29	4.34	Z = -2.719*

* $p < .05$

Table 9: Pronunciation performance in female and male groups in the control group

	Female (N = 14)			Male (N = 17)		
	Pre-test	Post-test	Sig.	Pre-test	Post-test	Sig.
Word List	5.11	4.89	Z = -.757	4.49	4.51	Z = -.107
Phrases	5.44	5.01	Z = -2.071	4.91	4.63	Z = -1.737
Sentences	5.34	4.74	Z = -2.423	4.64	4.27	Z = -2.23
Passages	4.79	5.26	Z = -1.224	4.08	4.50	Z = -1.94
Overall Impression	5.19	5.20	Z = -.158	4.45	4.48	Z = -.227

* $p < .05$

among females may be the existence of a ceiling effect. Most of the females in the experimental group who showed no significant change in intelligibility and comprehensibility had a pre-test score that was higher than the mean score for the whole group at post-test. On the other hand, the present study showed that even if the males' pronunciation improvement was statistically significant, the mean scores of the males were still lower than the ones of the females. This result, which echoes the previous studies that females received higher ratings than males on pronunciation performance, suggests that females seem to have better pronunciation than males.

Conclusions

The findings of the present study empirically support the effectiveness of pronunciation instruction with a focus on English rhythm in fostering students' overall pronunciation performance. This finding indicated a very important insight for English pronunciation teaching to secondary students in Taiwan—teaching rhythm is as effective as the traditional segment-focused pronunciation instruction dominantly used in secondary English classes in Taiwan. Potentially, teaching rhythm can even be better for improving students' pronunciation.

However, the study does not necessarily speak in favor of a wholesale abandonment of a segmental focus in pronunciation teaching. Rather, attention to both suprasegmental and segmental concerns benefits EFL students. As indicated in the section on *The relationship between language proficiency and pronunciation performance*, high proficiency level students, after receiving segment-focused instruction, still had significant improvement in Phrase and Sentence production tasks. Therefore, the researcher argues that a combination of suprasegmental and segmental features in teaching English pronunciation is necessary. In the case of communication breakdown caused by mispronunciation, a student who has received segmental training might be able to focus on the mispronounced form in self-repetition. On the other hand, suprasegmental instruction seems to provide the learner with skills that can be applied in extemporaneous speech production, despite the need to allocate attention to several speech components. As a result, it is clear that a combination of suprasegmental and segmental features is important. Segment-focused instruction is no longer the only option for teaching English pronunciation. It is recommended that language teachers in Taiwan should spend some time working on English rhythm besides individual sounds.

Furthermore, some suggestions toward teaching rhythm are provided:

1. Teaching materials such as *Jazz Chant*, nursery rhyme or short poems can help establish students' perception and production of English rhythm and increase their confidence in speaking as well.
2. Since suprasegmental features do not transfer easily to second language learners, in addition to imitation, some explanation can help students improve considerably.
3. Teachers should provide opportunities for students to practice and encourage students to do their best in practice and avoid being disappointed with students' bad performances.

Limitations and directions for future research

The study also explored the effect of gender and language proficiency on pronunciation performance. The design of the study used statistical tools in order to make the results more accurate; however, this study has some limitations concerning methodology.

First, although the reading tasks were extracted from students' textbooks in order to familiarize the subjects with the reading materials, students' familiarity with the words seems to be the problem. Those few who seemed to know almost all the words got the highest scores. Besides, in the present study, the data elicited were all from the controlled reading tasks, not from spontaneous speech, because most of the participants in the study were not able to speak English fluently. Future studies with more authentic data are needed in order to provide a more complete picture of the effect of teaching rhythm on pronunciation performance.

Another methodological limitation concerns the time duration of conducting the study. Some studies have proved that a delayed post-test is

important to determine learners' ultimate second language performance. Therefore, a delayed post-test and switched treatments are helpful to probe the retention of pronunciation instruction.

In addition, the small number of raters in the present study may have lowered the possibility to produce more reliable and meaningful results. Due to the difficulty of finding enough native speakers of English who have experience teaching English to Taiwanese students to act as raters, there were only 5 raters involved in the judgment of non-native speakers' pronunciation performance. It is hoped that more listeners involved in future studies will help obtain more valid results.

Finally, the implementation of teaching pronunciation in English classrooms is a controversial issue, requiring considerable caution. The present study explored the effects of teaching rhythm as a means of pronunciation in secondary English classes in Taiwan, and a noticeable improvement is evident in "before" and "after" of production tasks of students who have had pronunciation instruction with a focus on English rhythm. However, the findings are not conclusive because there are many other factors that may influence learners' pronunciation performance. The relationship between other factors such as the learner' belief about pronunciation or their starting age to learn were not examined in the present study. Thus these factors are also worth incorporating into a future pronunciation instruction experiment.

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