

Language Education in Asia



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Editor's Note

The Partnership Between Research and Practice

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The challenges that face language educators and researchers are as varied and diverse as the contexts in which they are located. However, as the systems through which English language education are delivered change and adapt to a globalizing world, the English language educator remains the key to helping students achieve the levels of proficiency necessary in order to succeed after leaving the classroom. Researchers are asked to provide these teachers with the tools necessary to achieve this goal.

Both English language educators and researchers face a myriad of variables that impact the teaching and learning of language from both in and outside the classroom. On a national level, throughout the Asian region and beyond, policy initiatives must take into account the needs of learners, the nation, and the society, while at the same time considering cultural, national, and local contexts. Even policies formulated with the best intentions must recognize the potential impact and conflict that language policy and foreign language education can have on the identity of individuals and a nation as a whole (Bhattacharya, Gupta, Jewitt, Newfield, Reed, & Stein, 2007; Clarke, 2007; Graves, 2008; Ramanathan & Morgan, 2007; Schneer, 2007; Zappa-Hollman, 2007).

At the same time, in the classroom, teachers need to consider how to practically and effectively implement policy as well as strive to achieve personal professional development and, for non-native English speaking teachers, language proficiency. This is particularly true when English language education is implemented at increasingly lower levels in the educational system (Enever, Moon, & Raman, 2009). Such has been the case in many Asian countries (Butler, 2004; Igawa, 2007; Nunan, 2003) and a similar debate has again emerged recently in Saudi Arabia (Alabdelwahab, 2002; Al-Tamimi, 2011; De Lotbinière, 2011). Teachers at other levels of educational systems are also challenged to prepare their students to study abroad, succeed on standardized exams, secure employment, immigrate to new countries or integrate into new cultures, or become prepared for English-medium instruction, often alongside their native-speaking counterparts (Aredy, 2011; Carliner, 2000; "English proficiency: Malaysia," 2011; Fischer, 2011a, 2011b).

The role of the researcher is to support practitioners' efforts through reliably investigating the language learning process, and to encourage a research-oriented culture among teachers (Al-Mahrooqi, & Tuzlukova, 2010; Borg, 2009; Spada, 2005). Research should not occur in a vacuum, but rather result in practical recommendations that are applicable to the language learning process. Additionally, the idea that research is a mysterious and complex activity that

“others” do should be dispelled: Teachers engage students in their classroom “laboratories” each day and drawing on their own experience, can and should question and investigate the relationships occurring in their own classrooms (Richards & Lockhart, 1994; Stringer, 2007). The connection between the reality of the classroom and the systematic investigation of the variables and relationships observed there is key, and should result in practical recommendations for improvement. It is this partnership between research and practice that will result in the most effective and enriching development of the experiences in our language learning classrooms.

The authors included in this issue of the *Language Education in Asia* publication address the areas highlighted above and seek to make those connections between research and classroom practice. Through their research activities and descriptions of successful methodologies, the authors share their experiences and insights into the teaching and learning process in this region. Based on research conducted in relation to classroom performance, Jeremy Jones describes the challenges non-native English speaking (NNS) students face when developing arguments in essays. Based on an individual case study at an Australian university, his findings lead to recommendations for strategies to help a student that can also be utilized to help other NNS students who are studying in English-medium contexts.

Effectively learning vocabulary is the focus of two of the papers in this issue. Siu-on Lee describes how the combination of task-based learning activities together with more traditional exercises help students at a Hong Kong-based university learn vocabulary more successfully. How various tasks affect vocabulary retention was also the focus of research reported by Zabih O. Javanbakht. Here, the results of utilizing different combinations of vocabulary learning tasks with elementary-level male Iranian students at junior high schools are presented.

As English is introduced in the formal education system in many countries in Asia, often at younger ages and at lower levels, this adds yet another language to the linguistically diverse repertoire of speakers in this region. In countries where there are often multiple “native” or indigenous languages, increasingly, with the addition of English language instruction, the use of a number of languages during the language learning process can be observed. Unlike the traditionally negative view of the use of other languages or lexical items in English language classes, Roger Barnard and his co-researchers suggest that there is in fact a place for such plurilingualism in an English language learning environment. Beliefs are also the basis of John Macalister’s paper on the comparison of how language learning is viewed and practices among teachers from different national backgrounds. Recommendations for teachers and trainers based on his findings are also suggested.

Classroom practice is the focus of the next set of papers. Nguyen Nha Tran discusses how a negotiated syllabus has been successfully used at a university in Vietnam. A number of positive outcomes are presented and recommendations for potential further implementation are suggested. At the primary level, Steven Graham describes how he has successfully used comic dialogues as a component of curricular requirements and as a tool for recycling content in Thailand.

The development of critical thinking skills has been a focus of research on teaching practice in recent years. Based on her work with university students in Qatar, Krystyna U. Golkowska recommends the use of a cognitive literary study approach to support students as they gain a better understanding of cultural differences. Online video applications can also add to students’ exposure and understanding of culture, World Englishes, and authentic

communication; Jon Watkins and Michael Wilkins describe how using YouTube can stimulate student autonomy and be a useful tool to study multiple language skills. Again at the tertiary level, Debra Jones describes a methodology to more effectively utilize the feedback provided on final drafts of academic essays through student-teacher dialogues. Neil T. Millington also discusses how using songs in the EFL classroom can be used to highlight cultural aspects of the language. He reviews the literature and suggests ways in which music can be an integral part of the language-learning curriculum.

Lastly, Mary Shepard Wong focuses on the professional development of language educators. Viewed as an ongoing process, professional development plans for teachers are emphasized. Furthermore, the author presents a clear and practical step-by-step process that can guide individualized professional development and can be easily adapted to any teaching context.

In a significant way, all those practitioners and researchers who have shared their experiences and research findings at the CamTESOL Conferences have contributed to this partnership between practice and research. It is through these face-to-face opportunities that we can all learn from each other. Additionally by extension through this publication, and very importantly, the members of the Advisory and Editorial Boards of this volume have offered their support and expertise to not only those authors represented in this volume, but in many other ways to the conference series participants as a whole. I would also like to note the significant contributions to the current volume of *Language Education in Asia* by the publication's Assistant Editors, Ms Deborah Harrop and Mr Chea Kagnarith, and most importantly, the Assistant Editor-in-Chief, Ms Kelly Kimura, without whose dedication and effort this publication would not be possible.

The challenges that language educators and researchers will continue to face in the Asia region will only become more complex as policies are drafted, implemented, evaluated, and revised, and as English proficiency is increasingly emphasized even as many seek to preserve local languages and traditions. While historical influences must be addressed through this process, policymakers, language educators, and researchers must also look to the future as globalization becomes more influential. It is through the partnership between research and practice and the sharing of knowledge and experiences that all involved in the language learning process can support ourselves as language educators and researchers, but most importantly, support and provide the most effective learning experiences for our students as they work to achieve their educational, academic, and professional goals related to English language proficiency. The authors included here hope that their contributions to this volume will further support those efforts of EFL educators, researchers, and students alike.

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Research

Using Metadiscourse to Improve Coherence in Academic Writing

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Abstract

One potent effect of the globalisation of English is the huge increase in the number of non-native English speakers (NNSs) undertaking university courses in English-speaking countries. There they study alongside native speakers (NSs), compared with whom they are at an obvious disadvantage. Analysing one essay by a NNS at an Australian university, this paper confronts a common and very significant challenge that such students face: difficulty with constructing a coherent argument. It probes this difficulty with particular reference to the techniques of reader-based writing embodied in the concept of *metadiscourse*. Possible remedies will be proposed to help the student, both for the short and long term.

People speak of English as a “global language,” by which they mean a commonly accepted form of communication free of national and international variation. This is the lingua franca whose adoption allows Cambodians to talk to Swedes and Swedes to Mexicans. However, even within global English, there appear to be variations, for example between English for Business and English for Academic Purposes. Indeed, the field of English for Specific Purposes has evolved in TESL and TEFL to accommodate such differences.

This paper is situated within and is a contribution to the sub-discipline of Academic English, and in particular, academic writing. The genres of academic writing in English are immensely important in the world, since non-native English-speaking (NNS) academics, in common with their native English-speaking (NS) colleagues, have to learn to communicate in this English if they wish to publish and become known in the international community of their field. Academic writing in English is equally important for NS and NNS students who wish to succeed in English-medium higher education, because assessment is, in most disciplines, mainly by writing. Further, NNS students might be studying English to gain entry to an English-medium university; they, too, have to acquire the “global” skills of academic writing with a view to passing an international gatekeeping proficiency test, e.g., IELTS or TOEFL.

Unless they are close to bilingual, NNSs must struggle hard to present acceptable writing. As Canagarajah (2002) observes, “we shouldn’t be surprised that L2 students fall short when L1 writing is treated as the norm or point of reference” (p. 12). Even if NNSs’ grammar, syntax,

and vocabulary range are of a relatively high standard, they still have to master the genre demands of their discipline.

Essential to academic writing is coherence. The present paper is a contribution to research on coherence, which is acknowledged to be “difficult to teach and difficult to learn” (Lee, 2002, p. 135). Coherence suggests that the ideas in the writing hold together. In this way, “the reader can follow the overall position that the writer takes, the arguments that are given to support the writer’s position, and the evidence that the writer provides in support of these arguments” (Paltridge, Harbon, Hirsch, Shen, Stevenson, Phakiti, & Woodrow, 2009, p. 34). The reference here to the central role of the reader in the definition of coherence foreshadows the emphasis of the argument in this research on the awareness of the reader’s needs in effective academic writing.

By way of a case study of a particular NNS student’s essay, the paper will throw into relief the degree to which the writer achieves coherence and show that the cause of her occasional loss of coherence may lie in a failure to adopt an approach that is responsible to the reader. It will then offer a pathway to helping her towards revision and coherence, a pathway given by the concept of metadiscourse.

The inquiry will, it is hoped, be illuminating for academics who seek a closer understanding of their NS and NNS students’ writing behaviour and particularly the reasons for loss of coherence. Their perceptions, feedback to students, and even assessment may be better informed by such understanding. Teachers of academic writing may benefit likewise from the new insights yielded by the research, perhaps especially those related to reader-based writing, which have implications for writing pedagogy.

Conceptual Background

Although there are today many approaches to the study of academic writing, the field uniformly draws on two powerful concepts: contrastive rhetoric (CR) and genre analysis. CR is relevant to this study since it highlights differences of rhetorical convention between a writer’s first and second languages; genre analysis is significant because it serves to define the features of the genres that academic writers need to grasp.

Contrastive rhetoric and academic writing. The essence of CR is that each language is unique in its rhetorical aspects; research in CR focuses on rhetorical differences across cultures. In second and foreign language education, where such research has found its primary audience, CR suggests that differences between the discourse characteristics of learners’ first and second languages are responsible for their difficulties in acquiring discourse patterns in their second language. This was the view of Kaplan (1966), the pioneer of CR, who analysed the paragraphs of essays by ESL students from varying cultures to demonstrate the way in which first language rhetorical structures figured in the second language writing.

CR had a great deal of influence on translation studies and second language pedagogy, informing teachers about cultural preference in the writing approaches of their students: “With this knowledge, teachers are better able to prepare ESL/EFL students to write for L2 audiences, which often have different expectations about organization, style, and appropriateness of content” (Connor, 1998). Teachers may learn, for example, that Finns and Japanese tend not to state their thesis at the start of the writing, leaving it until later in the text (Connor, 1998). Connor (1998) points out that Finnish writers are not reader-friendly, as they do not use transitions between paragraphs; they “let the facts speak for themselves.” Hinds (1987) claims

the same features for Japanese writing, in which it is the task of the reader to construct meaning. Modern Chinese, he insists, is more like English in being more reader-friendly.

However, CR is subject to appreciable debate. Even as Kaplan and his followers have revised and adapted the original thesis to counter charges of ethnocentricity and cultural stereotyping, others have produced research results that undermine CR. Kubota (1998, cited in Casanave, 2004), for example, undertook a study of 46 expository and persuasive essays written by Japanese students. Half were in English and half in Japanese. She found no uniform evidence of indirectness or digression, said to be characteristics of Japanese style, in the writing. Some of the students followed the CR stereotype and, in English, transferred it to their writing; many others did not do this. Kubota surmises that a number of variables were at work in her subjects' writing performance, including low competence in first language writing, the general standard of their second language, and the amount of experience they had in writing in the second language.

Indeed, these possible factors are the type that opponents of CR cite as responsible for ESL writing difficulties. Negative transfer of rhetorical organisation alone cannot explain them. For the purposes of the present research, Casanave's (2004) judgment on CR is resonant. Summarising research contributions to the decades of debate on CR, she concludes that "many of the problems that L2 students have with writing parallel those that L1 writers have" (p. 54). NS and NNS students alike will have trouble putting together the required elements of, for example, an academic essay if they have little experience of the genre.

Genre theory and academic writing. To be sure, genre, culture-specific as it may be, is what academic students must strive to master. Every genre, as a specific text type, has a body of formal features that distinguish it from another genre – a laboratory report from a book review, for instance. According to Swales (1990, p. 58), "Exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience." Teachers of academic writing have to know such patterns to ground their courses in the texts that the students will have to write in their target contexts.

It is important to concede that academic writing is not one genre. Across the disciplines there are so many differences in writing conventions that it makes little sense to treat academic writing as an undifferentiated genre. Indeed, in light of such diversity, it is arguable that no service course in academic writing could accommodate all the genre demands of the disciplines: students themselves should be encouraged to acquire mastery of the genre or genres of their field (Hyland, 2000).

However, there is a strong case for embracing the essay as a genre that crosses disciplinary boundaries. The great majority of students in the subject "Academic English," from which the sample in this paper was drawn, have to write assignments that take the form of essays. If they do not write essays as such, they nevertheless have to "write in essay-like ways, expressing a degree of critical thinking and sustaining a coherent, reasoned argument (Jones, 2007, p. 132). Certainly, academic English courses that prepare students for writing in their chosen discipline or support them once admitted commonly favour the essay as the genre that offers the most help for them. For example, an extremely popular modern textbook, *Writing Academic English*, by Oshima and Hogue (2006), presents mastery of the essay form as its goal.

In the academic setting, an essay is an argument that proceeds from introduction through body to conclusion. The body contains the force of the argument mediated through explanations,

comparisons, examples and evidence, and “it is here that the bulk of the marks lie” (Morley-Warner, 2009, p. 35). Indispensable to the effectiveness of an essay is logical order, which constitutes the essence of coherence.

Methodology

This research may be regarded as proceeding along the lines of a case study, where the case is a “single instance of a class of objects or entities” (Nunan, 1992, p. 79). The case study is an inquiry into this single instance in the context in which it appears. In this study, the single instance is the essay for analysis, the results of which will enhance understanding of a particular problem in learning and teaching; the context is an Australian university, but more particularly a subject for credit in which students learn and practise academic skills that will help them in their mainstream subjects.

Essay writing is an essential part of the subject. Data, in the form of one sample essay, was drawn from the writing component and was not elicited by the researcher, but came out of a scheduled assignment. The student gave permission for her work to be used for research.

As with all small-scale studies, the matter of generalisability arises. We cannot generalise beyond the sample under investigation to a wider population. However, consistent with the principles of case study, the researcher does not claim that what has been discovered is true of the population in general; rather, he claims that the understanding gained from the research should illuminate issues for other researchers and practitioners (Allright & Bailey, 1991). This research is therefore undertaken on the assumption that its readers – university educators and teachers of academic writing – will view the findings as holding true for, and offering useful insights into, the students they have.

Sample and Students

As mentioned above, the essay for analysis (see Appendix A) has been taken from a subject called “Academic English” which intends to improve academic skills, especially writing skills, which students need in their mainstream courses. Such subjects are common in universities in the English-speaking world these days. The chosen essay is not demonstrably “typical” of the quality of writing in the subject, which usually presents a range of competence, but it plainly exemplifies the difficulties of making a coherent argument.

For the purposes of this research, the NNS is re-named Maria; she is in her early 20s and comes from South America. When she wrote her essay, she had been in Australia for just over two years and was a first-year student. A distinctive feature of Maria is that she had studied English writing as part of the English proficiency requirement for university admission. Writing for her was a subtest of IELTS.

Since the essay belongs to a learning progression, it is important to give information about it in the context. It responds to a task set in the middle of the semester; thus, Maria is not a novice in the study of academic writing. She has benefited, to one extent or another, from instruction in the definition of an essay, brainstorming a topic, planning overall structure, writing an outline and introduction, note-taking from reading, and referencing. The essay is a first attempt in the “practice” stage and also represents the standard of writing competence that the student is offering lecturers in her mainstream subjects.

Approach to Analysis

Criteria for analysis of the text derive from the definition of the genre essay itself and of coherence, as set out earlier. The analysis pays attention to the extent to which the writing displays logical order, its ideas hanging together.

It may be said that coherence subsumes cohesion, another key term for the analysis. Cohesion is coherence at a “local level,” in relationship between sentences: “Think of cohesion as pairs of sentences fitting together in a way two pieces of a jigsaw do” (Williams, 2007, p. 80). Among the most important manifestations of cohesion are transition signals (*however, as a result, for example*, etc.). Repetition of key nouns and using pronouns to refer back to key nouns also promote cohesion. If any one of the above features is missing, the reader may fail to see connections between ideas.

Failing to see connections could cause just temporary annoyance since the reader may still infer the meaning and sense the flow of an argument. On the other hand, absence of connections could result in severe confusion. It may be said, then, that there are two levels of non-coherence: 1) when links are missing but the reader's ultimate comprehension is not threatened; and 2) when links are missing and the reader cannot follow the ideas. In the first case, the text is easily remediable, for example, with the addition of transition signals. In the second, a remedy is hard to see, and some significant rewriting is needed. Part of the analysis will concentrate on an instance of the latter in Maria's writing.

Apart from evaluating the text for coherence in its various facets, it is necessary to consider the quality of grammar, because if the grammar is of such poor quality that the reader cannot pick up the meaning, then coherence is lost.

The Task

Students, Maria among them, were asked to write an essay of between 1,000 and 1,200 words on the following topic:

To many people, the term Globalisation means Americanisation. This is because modern technology has allowed American products, including food, clothing, music, and films, to reach people all over the world. Some people see this aspect of globalisation as a threat to their traditions and values.

To what extent does globalisation threaten the traditions and values of some countries?

The students understood that they would need to search resources for ideas relevant to their approach to the topic and show evidence of such reading in the writing. Thus, they would demonstrate their skill in managing references. Five or six references were to be included in the text and set out as entries in the appropriate style in a list at the end.

Analysis

What follows is an analysis, with a focus on matters of coherence, of Maria's essay. Two subheadings are used: “Grammar” and “Coherence.”

Although the analysis brings to light what is hoped to be sufficient evidence of the writer's degree of coherence to make credible generalisations about the causes of and possible

remedies for any difficulties she has, it cannot be comprehensive, and much more may be said about this essay than appears in these few pages.

Grammar

With the sort of errors that Maria makes, the reader recognises the hand of a NNS. The errors are numerous. Prominent are faulty verb forms, for example, *will explored* (Paragraph 1) and *to identified* (Paragraph 2), and faulty word forms, for example, *conscience efforts* (Paragraph 4). Syntactic difficulties occur from time to time, as in “Globalization is driven by western adventurers had made . . .,” where there are two main verbs. Though the grammar causes strain for the reader, it does not overwhelm the general coherence of the essay.

Coherence

The opening paragraph serves as an indication of the writer’s likely control of the topic and essay structure. Maria does not make a particularly auspicious start: “Since the history and introduction of new technologies . . .” However, despite the awkwardness of expression, the paragraph offers a reasonable introduction. Maria states a clear purpose, legitimately narrows the focus to “values” in Africa and Australia, and foreshadows a point of view.

This limiting of coverage promises rhetorical control. Indeed, Maria sustains her two major subtopics, summarises her major points in Paragraph 7, and reserves space towards the end for an argument on the merits of globalism as opposed to globalisation.

One weakness is that she does not take up the concept of Americanisation at all. Also, it may be said her strident expression of a point of view and remedy for the effects of globalisation go beyond the requirements of the essay topic, which has the ultimate form of a “To what extent . . .” question; nevertheless, a lecturer might appreciate this indication of more adventurous critical thinking.

Further, Maria occasionally stumbles in one aspect of coherence of argument, that is, the sense in which assertion and evidence hang together. For example, Maria states an opinion without support in Paragraph 3: “The extent [of] threats of globalisation are self evident in African countries”; in Paragraph 5, she makes a connection between technology and social decline, but does not establish how one is the reason for the other. There are also unsupported claims in the following paragraph about big banks encouraging online shopping with the result of reduced “socialization.” The evidence for her claims may lie in her various cited references; if so, she is not representing her reading effectively in her writing.

Maria makes a noticeable attempt to form cohesive ties within paragraphs, especially with respect to transition signals. She confidently exploits conjunctions such as *however* and *therefore*. In Paragraphs 2 and 3, four such words are used. Paragraph 7 is skilfully held together by an “on the one hand . . . on the other” structure. But her skill fails her in Paragraph 4, where the four sentences are not explicitly connected to one another. The disconnection is especially abrupt between the second and third sentences, the latter introducing a new subtopic. These separate sentences may be “chunks” that Maria has imported from her reading and does not know how to integrate.

Likewise, in the last two sentences of Paragraph 6, there is a dislocation: no link guides the reader from “reduced socialization” to the point about globalisation as a “reality check.” In the first of these two sentences, the part beginning with “and the individual when is not logger need . . .” is a breakdown of sense. It is then impossible to understand the “However” she

introduces in the final sentence, and the following idea cannot be reconciled to whatever meaning comes through in the rest of the paragraph.

The flow from one paragraph to the next in Maria's essay is generally smooth. Between the end of Paragraph 2 and the start of Paragraph 3, however, the reader has to make a sudden leap as the writer embarks on her discussion of globalisation in Africa without any discourse marker, such as *To begin with . . .*, or introductory clause or sentence. But after this point, she shows appreciable competence in her linking. For example, she connects Paragraph 4 to Paragraph 3 using the expression "such a radical undermining . . ." to link back to and deepen the last idea of the previous paragraph.

In sum, although Maria has a number of skills as a writer, she has significant flaws of the kind that she is likely to repeat in other writing unless she finds ways to improve. First, she has difficulty in providing evidence for her claims, which is sure to be regarded as a serious lapse of academic skill by an assessor. The reason for this difficulty may well lie in her limited ability to represent her sources. Second, she is capable of losing cohesion to the point of a breakdown of sense. This is the form of non-coherence that is hard to remedy merely with the addition of a word or two, and thus some rewriting is necessary.

Towards Remedies

A major question appears at this point: What can be done to overcome the problems of coherence that Maria has? Since coherence occurs when "the reader can follow" the argument and evidence (Paltridge et al, 2009, p. 34), seeking a solution in the notion of reader orientation makes sense. When Maria loses coherence, she is not being "reader-friendly."

Although the writer's relationship with the reader is hardly a new idea – and, as mentioned earlier, it has a place in the debates on CR – it is only in recent research that it has been given theoretical and empirical rigour. It is worth stressing that the implications of this research for the classroom have not fully reached writing pedagogy. Much of the research is associated with Ken Hyland and colleagues and their concept of "metadiscourse." This is a term that suggests the ways a writer or speaker, using discoursal features and text commentary, guides a reader's or listener's perception of a text. Crucial to metadiscourse, according to Hyland (2005), is the writer's conscious engagement with the reader:

Metadiscourse reveals the writer's awareness of the reader and his or her need for elaboration, clarification, guidance and interaction. In expressing an awareness of the text, the writer also makes the reader aware of it, and this only happens when he or she has a clear reader-oriented reason for doing so. (p. 17)

Embodying this principle is a classification scheme for metadiscourse resources that writers may put into practice. These may be placed in two categories:

1. Helping to guide the reader through the text, e.g., *in addition, furthermore, but, however, thus, as noted above, according to X, in other words, that is, for example*
2. Involving the reader in the text, e.g., *might, may, perhaps, probably, in fact, definitely, unfortunately, surprisingly, it is clear that, I, we, my*
(adapted from Hyland, 2005, pp. 49, 51)

In light of metadiscourse, what specifically can be done for a student like Maria? As an example of helping her in the short term, one serious instance of her non-coherence is chosen for remedy: Paragraph 4, which suffers from disconnectedness between sentences and ideas. As regards the long term – helping her to retain metadiscourse strategies – some pedagogical techniques are also proposed.

In the Short Term

1. Consult with Maria on what she intends to say in the paragraph. (“It *seems* to be an effort to broaden the scope of the threat of globalization and introduce Australia as an example.”)
2. Create a model paragraph by leading Maria through a rewriting of it. Try to preserve as many of her words and meanings as possible. Make links between the sentences. Appendix B offers an example of such a model, with the metadiscourse resources in bold.
3. Point out that the sentence beginning with “Globalization is driven by western adventurers . . .” does not clearly fit the context. If Maria wants to keep the idea, she should go back to her source (assuming that the idea comes from one) and review whether the sentence has a place in the paragraph and how it can be integrated.
4. Point out the metadiscourse words – the words that make it easier for the reader to follow ideas from one sentence or part of a sentence to another.

In the Long Term

After Maria has successfully revised the non-coherent parts of her essay, perhaps along the lines suggested above, there is no certainty that she has “learnt,” that in subsequent writing she will remember to be responsible to the reader or recognise reader-unfriendly text when she has written it. If she is in the hands of a writing teacher, whether in class or in private consultation, then she may be guided through specific techniques to help her learn metadiscourse features for the long term. Significantly, such techniques are reading-based. The advantages of learning metadiscourse features are manifold. Among them are that metadiscourse features increase the writer’s presence in the text, making the writer more engaged with it; they enhance the persuasiveness and comprehensibility of a text; they signal the writer’s “friendly” attitude to the reader; and, not least, they promote coherence and relate ideas clearly to one another (Hyland, 2005). Some techniques follow:

Text manipulation. Many teachers will know jigsaw reading, which takes the form of reassembling chunks of text, often paragraphs, that the teacher has jumbled. To emphasise the writer’s perspective on the activity, Hirvela (2004) proposes that students be given the first part of the text intact as a “launching point” (p. 120) and then smaller fragments of the text – at word, sentence, or paragraph level – to reassemble. A student like Maria would profit from practice in joining sentences to recognise the linguistic as well as the thematic ties that unite them. In this activity, “the reader basically pretends to be a writer” with the result that “greater attention is paid to the operations of writing” (Hirvela, p. 19).

Another text manipulation activity involves actual writing. Students are offered draft texts for editing and reworking. An example of a text would be one in which the metadiscourse features have been removed; the student then has to supply acceptable missing links and discuss how the additions improve the reader-orientation of the text. According to Hyland (2005), this kind of focused task provides “plenty of scaffolded opportunities for students to see the rhetorical effects of metadiscourse items” (p. 187).

Concordancing. This, too, is a resource familiar to teachers of academic English, and there are several guides to using concordancing in the classroom (e.g., Thurstun & Candlin, 1998).

Although concordance tasks do not require production, they do emphasise the ways in which language is used in discourse context, and they encourage analysis of text in the sense that the student draws conclusions about such use. The tasks can be adapted to focus particularly on metadiscourse features. According to Hyland (2005), "Concordanced output provides authentic data for materials that concentrate attention on metadiscourse forms widely used in target genres" (p. 185). He recommends getting students to fill in the gaps in concordance printouts with the help of contextual clues. The students could also use a concordancer themselves to draw out metadiscourse features and make inferences about their behaviour.

Reading for writing. The final point on how to help Maria and students like her in fact does not offer a technique but rather some general pedagogical advice: Simply, get students of writing to read as much as possible, because reading will improve writing. This perspective is hardly new. "Good readers are good writers" is a timeworn adage (Hirvela, 2004, p. 2). However, it is only in the last two decades that research has closely connected the two skills, abandoning the distinction between reading as "passive" and writing as "active" (Hirvela, 2004, p. 9). However, reading and writing still tend to be taught and learnt separately. Teachers "are not necessarily prepared to fully appreciate or recognise the various relationships that exist between the two skills" (Hirvela, 2004, p. 2).

A number of studies (e.g., Cumming, 1989; Elley, 1991; Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998; Krashen, 1993; Tsang, 1996) have shown how learners develop their writing through voluntary, extensive reading. Writing ability is, to use Krashen's (1993) term, "acquired" through reading. Many writing skills may flow from this exposure to extensive reading, from grammatical to rhetorical. However, the learner must *want* to read extensively.

Conclusion

At the end of his book *Metadiscourse*, Hyland (2005) points out that metadiscourse is a new and growing field of inquiry, holding potential for richer description and explanation of communicative interaction. It is to be hoped that the present study realises some of this potential. It shows how a lack of relationship with the reader may be the cause of a writer's difficulties with coherence, and how the resources of metadiscourse may help the writer both in the short and long term. Such resources are for the teacher, too, of course, once she or he recognises all of its advantages.

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Appendix A

Maria's Essay

(1) Since the history and introduction of new technologies around the world, globalization has contributed to some extent to help the individual to maximize their potential and creating different life standards. The extent threats of globalization thus to the cultural and traditional values is not only in some countries but the threats are global. This essay will explored to what extend globalization is threatening cultural and traditions values of family values, heritage, and spirituality in African and Australian societies and, concludes by embracing globalism as humanistic alternative to globalization.

(2) Short, 2001 looks to Globalization and has defined as a global process that has being linking one first world country and one-third world country, by introducing a high level of demands in new technologies. However, globalization has undermined the ability of many cultural and traditional values worldwide and individual potential to understand the real extent of threats of globalization. Therefore, it essential to identified the extent of threats of globalization when it comes to the individual, family and societies like Africa and Australia within the cultural and traditional values. Short, states that the heart of the culture involves the place or the country, language, religion, values, traditions and costumes to identified the links and threats of globalization worldwide.

(3) Globalization undermines African peoples' cultural and traditional values by imposing western values of individualism and consumerism culture. The extent threats of globalization are self evident in African countries. Globalization is a new process of colonization for African societies in the twentieth century as people are seems as a commodity rather than a human being. It denies African peoples' history, renouncing cultural values, and heritage (Akande, 2002). African people are seduce by millions dollars advertising to consume new socially unneeded constructed goods threatening the cultural and traditional values of the familiar and the old to be undermined. Consequently, globalization has eroded African peoples' community building capacity, community values, individual and family identities and minimizing social harmony. Thus, the end result of globalization on African people is that global integration can contribute to local disintegration of culture, and traditional values.

(4) Akande, (2002) argues that such a radical undermining of individuals' existing cultural and traditions values have a corrosive threat and impact of who they are, what they want, and what they respect. The threats of globalizations are more evident because attacks spirituality, values and faint and cultural and traditional values worldwide. Globalization is driven by western adventurers had made a conscience efforts to undermine the cultural and traditional heritage of various countries around the world. The extent of the threats of globalization is not only for African societies but also to countries like Australia.

(5) Australian society has being seduced by new technologies, which have being introduced by the new free economic market of globalization. The introductions of the latest technology is threatening Australian society as having access to services like more expensive mobile phones, Internet, latest music, and fast foods undermining family and relationships, religion values, respect and dignity. Ganz (2006) argues that Australian societies in particular youth people are spending more time with the electronic gadgets than socializing. Access to new mobile technologies is addicted and high costly is predicted that youth Australian will built a significant debt in the next 10 years. This new trend of communication based on peer pressure of consumerism latest mobile phones, digital TV, iPods and other electronic gadgets are health

hazards threatening not only youth Australians' health, and income but also impacting on relationship with parents, grandparents and peers.

(6) Australian society outdoor culture has been threatening by big banks encouraging people to use credit cards to shopping online rather than going out to shopping at the markets. Australian people have been seduced by believing that using plastic to do online shopping gives more choices on healthy produces and specials. The reality is that choices are limited, socialization is reduced and therefore, reinforcing individualism (Wright, 2006). Akande argues that Globalization is a reality check for many societies, and the individual when is not logger need for concern of living wealthy or poor in the world. However, globalization has made difficulties and differences in the life of people in countries like Africa and Australia loosing their cultural and traditional values (Akande, 2002).

(7) Akande, 2002. States that Globalization is a threat for African and Australian societies' cultural and traditional values. On the one hand African societies has had experienced over the last centuries colonization undermining its people history, heritage, individual and family identity, spirituality, cultural and traditional values. Now globalization is threatening African people is to become a commodity rather than a human being. On the other hand in Australian society cultural and traditional values are threatening by the seductive consumerism culture which encourage people to have high levels of debt, eroding socialization, and changing conventional communication and outdoor culture. The challenge is to create a new social movement to address the threats of globalization in the world (Cerny, 2002).

(8) Globalism is a humane alternative to globalization. Globalization can be addressed by introducing globalism which means recognizing mutual respect and careful treatment for all people and the environment. It promotes ethical values of active practice in every-day-life (Ritchie 1999). The embracing of globalism will required a new social movement to take action; commitment and leadership of governments; multinationals ethical business practices, stakeholders and policy makers in creating active communication to foster understating of sharing of resources and sustainability and mutual aid in times of needs. Implementation and practice of globalism are urgent needed to address the treats of globalization in humanity.

(9) Finally, a new social movement is paramount to raise awareness and alternatives of the extent of threats of globalization. The inhumane impact of globalization on societies has been outlined in this essay as a wake up call to take action in addressing the new challenge of humanity that is globalization. The anti-globalization movement needs the support of societies, families and individuals to eradicate globalization and embraced globalism as an alternative humane process. Community building capacities, sense of self, individual and family identity, are foundation of cultural and traditional values to sustain families, communities and societies. It is for the best interest of future generations to think locally and act globally to nurture local culture to nourish and sustain humanity' livelihoods only can be achieved by eradicating globalization.

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Appendix B

Proposed Model Paragraph 4

Akande (2002) argues that **such** a radical undermining of individuals' existing cultural and traditional values has a corrosive influence on who they are, what they want, and what they respect. **However**, the threat of globalization affects **not only** developing regions like Africa **but also** countries around the world, attacking spirituality and cultural and traditional values. **One example** of this threat may be found in Australia.

Using Post-Task Written Vocabulary Exercises in Task-Based Instruction

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Abstract

Task-based instruction, which emphasizes authentic communication and holistic language learning opportunities, has been a prominent topic in Asia for both researchers and teachers. Still, relatively few studies have addressed vocabulary acquisition from a task-based perspective, notwithstanding second language learners' need to acquire thousands of words to deal with various language uses. In this paper, the teaching procedure and empirical data will be presented to showcase how 27 Hong Kong learners benefited from a combination of an authentic task and written vocabulary exercises in terms of receptive and productive retention of the target words. The results indicated that such a combination yielded better immediate and delayed retention than a purely communicative approach; however, form recall remained the most difficult type of word knowledge irrespective of the treatments. This highlights the value of traditional elements such as written exercises in task-based instruction.

Second language (L2) learners must learn thousands of words to deal successfully with a range of language uses, and for long this has been one of the greatest hurdles facing learners in acquiring English. Even the most gifted learners need no less than one year to acquire 1,000 words, and the time required can be much longer for average learners (Nation & Chung, 2009). It is not surprising then, that both teachers and learners are eager to know what can foster such acquisition. A strategic plan about how to handle vocabulary is necessary, and programmes overemphasising communication or authenticity may fall short in this regard.

While educational policies in Asia have heavily favoured task-based instruction (also referred to as task-based language teaching, henceforth referred to here as TBI) and other communicative, holistic approaches in the last decade, whether such pedagogical approaches are effective with respect to L2 vocabulary learning is still open to question. As pointed out by Laufer (2005), they cannot always assure learners of a wide and repeated coverage of new words. In contrast, traditional written vocabulary practices are fairly effective in improving both receptive and productive acquisition (Folse, 2004, 2006; Laufer, 2003). Although some advocates of TBI may proscribe exercises, considering them decontextualized and repetitious, it is worth exploring if a combination of TBI and numerous vocabulary practices can enhance the retention of words in terms of quality, quantity, and duration.

A Quick Note on Task-Based Instruction

The concept of TBI was developed in the 1980s by second language acquisition (SLA) researchers and teachers who were discontented with teacher-centred, form-oriented language teaching practice. The rationale behind TBI is that key language learning processes take place in holistic rather than analytic language activities, and tasks are invaluable in achieving this (Samuda & Bygate, 2008). The primary unit for both designing a language programme and individual lessons should be a task because it creates opportunities for communication and noticing form / meaning / function relationships, which are the conditions essential for the development of communicative competence in an L2 (Willis & Willis, 2007).

Though there are various definitions of a task, most require that a task meet the following criteria (Ellis, 2009): the focus should be mainly on meaning but not language; there should be a gap to be filled such as exchanging information or sharing an opinion; learners should utilize their own linguistic and world knowledge; and the outcome should be non-linguistic, with some real-life relevance.

With regard to research, tasks have been used in a multitude of studies to further explain how SLA occurs, and what variables influence its rate and final outcomes. Researchers have been particularly interested in areas as follows (Van den Branden, Bygate, & Norris, 2009):

- The impact of specific task types on interactive behaviour and the learning that results from it
- The impact of the performance of tasks on the acquisition of particular items
- The impact of manipulating some features and variables on fluency, accuracy, and complexity
- The impact of incidental, implicit focus on form on language learning
- The relationship between individual differences and performance

As governments in Asia are keen on raising the number of people in their population who can communicate in English, TBI, as well as various versions of communicative language teaching, has been the predominant approach in national policies and syllabuses. Even so, TBI has not always been implemented consistently or willingly. Teachers frequently encounter problems such as classroom management, learners' avoidance of English, conflict with traditional values, incompatibility of TBI with assessment methods, and minimal teacher development efforts (Adams & Newton, 2009; Littlewood, 2007). How they tackle these problems and adapt TBI in a sensitive and appropriate way has become a new area of interest among TBI researchers.

How Well Can TBI Cater for Vocabulary Learning?

Learning an L2 involves various aspects of that language, yet for a long time, vocabulary has received less attention in teaching, resulting in frustration among learners. This phenomenon can also be found in TBI classrooms, where learners are expected to utilize their own resources to communicate and solve problems collaboratively.

The question of whether tasks can be used to promote vocabulary development is a relatively unresearched direction (Samuda & Bygate, 2008). This view is also shared by Swan (2005), who claims that TBI is characteristically limited to the acquisition of grammar, but not vocabulary or phonology. The limitation of explicit vocabulary instruction in TBI is partly attributable to the belief that natural input, such as reading newspapers and conversation outside the classroom, is the major source of vocabulary acquisition – that learners notice new words, infer meanings from context, and retain them immediately or in additional encounters.

Unfortunately, as summarized by Laufer (2003), learners sometimes overestimate their understanding of words and leave unfamiliar words unnoticed, and guessing does not work when the context provides no clue at all. Also, one may need to see a word 10 times to retain it (Saragi, Nation, & Meister, 1978), and a coverage of as high as 98 percent of the running words is needed for reading a wide range of authentic texts (Nation, 2006). Even if we are so optimistic as to expect a 25 percent chance of reappearance for each new word in random texts, a learner has to read 200,000 words just to learn about 100 new words.

Some versions of TBI do acknowledge that an occasional shift to linguistic features and vocabulary may not be adequate (Long & Robinson, 1998). Thus, there is a need to add certain kinds of vocabulary instruction to complement communicative activities, usually in the form of pre-tasks or post-tasks (Swan, 2005). However, this raises a body of scholastic and ideological issues at the same time. How can a substantial number of pre-selected new words be “hidden” (Ellis, 2009, p. 223) in a task that is claimed to resemble natural, unpredictable use of language? How much help (e.g., definitions, paraphrases, contextualizations, and synonyms) is the teacher allowed to offer without threatening “the integrity of the task” (Ellis, 2003, p. 246)? What should learners do in a post-task so that it is still a communicative task, rather than a non-communicative exercise? For teachers with a vague understanding of TBI, coping with these concerns successfully is taxing, if not unrealistic.

From the perspective of beginner learners, it is hard to shift attention to numerous unknown words in oral interaction, because they know little about the linguistic conventions for opening and closing conversations, interrupting, challenging, and clarifying (Swan, 2005). As an outcome, they may either bypass the unknown words and the communication problems caused by them altogether, or remain silent and rely heavily on teacher assistance (Kim, 2008). Even if they manage to attend to the target words, they are unlikely to do any better than recognizing the most salient meaning (Sonbul & Schmitt, 2009), and consequently the gap between their productive and receptive word knowledge will be widened further.

In sum, various salient features of TBI such as negotiation for meaning and modified output may promote vocabulary growth as with the acquisition of other skills. However, as concluded by Schmitt (2008), it is expecting too much to assume that a sufficient amount of words will be learnt from exposure to language tasks that are primarily communication-oriented, and more controlled, structured approaches are called for to make learners stay active for longer than just several minutes of engagement within a task.

The Need for Form-Focused Vocabulary Exercises

To ensure the balanced development of vocabulary, a roughly even amount of time has to be allocated for meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, fluency development, and language-focused learning (Nation & Chung, 2009). The pre-task and task cycle can involve learners in the first two strands, and fluency can be enhanced in reports and the planning before them. But a task-based lesson that is entirely composed of group work and oral exchange can rarely provide individuals with adequate language-focused learning. One way to mend this imbalance is to use written vocabulary exercises in the post-task phase.

A decisive factor in vocabulary acquisition is frequency of retrieval, but unlike grammatical structures, words typically appear less often in both input and output. A task-based lesson can easily elicit the frequent use of a certain grammatical structure, such as the progressive aspect, but not 10 or 15 new words. With written exercises at the end of a task-based lesson, multiple retrievals of each target word can be guaranteed. One or two more retrievals can give rise to

significant gains in aspects such as meaning and syntax recognition (Webb, 2007). Another advantage of using exercises as a post-task is the shorter preparation time needed. New sets of sentences can easily be written to ensure exposure in different contexts, and learners will always end up with correct examples to study, unlike after guessing or negotiation. Lastly, while the task cycle causes learners to focus attention on certain new words they feel urged to use to convey a message, the written exercises help learners by channelling their attentional resources to words that they find harder to grasp during communication.

If task-oriented teaching cannot assure learners of the necessary reoccurrence and retrieval of words, one way to balance authenticity and vocabulary growth is to use word focus practices, where words are the objects of learning, not only tools of communication (Laufer, 2005). Though some may consider these seemingly shallow exercises inconsonant with the rationales behind TBI, it must be recognized that there is no single way of doing TBI, and an integrated syllabus can make use of both TBI and more traditional approaches (Ellis, 2009). Now that TBI is applied across diverse learner populations, it is imperative to examine what available task-based techniques prove the most effective in L2 vocabulary acquisition in Asia, where the vocabulary sizes of high school and undergraduate students typically fall short of even relatively conservative requirements (Laufer, 2000).

Method

Participants

Twenty-seven students (18 female, 9 male) enrolled in an associate degree program at the Hong Kong Community College of the Polytechnic University of Hong Kong took part in this study. They were aged 18 to 20, and all of them had passed at least five subjects in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination, including Chinese and English. It was assumed that they all had at least intermediate mastery of English.

Instruments

The main instruments used in the study were three paper-and-pencil tests – a form-recall test, a meaning-recall test, and a meaning-recognition test. The first test was a completion test to assess form recall. Several letters of each target word and a concise meaning were provided as below:

- B _ _ g _ _ _ – an elegant chair with arms in traditional European style

The next test was to assess meaning recall, and either L1 translations or L2 definitions were accepted.

- Easel – _____

Lastly, multiple-choice items were used to measure meaning recognition. There were five choices for each item: the correct answer, three distractors, and an “I don’t know” option to reduce guessing.

- Armoire
 - ☐ A. a decorated bottle
 - ☐ B. a beautiful wardrobe with doors
 - ☐ C. a sofa usable as a bed
 - ☐ D. a stand for holding a blackboard
 - ☐ E. I don’t know

The two recall tests were done before the recognition test so as to avoid a test effect. Apart from that, as Laufer, Elder, Hill, and Congdon (2004) found tests of form recognition and meaning recognition tended to yield similar scores, this study only tested meaning recognition.

Target Words

This study used the 10 words below in all treatments, exercises, and tests:

<i>armoire</i>	<i>bergere</i>	<i>console</i>	<i>cruet</i>	<i>divan</i>
<i>easel</i>	<i>futon</i>	<i>pendant</i>	<i>valet</i>	<i>vitrine</i>

A major concern in selecting the target words was that they be of similar difficulty to the participants. Therefore, only nouns were chosen to reduce to a role of the part of speech as an extraneous variable; only single words, not phrases, were included; words that have a morphological clue to the meaning (e.g., *lounger*, *glider*, and *recliner*) were rejected; and only words with two syllables and of similar length were chosen. Next, to evaluate the likelihood of target word familiarity among the participants, the researcher adopted a procedure from Laufer's study (2003). A group of postgraduate students at the Chinese University of Hong Kong who were highly proficient in English was first given the 10 words to translate or explain. The mean knowledge was lower than one out of 10. Since the study participants had lower language proficiency than the postgraduate students, it was assumed that they had no prior knowledge of these words. Furniture and household items were chosen to be the theme of all treatments owing to their low relevance to the participants' compulsory English courses. This minimized the potential benefit to the participants, as well as the potential risk to the students who decided not to participate.

Procedure

The 27 participants were assigned randomly to one of two one-hour treatment groups: the Task-Plus-Discussion Group and the Task-Plus-Exercise Group. After the treatments, a 30-minute post-test was immediately administered. One week later, the same test (item order changed) was administered unannounced to assess the retention of the target words over time.

The task-plus-discussion group. At the pre-task stage, the participants were invited to talk about the furniture in their homes, and the instructor wrote the words provided by the participants on the board. After that, 10 photos showing the target items were distributed to the participants, and they asked each other to name the items and describe their uses. To introduce these target words, the instructor showed the corresponding pictures on the screen, read the words aloud, and explained them one by one. This stage took approximately 15 minutes. This photo-sharing part was of great importance because it channelled the participants' attention to several target words. While many words were not known by individuals, most words were known by at least one participant. Even without outside help, as long as the participants were prepared to negotiate for meaning, they had sufficient resources to tackle most unknown words at later stages (Newton, 2001).

In the task cycle, the participants formed groups of four or five. Each group was given an apartment layout and a list of the 10 target words (but not their corresponding pictures). The participants discussed where to put the 10 items and why. To enhance authenticity, the existing furniture in the apartment could also be moved. The participants were strongly encouraged to speak in English only, negotiate for meaning of unknown words, and refrain from using a dictionary. They were also reminded to rehearse for a compulsory oral report in which every member would describe and justify the arrangement of one or two furniture items.

The discussion and rehearsal took about 15 minutes, and another 15 minutes were allocated for the group reports.

When all group reports were finished, the participants were offered a chance to freely produce the target words during the remaining 15 minutes. They discussed in groups what furniture items they wanted for their homes. The importance of using the new words was stressed, but no teacher-initiated focus on form was given. They were not required to report their decisions or reasons to other groups either.

The task-plus-exercise group. This treatment group went through the same pre-task and task cycle, but instead of adopting a completely communicative approach, this group used written vocabulary exercises as a post-task in the last 15 minutes. The formats of the exercises were the same as that of the instruments: form recall, meaning recall, and meaning recognition. As 15 minutes was less than enough time to finish all the exercises, the participants were given the liberty to select which parts or items to do. Answers were provided at the end of this treatment.

A summary of the two treatments is shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1
Group Sequences and Treatments

Task-Plus-Discussion	Task-Plus-Exercise
Pre-task (15 min)	
Word and photo sharing	
Introduction of target words	
Task cycle (30 min)	
Furniture task	
Rehearsal and oral report	
Post-task (15 min)	Post-task (15 min)
Free discussion	Written exercises
Immediate post-test (30 min)	
One-week delayed post-test (30 min)	

Data Scoring

All tests were scored by the researcher and two student assistants. For the recall tests, a correct response would receive a full point. Any unattempted item or wrong response would receive a score of zero. When spelling mistakes were found, however, the researcher and the assistants negotiated the degree to which the responses were correct or not. For example, a remote approximation of the target word (e.g., *curet* for *cruet*) or an incomplete definition would receive half a point. This measure was needed to take partial learning and knowledge into account. As regards the multiple-choice recognition test, a correct answer would be awarded a full point, "I don't know" or no answer would score zero, and any distractor selected would be scored -0.33 to adjust scores for guessing.

Results

Table 2 below represents the development of each type of vocabulary knowledge in the two treatments, both immediately and after a week. The maximum score for all the tests was 10.

Table 2***Immediate and Delayed Vocabulary Gains after Different Treatments***

Test Time	Treatment	Type of Vocabulary Knowledge					
		Form Recall		Meaning Recall		Meaning Recognition	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Immediate	Task-Plus-Discussion	4.04	1.46	5.07	1.38	6.45	1.36
	Task-Plus-Exercise	5.42	1.02	6.38	1.12	7.69	1.18
Delayed	Task-Plus-Discussion	2.71	1.40	4.71	1.14	5.98	1.24
	Task-Plus-Exercise	4.23	1.30	5.92	0.95	7.00	1.16

The data collected were also analyzed using a repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA). The alpha level for all analyses was .05. The effect for test time was found to be significant, $F(1, 25) = 55.25, p < .0005$. Type of vocabulary knowledge was even more significant, $F(2, 50) = 115.35, p < .0005$, so certain types of vocabulary knowledge were indeed harder to grasp for the participants. Treatment, which was the focus of the present study, also appeared to have a significant effect, although it was not as salient as the previous two variables, $F(1, 25) = 9.96, p = .004$. At the same time, some interaction was found between time and type of vocabulary knowledge, $F(2, 50) = 11.67, p < .0005$. This reflects that not all types of vocabulary knowledge declined at the same rate. However, very little interaction was found between time and treatment, as well as between type of vocabulary knowledge and treatment. Thus, using exercises as a post-task did not seem to slow down the decline of vocabulary knowledge in general, and the relative difficulty of the three types of vocabulary knowledge was almost the same for both treatment groups.

Discussion

On the basis of these findings, some possible answers to the research inquiries emerge. Generally, TBI has the potential to bring about moderate to large vocabulary gains at the three levels of form-meaning mastery. It is not unlikely that the characteristics of tasks – authentic materials, learner-centred communication, negotiation for meaning, integration of new and existing knowledge, and a meaningful, non-linguistic outcome – can foster vocabulary acquisition in the same manner they foster the acquisition of other language features. Another factor that may have an effect is wider acoustic variability in a task-based classroom. As suggested by Barcroft and Sommers (2005, p. 410), the use of acoustically varied presentation formats can help learners form “more associative hooks and more robust representations” of the words taught. To make that happen, communicative tasks and group reports as multi-talker presentation formats can be used to promote L2 vocabulary learning.

Another main concern in this paper is the quality of learners’ initial stage of vocabulary learning in task-based classes. The two treatments in the present study appeared to facilitate vocabulary learning in similar ways: meaning recognition was learnt best, followed by meaning recall. The gain in form recall was the smallest. Likewise, although the learners’ performance dropped in all delayed tests, form recall exhibited the most marked fall. These results followed the general pattern that productive knowledge (recall) is harder to acquire than receptive knowledge (recognition). One possibility is that the participants prioritized meaning

rather than word form, which was natural given that both treatments in this study were communication-oriented. In fact, it is not uncommon that teachers focus primarily on meaning when teaching new words, regardless of the teaching approach adopted (Sonbul & Schmitt, 2009). This study once again stresses the importance of word form, as more than often it is the most difficult aspect to learn.

Many educators view written vocabulary exercises as obsolete or superficial in comparison with sentence or essay writing. In this study, however, the participants who did exercises as a post-task clearly outperformed those whose post-task was a discussion. In addition, scores from the Task-Plus-Exercise Group were more tightly clustered around the means. Such a phenomenon might be an indication that even learners who did not participate much in the task cycle managed to pick up a considerable amount of word knowledge in the post-task exercises. This has a profound implication for vocabulary learning in a communicative, cooperative task, because learners are unlikely to have adequate time or opportunities to use all target words in their output, unless they try to dominate the task. What is more, even if they pay close attention to the speech of the other members, the word form and the meaning (or at least some clues to it) are often presented at the same time. This only results in repetition, which is less helpful than retrieval (Folse, 2004). Therefore, if a post-task comprising written exercises can not only elicit additional retrievals of partially-learned words, but also channel learners' attention to words that they have overlooked or avoided, it will be of enormous value to learners and teachers alike.

Lastly, both groups retained less word knowledge at all levels in the delayed post-tests, and the drops exhibited by both groups were comparable. One possible interpretation is that the additional word repetitions and retrievals that occurred in the post-task exercises were not robust enough to transfer all target words from short-term memory to long-term memory. Although there is no definite answer to how many encounters are needed for words to be retained permanently, 10 may be a reasonable estimation (Saragi, Nation, & Meister, 1978). Whether a one-hour task-based lesson can achieve this is open to debate. After all, in a task-based syllabus, new words that are thematically unrelated to the ever-changing content may not appear again. Thus, repeated encounters can only be ensured through activities not closely related to the current task (Laufer, 2005). This necessitates the use of less fashionable written exercises, but how long and how often they should be used is within the teacher's discretion.

Conclusion

The main pedagogical implication of this study is based on the superiority of a communicative task plus written exercises over a task alone. Although results show that the use of communicative tasks can indeed promote vocabulary learning at various levels, a written exercise component that lasts no longer than 15 minutes can raise the gain significantly. Such exercises are easy to develop, completion time is less than that with sentence or essay writing, and either the teacher or the learners themselves can do the correction quickly (Folse, 2006). Another advantage that should not be overlooked is that written vocabulary exercises can take the form of computer applications and traditional paperwork. Therefore, the use of vocabulary exercises as a post-task is highly feasible in classrooms with limited facilities, as well as in institutes that can afford advanced technology.

There are certainly limitations in this study that should be underscored. To begin with, the number of participants needed to be higher and the generalization of the results for this study is very limited. Next, owing to a tight teaching schedule, the researcher gave the participants

only a one-hour treatment, and all the testing instruments were in written form, notwithstanding that the problem-solving task, the group report, and the discussion post-task were done orally. Also, the participants' exercises were not collected or analyzed, so how learners make use of the written vocabulary exercises within a limited time is unknown. Do they prefer to work on well-learnt or unfamiliar words? Do learners who are more active in communicative tasks complete more items? Qualitative measures such as observation and interviews are required to look into these questions without exerting extra pressure on the learners.

It should be noted that the present study investigated only the acquisition of the basic meaning of a word, so other aspects of vocabulary learning (such as associations and collocation) remain untouched. How well these aspects can be learnt in a similar setting merits further investigation. Similarly, as only nouns were learnt and tested, further studies are needed to empirically explore if the results are generalizable to other word classes. Future research could also add learner differences as an independent variable. Although TBI in its purest form would seem to favour holistic learners (Willis, 1996), an exercise component in TBI might be more helpful to analytic or beginner learners.

While the suggestions above are valuable to researchers, teachers may be more concerned about what kinds of exercises are the best for learners. Although this study limited itself to three kinds of exercises, there are actually numerous permutations of vocabulary practices. A brief sample of some exercise possibilities can be found in the appendix. It should be stressed, however, that how often learners retrieve a word is more important than what they do with it. Various types of exercises should be used not because some are inherently better, but because this guarantees a more balanced exposure and helps to retain learners' attention. Even when class time is so short that no written exercises can be given, teachers might consider orally asking questions at various cognitive levels about newly taught words (Folse, 2004). For example, after the task cycle used in this study, the teacher could ask the whole class:

- Which words are related to a bed? (*divan, futon*, etc.)
- In what ways is a *bergere* different from your chair? (with arms, more expensive, etc.)
- What is a *console* normally made of? (wood, plastic, etc.)

Such questions require very little teacher preparation, yet they force learners to retrieve the words multiple times from different perspectives. Moreover, every additional activity, however short it is, signals the teacher's expectation that a certain amount of vocabulary should be learnt in each week or in each unit; it is hoped that learners will respond to such an expectation.

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Appendix

Examples of Types of Vocabulary Exercises

The following is a summary of possible directions of vocabulary exercises classified by Folse (2004):

1. Matching

Match the words in the left column with the definitions in the right column.

A. plumber	_____ an extending chair designed for someone to relax on
B. lounge	_____ a person who installs and fixes water piping

(Distractors are possible in either column. Pictures can be used to replace definitions.)

2. Defining

Write a good definition for the word *stubborn*.

3. Labelling

Write the words according to the given definitions.

m _ _ _ u _ _ – a silver-white, heavily toxic metallic element which is liquid at room temperature

4. True-false

Read the statements and write **true** or **false**.

_____ Luggage and spare tires are often kept in the *trunk* of a car.

5. Odd-man out

Circle the word that is different from the other three.

mutton veal carrot pork

6. Cloze sentences

Fill in the blanks with the given words.

carpet, sill

She sat with one elbow resting on the _____ of the open window.
The floor is covered with a beautiful _____ made of wool.

(Distractors can be added. Passages can be used instead of sentences.)

7. Word forms

Provide the verb form for the given nouns and adjectives.

anticipation > _____
hesitant > _____

8. Error identification

One of the three underlined words is incorrect. Circle the error and write a correction above.

Because of the rain, the press conference has to be put on until tomorrow.

9. Answering questions

Answer questions which include the new words.

What happens to someone if he or she has *asthma*?

10. Original sentences

For each word, write an original sentence that shows your understanding of its meaning.

communicate: _____

11. Original story

Write a story about anything, using all the given words.

complain, mistake, request, satisfied

The Impact of Tasks on Male Iranian Elementary EFL Learners' Incidental Vocabulary Learning

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Abstract

The present study was carried out to explore the evidence of incidental vocabulary learning through the different tasks undertaken by male elementary EFL learners. To pursue this purpose, the impact of three kinds of tasks, i.e., reading comprehension, reading comprehension with fill-in gaps, and sentence writing, was measured on incidental vocabulary learning. The materials of the experiment were pilot-studied in advance on learners ($n = 51$) of the same age and proficiency level to assure the unfamiliarity of the target words. Three intact groups of male Iranian elementary EFL learners ($n = 88$) in two junior high schools participated in the main study. Two unexpected vocabulary tests after the completion of each task were administered to examine short and long-term memory retention. The results of ANOVA showed evidence of the significant impact of task involvement on the incidental learning of vocabulary by male elementary EFL learners.

There is a consensus among different researchers (e.g., Allen, 1983; De Bot, Paribakht, & Wesche, 1997; Laufer & Shumeli, 1997; Nation, 1982; Nation & Waring, 1997; Zimmerman, 1997) that knowledge of second language vocabulary plays a crucial role in language learning. This significance is highlighted for EFL learners since, as Hunt and Beglar (2005) state, they “frequently acquire impoverished lexicons despite years of formal study.” A large and rich body of research has explored different aspects of vocabulary learning and found implications for teaching vocabulary, such as the role of frequency of exposure in vocabulary enhancement (e.g., Gass & Mackey, 2002; Rott, 1999, 2007), the role of input, intake, and output on retention of word meanings (e.g., Ellis & He, 1999; Watanabe, 1997), strategies of vocabulary learning (e.g., Fraser, 1999; Gu, 2003; Nassaji, 2004), and vocabulary acquisition through reading (e.g., Wesche & Paribakht, 2000).

Relevant to these issues is the role of consciousness in vocabulary learning that invited a large body of studies, especially in the domains of implicit and explicit learning. There have been debates among scholars on the relationship between implicit and explicit learning on the one hand, and incidental learning on the other hand. Schmidt (1994), in an attempt to make a distinction between these terms, proposed the following basic types of consciousness shown in Figure 1:

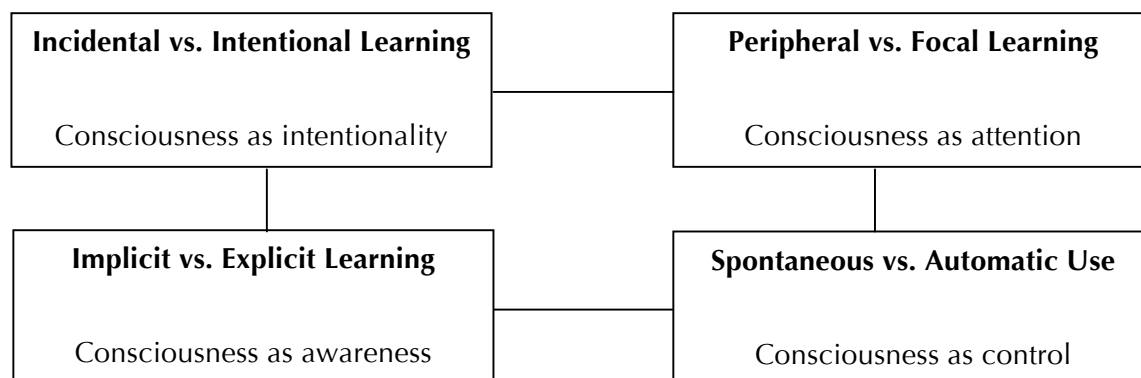


Figure 1. Four types of consciousness (Schmidt, 1994)

The notion of incidental learning has been defined from different perspectives. Generally, incidental vocabulary learning is defined as learning vocabulary as a secondary result of an activity, or as Huckin and Coady (1999) define it, incidental vocabulary learning occurs when the focus of attention is not on the main cognitive activity.

Incidental learning could happen in different contexts. Extensive reading is one of the major sources of incidental vocabulary learning (Brown, Waring, & Donkaewbua, 2008; Huckin & Coady, 1999; Kweon & Kim, 2008; Laufer, 2001; Paribakht & Wesche, 1999; Rott, 1999; Swanborn & de Glopper, 2002). Recently, with the development of task-based approaches to teaching different components of language, pedagogical tasks were identified as another principal source of incidental vocabulary learning (Keating, 2008; Moonen, De Graaff, Westhoff, & Admiraal, 2005; Wesche & Paribakht, 2000).

The rationale for task-based syllabuses, according to Ellis (2005), is based on the following ideas. First, from the theoretical view, it is assumed that instruction needs to be compatible with the processes involved in L2 acquisition. Second, it is important that the tasks be cognitively involving and motivating to engage the learner. Third, tasks provide an appropriate unit to comply with learners' needs and thus course design should meet these needs. The structure of a task-based syllabus, according to Ellis (2003), requires processes of task selection and sequencing. A principled selection of tasks needs decisions to select the type and the content of the task. Widdowson (2000) maintained that task design has two important conditions to fulfill: to provide learners with an activity that has meaning and to stimulate learning.

Through investigation, different tasks are able to be designed to measure the different dimensions of vocabulary learned as an ancillary product. Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) went one step further and proposed the Involvement Load Hypothesis as the first comprehensive theoretical attempt to operationalize traditional general terms such as noticing, attention, motivation, and elaboration into task-specific components. They introduced an involvement load index that is illustrated by plus (+) and minus (–) signs representative of the presence or absence of involvement load components (i.e., need, search, and evaluation) respectively. The presence of an involvement load component equals 1, and its absence equals 0 to indicate the numerical value of the involvement load index. Components such as need and evaluation, which are comprised of moderate and strong, will be shown as 1(+) and 2(++) respectively. The minimum involvement value of a task is 0 and the maximum is 5. The degree of

involvement load determines the effectiveness of a task as a result of interaction between these three basic components of involvement.

The theoretical basis of task-induced involvement has a close relationship with the Involvement Load Hypothesis; the basic assumption behind this construct was that retention of words in a task when processed incidentally is conditional upon three factors of “need,” “search,” and “evaluation” (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001). Table 1 shows the effectiveness of different kinds of tasks in vocabulary retention in terms of involvement load (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001).

Table 1
Task-Induced Involvement Load

Task	Status of the Target Word	Need	Search	Evaluation
1. Reading and comprehension questions	Glossed in a text but irrelevant to the task	–	–	–
2. Reading and comprehension	Glossed in a text and relevant to the task	+	–	–
3. Reading and comprehension	Not glossed, but relevant to the task	+	–	–/+ (depending on word and context)
4. Reading and comprehension questions and filling gaps	Relevant to reading comprehension. Listed with glosses at the end of text	+	–	+
5. Writing original sentences	Listed with glosses	+	–	++
6. Writing a composition	Concepts selected by the teacher (and provided in L1); the L2 learner-writer must look up L2 form	+	+	++
7. Writing a composition	Concepts selected (and looked up) by the L2 learner-writer	++	+	++

Note. Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001, p. 18

Whether or not tasks can be classified according to the extent to which they are effective in vocabulary learning has been subject of different studies. This issue motivated researchers to find empirical evidence for the efficacy of tasks in the retention of words learned incidentally. As a first attempt, Hulstijn and Laufer (2001) designed two reading-based tasks and one composition writing task to test their Involvement Load Hypothesis on EFL university-level students; the results confirmed their hypothesis. Kim (2008) measured the same tasks on matriculated undergraduate students versus students in an intensive English program. Lu and Huang (2009), with non-English major students, studied the impact of listening-based tasks on incidental vocabulary learning. The results were in line with the Involvement Load Hypothesis.

There is general consensus that incidental learning is not involved in the process of acquisition of the first two or three thousand most frequently occurring words (Huckin & Coady, 1999). In other words, the claim is that incidental learning does not occur in beginners. Despite a plethora of studies in the field of incidental learning, no empirical evidence confirms it. The most common feature of the majority of studies in the field of task-specific vocabulary learning is that university-level learners were investigated. A very scarce number of researchers have studied lower level of students in terms of proficiency and age range.

In order to undertake the present study, the following research question was formulated:

Do different tasks have any significant impact on the male elementary learners' incidental vocabulary learning?

To fulfill the research question, the hereunder null hypothesis was formulated:

Different tasks have no significant impact on the male elementary learners' incidental learning of vocabulary.

Method

Participants

The participants of the main study ($n = 88$) and pilot study ($n = 51$) were EFL learners in the second and third year of two junior high schools located around the city of Qazvin in Iran. The participants are all male, aged from 13 to 15, with an elementary level of English proficiency. All the participants are native speakers of Persian.

The participants were selected from five intact classes. Without manipulation of the class members, the participants of two classes studying in the second and third year were randomly assigned to the pilot study. The other three classes participated in the main study. In the main study, the members of Group 1 and Group 3 were second-year students and the members of Group 2 were third-year students. Regarding space, time, and facilities, the conditions of the two schools were approximately the same.

Formal English language education in Iran's schools begins in junior high school, when learners have completed five years of elementary school and are usually 12 years old. In the first year, they become familiar with the alphabet, basic words, and simple question and answer sentences. In the next two years, they gradually learn the basic structure of English. The textbooks are highly structure-based and consist of dialogues, patterns, and readings.

Instruments

The aim of the present study was to explore the impact of different tasks on the extent to which elementary EFL learners can learn vocabulary. The key instruments of the researcher to pursue this purpose were tasks. Two kinds of reading-based tasks and one writing-based task were adapted from those in studies by Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) and Martínez-Fernández (2008). These tasks were selected to examine the extent to which they could impact learners' promotion of vocabulary learning.

Task 1 was a reading comprehension exercise with a glossary. It consisted of a short reading text along with five multiple-choice comprehension questions. The content of the text did not contain abstract concepts or ambiguous sentences; it was about going to a stadium to watch a football match. This task was provided for second-year junior high school participants.

The participants' task was to read the text and answer the comprehension questions. The glossary contained the Persian equivalents of ten unfamiliar words that were used in the reading comprehension exercise (see Appendix A). In the process of target word selection, some factors were considered, such as the unfamiliarity of the participants with the words, the selection of words representing different parts of speech, the avoidance of the use of words with different meanings, the avoidance of the use of ambiguous and abstract words, and the use of words that learners can apply in the sentence-writing task.

Task 2 was another reading comprehension exercise; learners were supposed to fill in the gaps with the ten target words and then answer comprehension questions. This task was provided for the third-year participants, so the text and the target words were different from those used in Task 1. Five additional words that acted as distractors were given at the end of the reading text to decrease the possibility of filling the last blank spaces by the remaining words. The L1 meaning of all 15 words was provided in the glossary at the bottom of the page (see Appendix B).

In Task 3 (sentence writing), the second-year participants were obliged to write a contextualized sentence for each of the ten target words. The target words were the same as those employed in Task 1. The structure of this task was different from Tasks 1 and 2 in that there was no text to read and no questions to answer (see Appendix C). It was emphasized that slight spelling errors or ungrammatical sentences would not be considered as the primary criteria for scoring; rather, clarity in transferring the meaning of the words in sentences would be the main criterion.

Identical immediate and delayed vocabulary post-tests were conducted after each task to test the vocabulary knowledge of participants. The time interval between the immediate and delayed post-tests was one week. The post-tests were composed of a table, in which the participants had to give the L1 equivalent for each word (see Appendix D and Appendix E).

Procedure

Prior to the main study, the familiarity of the participants with the target words was pilot studied on two groups through the use of a vocabulary test. The first group ($n = 28$) and the second group ($n = 25$) were similar to the groups in the main study regarding age, gender, and proficiency level. The first group was composed of second-year students and the second group was composed of third-year students. The results showed that in Task 1, just one participant in the first pilot group knew two out of ten target words, and in Task 2, one participant in the second pilot group knew one out of ten target words.

In order to ensure the homogeneity of the proficiency level of the participants in all groups, a standard proficiency test, namely KET (Key English Test), was administered. Twenty of the participants (out of 88) with low frequent scores were eliminated from the whole sample.

One task each was given to one intact class group. In each session, the task sheets were given to the participants and the necessary instruction was provided. Time on the tasks was not controlled, since, as Skehan (1996) stated, when a specific amount of time is given to do a task, it puts pressure on the learners, but when the learners are allowed to take all the time they need, this pressure will be removed.

After the participants finished each task in their group, they were required to take an unannounced immediate post-test to measure their short-term retention of the target words in

the tasks. To serve the purpose of the study, the participants had no previous knowledge about upcoming vocabulary post-tests. One week after the immediate post-test, learners received another post-test to assess their long-term retention of the target words.

The method of scoring was adopted by the researcher in line with Laufer and Hulstijn's (2001) study in such a way that every item received a point from zero to one. An incorrect translation or no translation received no points or 0; a correct translation received the maximum point or 1; and finally, a partial translation or an acceptable, but not accurate item was assigned half a point or 0.5.

Results and Discussion

In total, the three groups received two post-tests each. There was a one-week interval between the immediate and delayed post-tests. Descriptive statistics of the obtained scores for the different groups are tabulated in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Performance on Immediate and Delayed Post-tests

Task	Group	N	Immediate post-test		Delayed post-test	
			Mean (out of 10)	SD	Mean (out of 10)	SD
Task 1: Reading comprehension	1	23	3.36	2.27	2.39	1.82
Task 2: Reading plus gap-fill	2	22	5.86	3.09	4.61	2.72
Task 3: Sentence writing	3	23	8.39	2.08	6.56	2.06

Table 2 shows that Group 2 performed better than Group 1, and the participants of Group 3 outperformed the other groups on both the immediate and delayed post-tests. To verify the statistical difference in the mean scores of both immediate and delayed post-tests in the three groups, a one-way ANOVA with the number of groups as an independent variable or factor and types of tests (immediate and delayed) as a dependent variable was conducted.

As shown in Table 2, the results of the ANOVA indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in the immediate post-tests among Group 1 ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 2.27$), Group 2 ($M = 5.86$, $SD = 3.09$), and Group 3 ($M = 8.39$, $SD = 2.08$), $F_{2,65} = 22.92$, $p < .001$. It was also demonstrated that there was also a statistically significant difference in the delayed post-tests among Group 1 ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 1.82$), Group 2 ($M = 4.61$, $SD = 2.72$), and Group 3 ($M = 6.56$, $SD = 2.10$), $F_{2,65} = 19.96$, $p < .001$.

Table 3

ANOVA on the Students' Post-Test Scores

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Immediate Post-Test	Between Groups	290.010	2	145.005	22.923	.000
	Within Groups	411.178	65	6.326		
	Total	701.188	67			
Delayed Post-Test	Between Groups	200.621	2	100.310	19.964	.000
	Within Groups	326.596	65	5.025		
	Total	527.217	67			

The effect size, or eta squared, as shown in Table 3, was large for both immediate ($ES = 0.41$) and delayed post-tests ($ES = 0.38$); their magnitudes are large enough to interpret that the difference among groups on immediate and delayed post-tests was meaningful.

Table 4

Eta Figures on Post-Tests

Measures of Association		
	Eta	Eta Squared
Immediate Post-Test * Tasks	.643	.414
Delayed Post-Test * Tasks	.617	.381

Since the F value was significant, Scheffé post hoc tests were performed for two post-tests in order to investigate the location of differences. The results showed that there was a significant difference in performance between Groups 1 and 3 in the immediate and delayed post-tests (see Appendix E). Furthermore, the scores of all participants declined from the immediate post-test to the delayed post-test. The decline may have been due to the one-week time interval between the immediate and delayed post-tests.

Conclusion

The results of the study significantly support the evidence of incidental vocabulary learning in elementary EFL learners as a result of performance on tasks with different degrees of involvement. Therefore, the null hypothesis of the study was rejected.

In this study, each one of the three tasks was significantly different from the others in vocabulary retention and of these, the writing task was the most powerful in keeping the words in learners' short-term and long-term memory. Although there were differences in the extent of vocabulary retention through the tasks, what is clear is that each of the kinds of learning which occurred was the result of the treatments used in this study.

To conclude, vocabulary learning tasks are advocated as a major vehicle to help EFL learners to learn foreign language vocabulary and retain it after a period of time.

Implications and Suggestions for Further Research

The important theoretical implication of this study is characterizing incidental learning as an effective way of vocabulary learning for learners of all proficiency levels.

This study also represented more involving tasks as a way of keeping vocabulary in long-term memory. More involving tasks, such as those that incorporate more involvement load components, provide optimal conditions for learners to interact with the words on deeper levels.

The findings of the present study, from a pedagogical point of view, pave the way for EFL teachers to manipulate language components and to design tasks that enhance incidental vocabulary learning. Moreover, as Allen (1983) points out, vocabulary activities have been criticized in that they take much of the class time and the teacher's energy; therefore vocabulary learning should be integrated with other language skills (such as reading or writing) in a structured and purposeful task. The teacher's role is to create such situations, and to be an informant and supervisor during the administration of tasks.

A task, as Ellis (2003) puts it, “is a powerful construct for designing courses” (p. 79) so the findings of the present study are conducive for syllabus designers in the sense that they can use the tasks as units to organize materials for vocabulary learning. This can be applicable, as the results of this study suggest, by designing interesting and attractive tasks, such as those employed in this study, instead of less engaging activities. This matter is significant when learners are at the beginning levels of language learning.

The lack of such tasks, especially in Iranian English language textbooks, is one of the major reasons for the demotivation of students in learning language. For the sake of vocabulary learning, designing tasks which interactively engage learners’ interest, such as reading texts with the highlighted new words along with marginal glosses, and creating ideas with the words in such a way that facilitate incidental vocabulary learning would be helpful.

The present study did not examine the participants’ opinions about their experience in learning vocabulary through using the tasks. These viewpoints could certainly have given valid and reliable insights to the researchers to fairly judge, discuss, and draw conclusions on the findings of the study. Thus, it seems necessary for future research to provide a structured interview process for the above purposes.

Regarding the skill-based tasks in this study, vocabulary learning was integrated with reading and writing skills. It would be worthwhile for another study to examine vocabulary learning through speaking and listening-based tasks.

In the case of regarding intentionality in vocabulary learning, this study, with its unexpected post-tests, investigated incidental vocabulary learning through the tasks. It is proposed that future studies organize a research project with two experiments: the first one, similar to that of this study, to inspect incidental learning, and the second one which informs the participants about upcoming tests to verify intentional learning to make comparisons to find which kind of learning is more effective.

Author Note

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Appendix A

Task 1: Reading Comprehension

Football Match

There is a football **match** at Azadi stadium. We are going to the stadium this afternoon. **Everybody** can see the match. They can **stay** at home and watch TV. We should **leave** home at one. We may take a taxi. We should be in time. They close the doors of the stadium at 2:45. We don't **want** to be late. But many **people** go by bus because it's very **cheap**. People can have a good time at the stadium.

My friends and I **usually** go there by bus. We don't take a taxi because it's **expensive**. Young people usually go to the stadium for football matches. They have a good time there and **enjoy** the games.

Answer the following questions:

1. We are going to the stadium _____.
a) at 2:45 b) this afternoon
c) this evening d) at one
2. People go to the stadium by bus because _____.
a) they can have a good time b) it's expensive
c) it's very cheap d) they enjoy the game
3. Everybody _____.
a) can see the match b) watch TV
c) take a taxi d) go by bus
4. Which of the following sentences is **true**?
a) They close the doors of the stadium at one.
b) We should take a taxi.
c) We want to be late.
d) We should be in time.
5. Which of the following sentences is **false**?
a) People can have a good time at the stadium.
b) Young people go to the stadium for football matches.
c) People can stay at home and watch TV.
d) My friends and I usually go to the stadium by taxi.

Word List

match (noun):

مسابقه

everybody (pronoun):

هرکس ، هرکسی

stay (verb):

ماندن

leave (verb):

ترک کردن

want (verb):

خواستن

cheap (adjective):

ارزان

people (noun):

مردم ، افراد

usually (adverb):

معمولاً

expensive (adjective):

گران

enjoy (verb):

لذت بردن

Appendix B

Task 2: Reading Comprehension with Fill-In Gaps

Instructions: Read the following text carefully. Fill in the blanks with ten of the following words in the box below. Each word **MUST** be used just once and in the correct form. You are free to use word-list sheet when you need. Then answer the questions.

break	busy	difficult	free	guess
heavy	life	place	problem(s)	relative(s)
spend	slow	think	town(s)	use

Town vs. City

Mr. Kamali and his family are from Tehran. They now live in Birjand. They had a _____ life in Tehran. They _____ people in small _____ have a happy _____. They don't have many of the _____ that people have in a big city. There are not many cars in the street. And they don't _____ a lot of time in the _____. traffic every day. They can get the things they need easily and fast. People are not always in a hurry. They have a lot of _____ time. They can visit their _____ and friends. People are not very _____ in small towns. And they help you when you need them.

Answer the following questions:

- Mr. Kamali and his family _____.
a) had a happy life in Tehran b) live in Birjand now
c) have a difficult life in Birjand d) are from Birjand
- People in small towns _____.
a) have many problems b) spend a lot of time in the heavy traffic
c) are very busy d) have a lot of free time
- In a big city _____.
a) there are many cars in the street b) people are not always in a hurry
c) people have a happy life d) people can get the things easily
- Which of the following sentences is **true**?
a) In big cities people can visit their relatives and friends.
b) In small towns people are always very busy.
c) In small towns people are not always in a hurry.
d) In big cities people can help you when you need them.
- Which of the following sentences is **false**?
a) People have a lot of free time in small towns.
b) People spend a lot of time in the heavy traffic in big cities.
c) People can get the things they need easily and fast in big cities.
d) People in small towns don't have many of the cities' problems.

Word List

break (verb):	شکستن	problem (noun):	مسئله ، مشکل
busy (adjective):	پرمشغله	relative (noun):	خویشاوند
difficult (adjective):	دشوار	spend (verb):	گذرانیدن
free (adjective):	آزاد	slow (adjective):	آهسته
guess (verb):	دس زدن	think (verb):	فکر کردن
heavy (adjective):	سنگین	town (noun):	شهر کوچک ، شهرستان
life (noun):	زندگی	use (verb):	به کار بردن
place (noun):	مکان		

Appendix C
Task 3: Sentence Writing

Instructions:

Make sentences with the following words. You can use the word-list sheet when you need.

1. **match:**

2. **everybody:**

3. **stay:**

4. **leave:**

5. **cheap:**

6. **people:**

7. **usually:**

8. **want:**

9. **expensive:**

10. **enjoy:**

Word List

match (noun):

مسابقه

everybody (pronoun):

هرکس ، هر کسی

stay (verb):

ماندن

leave (verb):

ترک کردن

cheap (adjective):

ارزان

people (noun):

مردم ، افراد

usually (adverb):

معمولاً

want (verb):

خواستن

expensive (adjective):

گران

enjoy (verb):

لذت بردن

Appendix D

Immediate and Delayed Post-Test for Task 1 and Task 3

Read the following words. If you know the meaning, write it down in the table provided.

	WORD	MEANING
1	<i>match</i>	
2	<i>everybody</i>	
3	<i>stay</i>	
4	<i>leave</i>	
5	<i>want</i>	
6	<i>cheap</i>	
7	<i>people</i>	
8	<i>usually</i>	
9	<i>expensive</i>	
10	<i>enjoy</i>	

Appendix E

Immediate and Delayed Post-Test for Task 2

Read the following words. If you know the meaning, write it down in the table provided.

	WORD	MEANING
1	<i>busy</i>	
2	<i>difficult</i>	
3	<i>free</i>	
4	<i>heavy</i>	
5	<i>life</i>	
6	<i>problem</i>	
7	<i>relative</i>	
8	<i>spend</i>	
9	<i>think</i>	
10	<i>town</i>	

Appendix F

Scheffé Post Hoc Multiple Range Test for Immediate and Delayed Post-Tests

Multiple Comparisons

Scheffé

Dependent Variable	(I) Groups	(J) Groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Immediate Post-Test	G1	G2	-2.49407*	.75005	.006	-4.3731	-.6150
		G3	-5.02174*	.74167	.000	-6.8798	-3.1637
	G2	G1	2.49407*	.75005	.006	.6150	4.3731
		G3	-2.52767*	.75005	.005	-4.4067	-.6486
	G3	G1	5.02174*	.74167	.000	3.1637	6.8798
		G2	2.52767*	.75005	.005	.6486	4.4067
Delayed Post-Test	G1	G2	-2.22233*	.66847	.006	-3.8970	-.5477
		G3	-4.17391*	.66100	.000	-5.8299	-2.5179
	G2	G1	2.22233*	.66847	.006	.5477	3.8970
		G3	-1.95158*	.66847	.018	-3.6263	-.2769
	G3	G1	4.17391*	.66100	.000	2.5179	5.8299
		G2	1.95158*	.66847	.018	.2769	3.6263

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Plurilingualism in University English Classes: A Case Study from Timor-Leste

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Abstract

Codeswitching between languages in English language classrooms has been disparaged by textbook writers, methodologists and educational policymakers in many countries.

This paper reports an action research project which examined language use in English classes in Timor-Leste. The first aim was to identify the extent of codeswitching by audio-recording four lessons and the second to explore the teachers' attitudes in follow-up interviews.

Transcript examples of codeswitching show that while one teacher used only English throughout the lesson, the others used varying amounts of Tetum, Portuguese, and Bahasa Indonesia. Extracts from interviews will report the teachers' views.

The data suggests that plurilingualism rather than multilingualism is a more appropriate term for the use of different languages in the increasingly complex linguistic context in which English is taught in many Asian classrooms. The findings also support recent published arguments (e.g., Cook, 2010) for a more positive attitude towards plurilingual use in English language classrooms.

The paper begins with an explanation of the difference between multilingualism and plurilingualism (Canagarajah, 2009), and the implications this distinction has for plurilingual use in language classes. This is followed by a brief review of recent literature outlining reasons for rejecting a monolingual approach to foreign language teaching, and outlining arguments and evidence in favour of the use of language alternation in language classes where plurilingual usage is a common social and educational phenomenon. The linguistic context

and the aims and procedures of the present study are then explained before the presentation and discussion of examples of transcript data from audio-recordings of English language lessons. A quantitative analysis of the observational data of this study shows that in this particular context, the extent of plurilingual usage by English language instructors varies from zero to more than 50% of the lesson. Moreover, in some cases, elements of three or four languages were incorporated, even within one utterance. Some of the views of the teachers expressed in semi-structured interviews are provided to indicate the range of beliefs about the value of mono-or plurilinguistic practices held by teaching staff within one department. Evidence from these interviews suggests very strongly that the extent of plurilingualism depends on the beliefs of the teachers concerned, rather than on national language policies or decisions made by senior management. The paper concludes with recommendations for teachers to undertake action research projects to explore their own classrooms in order to develop a principled approach to language use.

Plurilingualism and English Language Teaching

Multilingualism may be seen as the distinct use of different languages within a speech community; an example of this is the diglossic situation found in Eastern Malaysia, where speakers often use an indigenous language such as Bidayuh in complementary distribution to the national language, Bahasa Melayu (Dealwis, 2007; Dealwis & David, 2009). Such multilingual competence may be regarded as additive or subtractive; in the latter case, one language dominates another to the linguistic and sociocultural detriment of the dominated language and its users. By contrast, *plurilinguistic competence* is perceived as where two or more languages are integrated into an individual's personal repertoire. Thus, "[i]n plurilingual communication, English may find accommodation in the repertoire of a South Asian, combining with his or her proficiency in one or more local language" (Canagarajah, 2009, p. 7) and each language influences the other's development. Canagarajah also distinguishes plurilingualism from codeswitching, arguing that the latter "assumes bilingual competence, displaying considerable rhetorical control by the speaker" (2009, p. 8), whereas plurilingualism can be practised without bilingual competence.

This is precisely the case in Timor-Leste, where Tetum and Portuguese are the official languages and English and Bahasa Indonesia are constitutionally designated as working languages. According to The Asia Foundation (2004, p. 86), 88 percent of East Timorese people speak Tetum, 49 percent speak Indonesian, and "Portuguese is spoken by only seven percent of the public, mostly older, educated, higher income and in Dili." The Asia Foundation also reports that only one percent of respondents in the foundation's third national survey in 2002 said that they could read English (2004, p. 87), although it may be inferred that the use of English might be greater among the more educated groups, and also that English may have become more widespread in the years since the survey was carried out. With regard to the medium of education, Hattori, Gomes, Ajo, and Belo (2005, p.10) claim that "the government dictates that the language of instruction should be Portuguese, but teachers are often of the younger generation that has little Portuguese proficiency, having been taught under the Indonesian occupation" and recent empirical research in primary classrooms bears this out. Quinn (2008, 2010) has shown that neither teachers nor learners can use Portuguese proficiently and that there are insufficient pedagogic materials in Tetum; thus both parties resort to co-constructing understanding plurilingually, blending all the available languages, including varieties of Tetum and other indigenous languages. In some of these languages, both teachers and students will be fully competent, but in others - notably Portuguese, as noted above - their grasp is tenuous. As will be presented below, similar patterns of plurilingual co-construction can also be found in university English-language classes in Timor-Leste.

While alternating between languages is a very common social phenomenon in multilingual countries, the use of students' first languages in English language classrooms has tended to be frowned on by textbook writers, methodologists, and educational policymakers in many countries. The exclusive use of the target language has dominated English language teaching methodology for over a century, since the rejection in theory (but usually not in practice) of Grammar-Translation, and its replacement, successively, by the Direct Method, Audiolingualism, and Communicative Language Teaching. Mainstream Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research over the past forty years has consistently conducted experiments using only the target language, assuming the rightness of monolingual teaching and discounting the value of the use of other languages. Only two empirical SLA studies which explore the value of translation in language learning have been internationally published: one by Källkvist (2004, 2008) and another by Laufer and Girsai (2008).

However, there has been a resurgence of publications arguing that codeswitching in English language instruction can be socially, pedagogically, and educationally valuable (e.g., Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 2005; Macaro, 2005, 2009a; Swain & Lapkin, 2000). Vivian Cook (2001) has argued that "treating the L1 as a classroom resource opens up several ways to use it" both by the teacher to convey meaning and organise the class, and by the students to incorporate into collaborative learning and to develop their personal learning strategies. More recently, Guy Cook (2010, p. 201) has argued that claims for monolingual teaching are "quintessentially unscientific for a number of reasons." He makes the point that "translation can help and motivate students in a variety of pedagogical contexts . . . [and] is suited to different types of teachers, and different ages and stages of students" (2010, p. xvii). Almost twenty years ago, Widdowson (1994) argued that monolingual methods of teaching English have excessively privileged the status of teachers who are first language users of English, a matter which has given rise to organisations which have sought to redress the imbalance such as the Nonnative Speaker Movement (Braine, 2010). From a wider perspective, Phillipson (1992) pointed to the connection between linguistic imperialism and the hegemony of monolingual teaching of English. Since then, he has continued to argue that the overwhelming dominance of English has led the "deplorable neglect" (Phillipson, 2009, p. 207) of indigenous languages in academic discourse as well as a pandemic threat to academic freedom. Thus, there are convincing reasons for the use of codeswitching in foreign language classes, and these are especially cogent in the increasingly multilingual world of the twenty-first century.

The Present Study

As part of an internal academic development programme, a number of action research projects were started during 2009 at the Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e, one of which is the present ongoing study. The aims of the initial phase of the project, reported here, were to explore the extent to which different languages were being used in the English Department classes and the reasons the lecturers gave for their language use. The overall language policy of the institution has been that Portuguese should be used as the medium of instruction in all faculties except Medicine, where for historical reasons the classes have been taught in Spanish, and the English Department, whose main purpose is the initial training of English language teachers for the nation's secondary schools and for which English has been considered the appropriate medium of instruction. In fact, the institution was closed down for five months in 2009 so that all staff, including the English lecturers, could attend intensive courses in Portuguese.

The four classes which were observed were intact lessons towards the beginning of the sixth semester, i.e., at start of the third year of their four-year programme. There were approximately forty students in each class, and the lessons were taught by their regular teachers, who were also members of the project team.

Data were collected in two ways: firstly, by observing four normal lessons taught in the course of a single week towards the beginning of the second semester by members of the research group, and secondly by semi-structured interviews with the observed teachers to elicit their reactions to the observational findings. The audio-recorded lessons were fully transcribed and the data have been quantitatively analysed to calculate the extent of talking time in different languages, and by classifying examples of plurilingual usage. It might be noted here that the project team had assumed that there would be a fairly consistent use of both Tetum and English across all four lessons, but were surprised by the disparity within the eventual findings.

The Observational Data

In Table 1 below, each of the four teachers has been identified by an initial, and it can be seen that the length of the intact classes they taught ranged from 40 to 80 minutes, with an average of just over one hour. Typical of language classes, a lot of talking went on in most of the lesson – a mean of 84%. There was an above-average proportion of silence in Teacher C's reading lesson and consequently proportionally less teacher talking time (TTT). In the other three classes, there was much more teacher-talk, and an overall average of 60%, which is very much in line with empirical research into classroom interaction elsewhere - indeed, according to Wragg (1999, p. 8), ever since a very early observational study (Stevens, 1912), which found that in 100 random observations of lessons, teachers talked for about 64% and pupils for 36% of the time.

Table 1

Tabulated Classroom Interaction Data

	A	B	C	D	Range	Mean
Class time	80' 0"	79' 21"	39' 50"	67' 30"	40 - 80 mins	60.7 mins
Silence	9.0%	7.0%	40.5%	10.0%	7 - 40.5%	16.0%
Total TTT	47.5%	91.0%	31.5%	69.0%	32 - 91%	60.0%
Total STT	43.5%	2.0%	28.0%	21.0%	2 - 44%	24.0%
TTT English	100.0%	36.0%	60.0%	71.5%	36 - 100%	67.0%
TTT Tetum	-	61.0%	29.0%	25.0%	0 - 61%	29.0%
TTT Bahasa Indonesia	-	2.5%	1.0%	3.0%	0 - 3%	1.6%
TT Portuguese	-	0.5%	4.0%	0.5%	0 - 4%	1.25%
TTT unintell	-	-	6.0%	-	6%	6.0%

What is interesting is the disparity among the teachers of their use of languages other than English. Teacher A used exclusively English, while all the others used varying proportions of Tetum, Bahasa Indonesia, and Portuguese. Teacher B used almost twice as much Tetum as English, and both Teachers C and D spoke Tetum at least 25% of the time. As can be seen, Bahasa Indonesia or Portuguese were used to some extent, and some of Teacher C's utterances were unintelligible. Before the teachers' views on their use of these languages are reported, we will present some of the examples of the ways in which they alternated between languages.

Codeswitching in the data from Teachers B, C, and D was frequently used for brief repetition of explanations or instructions either from English to Tetum, as in Extract A, or from Tetum to English, as in Extract B. The italicised words in parentheses are direct translations of the previous utterance in Tetum.

Extract A:

T: . . . ya translate ba Tetum (*translate into Tetum*) and find out the meaning. Which part of speech? ida be metan ne'e tensor translate ba Tetum depois ita boot sira (*those words in black colour please translate into Tetum and then you*) pronounce orally, arti ba Tetum ne'e saida (*what it means in Tetum*). (Teacher C: minutes 05'37" to 05'50")

Extract B:

T: Se la kumpriende karik husu pergunta. If you don't understand, ask question (Teacher C: minutes 07'48" to 07'50")

Another use was to explain grammatical points in more detail:

Extract C:

T: OK, we move on. "A friendly writer, a writer taught me a few words of Italian." OK. What type of sentence? You. What can you tell us?
S: Um. Past
T: Yep
S: Past. Simple past
T: Simple past. How do you know?
S: Because the
T: What is the key for a verb?
S: Oh
T: Yeah. Taught. What is simple present?
S: teach some
T: I teach someone. I taught someone. All right? So that's the key, OK? Ne'e mak imi tenki hatene, setiap kalimat, setiap sentence, imi atu halo definisaun nebe klaro, imi tenki hare mak nia vervo. Kumprende ga lae? Vervo importante, vervo imi tenki hatene. (*This is what you need to know that if you want to understand a clear definition of every sentence, you must look for the verbs. You understand or not? Verbs are very important and you must know the verbs.*) Regular verb, and . . . ?
Ss: Irregular verb
T: Regular tanba beraturan (*because it is in order*). . .
(Teacher C: minutes 16'12" to 17'17")

There were also appeals to students to help each other, and it may be argued that the use of Tetum in the following extract was intended to establish a sense of personal and social solidarity with, and among, the students.

Extract D:

T: I'll give it to you – two copies - but please make your own group to help each other out. You may copy some items. I believe you, almost all of you, are working but any case some of you are not working or working but with low income, small salary, tiny salary, please help each other. *Importante ema aprende laos hanesan balu lalehan ho rai kedas balu as lalimar matenek lahalimar, balu rabat rai sei dollar hela ne'e labele. Istuda hamutuk ne'e iha nia dimesaun social tulun malu tanba se mak hatene hodi tulun malu, o agora matenek loron ruma o hetan. . . monu ba susar ruma nia bele tulun o. (The important thing is to learn and help each other not to become arrogant. Therefore studying together as group has a social dimension and it is a social act to help one other, not to compete against one another.)* You may laugh at it, you may ridicule it, but it, it, that's the reality I think. We need to work together, we need to talk to each other. So, for those who have, please - give. Because the more you get the more you get and the more you get the more you give. Komik ga lae, (Is it that funny?) ema Belanda nia provervo ne'e hanesan (the Dutch proverb says) the more you give the more you get. (Teacher B: minutes 12'10" to 13'47")

The above extracts exemplify the use of codeswitching between utterances. There were many more examples of plurilingual codemixing *within* utterances using combinations of all four available languages: Tetum (T), Bahasa Indonesia (I), and Portuguese (P), as well as English (E).

1. *Ida metan ne'e tenke (T) translate (E) ba Tetum (T).*
[Translate the bold words into Tetum.]
2. *Single (E) ida (T) means (E) ida katak (T) single (E) ida (T).*
["Single" means one, one single means "one."]
3. *Oinsá (T) how languages change over time (E), ne'e ita ko'alia (T). . .*
[How, how languages change over time, we'll talk about this . . .]
4. *Imi taka tiha sorin (T) hmm? Close the other side (E). Se lae imi bele (T) copy (E) de'it (T).*
[Cover up the other side, eh? Close the other side. Otherwise you could just copy the answers.]
5. *Okay (E), wainhira iha (T) kata (I) ne'ebé iha livru laran (T) always, usually sometimes (E) ida ne'e uza parte (T) simple present tense (E).*
[Okay, if you find words like "always," "usually" "sometimes" in a book, it's usually simple present.]

Sometimes any two of the four available languages were alternated within an utterance:

6. *You (E) ketua (I)!*
[It should be, you, chairman! (humorous)]
7. . . . *begitu (I) ita dehan (T). . .*
[once we say . . .]

8. *Em termo de (P) meaning (E), . . .*
[In terms of meaning, . . .]
9. . . . *setelah (I) ita haree ida-ne'e sa'ida maka ita (T) menarik kesimpulan (I)*
hosi ne'eba konkluziun si ne'ebá (T)
[. . . after a closer look at this, we can draw the conclusion from there, the
conclusion from there]

The following examples show how three languages were merged within an utterance:

10. *Haree (T) verbo (P) iha (T) kolom (I) nia laran ne'e mak imi muda (T).*
[Look at the verbs in the column and then change them.]
11. *Spoil (E) iha mos (T) arti (I) rua (T).*
[“Spoil” also has two meanings.]
12. *Irregular verb (E) selalu berbeda-beda (I). Hanesan (T) put put put. . . (E)*
[Irregular verbs are always different, for instance “put put put”. . .]
13. *Ida ne'ebé (T) imprestar (P) ne'e bolu (T) borrow (E).*
[The one who borrows is called borrow.]
14. *Submit (E) kedas (T) compriende (P), se la (T) finish (E)*
[Submit it immediately, understand? If not, you're finished]
15. *Not Europa. What is Europa? (E) Europa e Portuguese (P). Komprende ka lae? (T)*
[Not “Europa.” What is “Europa”? “Europa” is a Portuguese word. Do you understand?]

Even in relatively short utterances, four languages are sometimes merged:

16. *Ita foin tuur (T) lima-belas menit (I) quinze minutos (P). Ha'u laos (T)*
karang-karang (I) de'it (T)!
[We'll just sit down for 15 minutes. 15 minutes. I'm not just making it up!]
17. *Ne'e (T) noun (E) fatin (T) acontesemento (P), tkp (I – abbreviation for*
tempat kejadian peristiwa).
[This is a noun, meaning crime scene. Abbr. The place where the event
happened.]

And here, multiple codeswitching is humorously taken to an extreme:

18. *Hanesan ne'e, wainhira (T) analisa (P) didiak (T), masalahnya apa (I). La*
iha probleme (T), no problem (E), nao tem problema (P), hakuna matata
(Swahili)!
[Likewise, if we analyze this carefully, what looks like a problem is not a
problem at all. No problem, no problem, no problem, don't worry about it!]

Tetum incorporates many loan words, and according to Teacher D, “Officially, Tetum Dili has about 60% of its vocabulary borrowed from Portuguese.” Whereas Tetum is an isolating language, in the data shown above, the following items can be fairly easily identified as Portuguese because they are inflected: *em termo de* in Extract 8, *verbo* in 10, *imprestar* in 13, *comprende* in 14, *quinze minutos* in 16, *acontesemento* in 17, and *analisa* and *problema* in 18.

However, there are less direct examples: for example, in Extract 15 (*Komprende ka lae?*), the Portuguese word has been incorporated into Tetum both graphologically and syntactically, as has *La iha probleme* in Extract 18. The same may be said about *ne’ebé iha livru laran* in Extract 5, and *hosi ne’ebá konkluzan hosi ne’ebá* in Extract 9 because both *livru* and *konkluzan* derive from Portuguese – although the latter may well have been borrowed from English. Whatever the origins of these words, they seem to have been incorporated into the teachers’ classroom language in order to facilitate interaction. As Canagarajah (2009, p. 17) points out, “Plurilingual communication works because competence does not rely solely on a form of knowledge, but rather, encompasses interaction strategies...In other words, participants have to engage with the social context, and responsively orchestrate the contextual cues for alignment.”

There is no evidence in the observational data that the three teachers’ plurilingual use caused any strained comprehension or miscomprehension among their students.

The Interview Data

In the follow-up interviews, the teachers expressed a variety of views about the languages they used in their classes. Teacher A, who used only English, argued that “Since it’s the English Department, English should be used as much as possible . . . We need to get students in the habit of using English.” He also added that “Students in this class are of a higher proficiency, since they are in the 6th semester and they will become English teachers, and lecturers must provide a model for students.” In contrast, Teacher B (who taught the same students in a different lesson) said that “If I speak Tetum, students may be more comfortable to speak or participate in lessons.” Also, despite the monolingual policy of the institution and department, he argued that

we need to avoid linguistic imperialism by promoting and developing Tetum, which is an index of our national identity. Currently, Tetum is Number Two to Portuguese educationally – but I believe Tetum should be taught and used in all domains, including the English Department. (Teacher B)

Teacher C explained that “we are multilingual people, and so are our students and I use code-switching for ease of understanding for students, for example contextual solutions to content.” Economy of use is also a factor in choosing which language to use; for example, he added, “to say the number 1999, English is easy to use [*nineteen ninety-nine*], but in Indonesian or Portuguese one has to say ‘one thousand, nine hundred...’ etc.” Teacher D echoed the first point above by saying “I feel it’s easy for students,” and said that he repeated words or phrases in other languages, for socialising, humour (it was he who included a Swahili phrase in Extract 18), or to keep the students’ attention.

Sometimes students haven't eaten breakfast or lunch before class, it's hot, and the classroom is uncomfortable, etc. It's very important that teachers find ways to engage students if they want their teaching to be successful. Also, teachers often repeat words / phrases in a few languages to ensure students' understanding. (Teacher D)

Because he is a multilingual speaker himself, Teacher D explained that "code-mixing just comes out automatically because it's the way I think." Although Teacher B is competent in Portuguese, he used that language sparingly, explaining

I read Phillipson and Canagarajah (as well as Calvet) and I feel that it's good to use Tetum not to resist English but Portuguese, and to show that there is something wrong with our language policy and planning. I believe that it's not languages that kill each other but it's the policymakers and politicians who do the damage. (Teacher B)

Teacher C used Portuguese somewhat more frequently, and when asked why this might be, he said "I feel comfortable speaking Portuguese when I need to." When asked about the extent of his codeswitching, Teacher D replied, "This is a dilemma because should one borrow from Indonesian, English, or Portuguese? Also, *which* Tetum should be spoken? Officially, Tetum Dili has about 60% of its vocabulary borrowed from Portuguese."

This raises another point - that the national language, Tetum, has a number of varieties, and the one used in the capital city is in many ways distinctly different from those used in other areas of the country. As Teacher D said, while the Dili variety incorporated a large number of lexical items from Portuguese, this would not be true of varieties spoken in rural areas; those closer to the border with Indonesia are more heavily influenced by Bahasa. These varieties, of course, are the results of historical as well as geographical factors, and languages do not stand still. The growing number of English-speaking workers, military and police personnel, and aid agents in Timor-Leste will undoubtedly enhance the impact of the English language on the future development of Tetum. Thus, while many Timorese students are indeed users of different languages, their competence in any of the codes will be variable and unstable; for example, their spoken and aural competence in Portuguese is less than that of their teachers – as, of course, is their competence in English. The present cadre of teachers learnt English as a third or fourth (or fifth) language and were themselves educated in Bahasa Indonesia. Future generations of teachers will not have the same productive competence in that language, although it is likely that their reading skills in Bahasa will be maintained until the majority of school and university textbooks are produced in one or the other (or both) of the official languages. Which variety of Portuguese or Tetum will become standardised in the education system remains to be seen. Given this inevitably unstable linguistic situation, plurilingualism rather than multilingualism is likely to be an enduring feature of life, work, and education in Timor-Leste.

What emerges from these interviews is that all of the teachers had reasonable grounds for their respective positions. Teacher A not only strictly adhered to the department's language policy, but also explained that he considered the students in his class were sufficiently competent in the target language to follow exclusive English-medium instruction. In strong contrast to this pedagogical point, Teacher B (teaching many of the same students) adduced political reasons for using Tetum in his class, and did so to clearly express his sociopolitical views to the class. The other two teachers alternated between available languages on pragmatic, rather than

principled, grounds. They pointed out that plurilingualism was a normal communicative practice for them and their students, both inside and outside the classroom, and switching between languages simply made classroom interaction easier. To the extent that these teachers' explanations for their respective language use can be considered reasonable, the question arises as to whether it is necessary for teachers to strictly conform to any institutional language policy, whether monolingual or otherwise. Apart from the possibility of a threat to the academic liberty of university lecturers to teach in the way they consider best, it should be clear that the issue of effective teaching should be based not on the specific medium of instruction which is adopted, but on how teachers and learners use whichever language to enhance the quality of learning that occurs in and beyond the classroom.

Reflections and Implications

There are inevitably a number of limitations of a small-scale action research project such as this: only four classes and their teachers were observed (and the latter group interviewed) at a particular time in one institutional setting. Despite these limitations, some interesting data were systematically collected and the findings carefully analysed. Only one of the four teachers held to a strictly English-only practice in his classroom, while the others used four languages to a greater or lesser extent.

We do not feel that there is actually a problem in regard to the specific issue of plurilingual use in our classrooms. As Canagarajah says "plurilingual competence does not mean that students cannot produce 'standard' language for formal production when the context requires it" (2009, p. 20). Rather, teachers and students should call upon their various linguistic resources to negotiate meaning to achieve this aim - a point made strongly by both Vivian Cook (2001) and Guy Cook (2010). After all, second and foreign language classrooms, like any other, are intended to promote meaningful learning and the exclusive use of the target language may hinder the negotiation and co-construction of understanding. It seems to us that teachers should use their professional judgment about which language(s) to use, and for what purposes, in the classroom in order to bring about optimal learning conditions for their students. If the teachers' judgments and alternative views can be openly and collegially discussed – although not necessarily shared – they could and should inform language policies, at least at the local level. As was noted earlier, the official institutional policy has been that students in the English Department should use exclusively English both in the classroom and across the campus; this policy has now been somewhat relaxed.

Participating in the action research project opened our eyes to the nature of language use in our classrooms and of our colleagues, and the various reasons given for both monolingual and plurilingual usage. More importantly, perhaps, it gave us an opportunity in our busy professional lives to understand the extent of convergence and divergence of beliefs and practices among us. As in many other relatable contexts across Asia, most of the English lecturers in East Timor work part-time at the university and need to seek employment elsewhere in order to maintain a reasonable standard of living. This means that it is difficult to meet to collaboratively discuss professional issues to maintain an effective community of practice (Wenger, 1998) within which colleagues can share experiences, learn from each other, and co-construct practical solutions to professional issues. We feel that this action research project and others, which were going on at the same time, have enabled us to maintain momentum in our emerging community of practice so that we can continue to identify problematic areas within our working context and explore possible solutions.

One of the implications of empirically-based projects such as this is the need for teachers to become aware of their plurilinguistic practices – and those of their students – and to understand and explain the reasons for their choice of language(s) within and beyond their own classrooms. Engaging in such reflective practice (Farrell, 2004, 2007) and conducting modest and collaborative action research projects can empower the teachers involved (Burns, 1999, 2011). In this way, individuals may feel justified in either maintaining or revising their own classroom language practices – whether monolingual or plurilingual. Collectively, a group of teachers can decide their own standards based upon empirical investigation in their own classrooms and the growing body of evidence from case studies elsewhere (e.g., Barnard, *in press*; Turnbull & Dailey-O’Cain, 2009) as well as recent theoretical arguments by scholars such as Canagarajah (2009) and Macaro (2005, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c). Thus armed, teachers can engage the institutional policymakers in constructive dialogue about the optimal balance between monolingual and plurilingual pedagogy within their specific contexts.

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Teaching with Information Texts: Comparing the Beliefs of Malaysian and New Zealand Trainers

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Abstract

This paper investigates the approaches to teaching an information text proposed by two groups of trainers involved in the same Malaysian pre-service teacher training programme. Qualitative data analysis was used on transcribed interviews with the trainers. There were both similarities and differences between the Malaysian and New Zealand trainer responses, and the differences appear to suggest that the distinction in language teaching as practised and promoted in Britain, Australasia and North America and found in tertiary, secondary and primary sectors throughout the world (the BANA / TESEP distinction) remains valid twenty years after it was first proposed. An awareness of such differences is important for teachers, teacher trainers, and curriculum / material designers working in contexts where the BANA / TESEP approaches to language teaching meet.

Various approaches have been proposed for thinking about the English language and English language learning around the world. A particularly influential model for understanding English globally has been Kachru's idea of the three circles (Kachru, 1985), with the inner consisting of countries where English is the native language, the outer circle, countries where English operates as a second language, and the expanding circle, countries in which English is learned and used as a foreign language. Within English language learning, a powerful construct has been the distinction between the acronyms BANA and TESEP (Holliday, 1994), where BANA stands for the approach to language learning and teaching practised and promoted in *Britain, Australasia and North America* and TESEP for the approach found in *tertiary, secondary and primary sectors* throughout the world. It is important to emphasise that TESEP is practised in BANA countries – Kachru's inner circle – as well as the outer and expanding circle countries. Similarly, BANA practices can be found in otherwise TESEP environments, such as in the teaching at a private language provider.

The distinguishing characteristics of BANA and TESEP, following Holliday (1994), are set out in Table 1. In essence, the BANA approach tends to be more learner-responsive and learner-centred and less curricularly constrained than TESEP. Because those who research and write about language acquisition and language teaching methodology – those who determine what is “good” and what is not – tend to come from the English-speaking West, the BANA approach is regarded as having higher status than that of TESEP.

Table 1***Characteristics of BANA and TESEP Approaches (Holliday, 1994)***

BANA	TESEP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instrumental orientation • Learner-centred • Communicative • High status • Innovation & dynamism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State orientation • Teacher-centred • Grammar translation • Low status • Static

The distinction between BANA / TESEP is not unproblematic, of course, and has been misunderstood to some extent (Holliday, 2001). It is also not the only possible way of thinking about different approaches – others include the Centre / Periphery distinction and the native versus non-native speaker debate (Holliday, 2001). But what all have in common is that one component emanates from the inner circle, the other from the outer and expanding circles. Furthermore, this distinction has been found useful in understanding the challenges that can exist when proposing changes in particular learning contexts (e.g., Julian & Foster, 2011; Leather, 2001).

Developing Teacher Cognition

The context for this study is a pre-service teacher training programme in which Malaysian trainees receive training in both Malaysia and New Zealand; in other words, they receive training in both inner and outer circle contexts where BANA / TESEP distinctions may exist. The structure of the programme is outlined in Table 2. Thus, both Malaysian and New Zealand-based trainers are likely to be contributing to the developing cognition of these teacher trainees.

Table 2***Overview of Teacher Training Programme***

Degree Programme Structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2½ years in Malaysia (Foundation + first year) • 2 years in a New Zealand or other BANA university • final year in Malaysia

Teacher cognition, as shown in Figure 1, is subject to a number of influences. These include previous experiences, professional coursework and beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge (BAK). As an example, a teacher may enjoy reading in her first language in her free time and so she is likely to hold positive attitudes to reading. In her teacher training, she may have learned that reading for pleasure is useful for language learning. This knowledge is likely to reinforce her already positive attitudes to reading, and the cumulative effect on her teacher cognition is probably going to result in a wish to incorporate reading into her teaching practice. Whether, in fact, this cognition does translate into classroom practice may depend on, for example, the availability of books – the context.

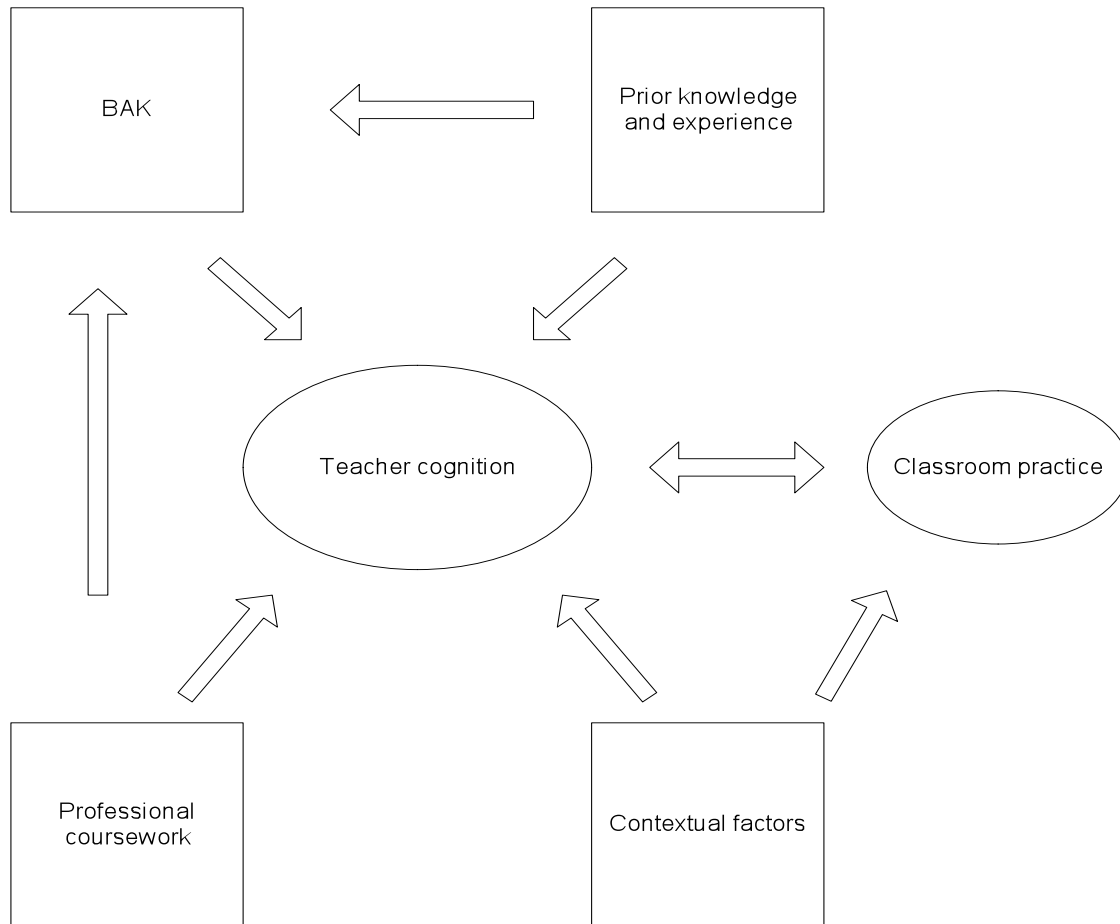


Figure 1. The dynamic nature of teacher cognition (Macalister, 2010)

Within this model of teacher cognition, the influence of the two sets of trainers is most likely to be felt in the professional coursework that the trainees in this study receive. Depending on the way in which the training is delivered, there may also be some input through previous experience, such as experiencing particular teaching activities in workshop situations. When different approaches to language learning / teaching are promoted, trainees may need to negotiate between them, and to decide which to adopt. In understanding the development of their teacher cognition, therefore, it is necessary to investigate the beliefs and attitudes of the teacher trainers themselves. As a result, an initial research question in this study is:

What are the similarities and differences between the beliefs and attitudes of Malaysian and New Zealand teacher trainers in their approach to language teaching?

In this paper, the question is focused further, by limiting the investigation to one type of text. Thus, the question this paper addresses is:

What are the similarities and differences between the beliefs and attitudes of Malaysian and New Zealand teacher trainers in their approach to teaching an information text?

Methodology

Sixteen Malaysian and six New Zealand-based trainers volunteered to participate in this study. All twenty-two taught the trainees on core papers in their degree; fewer overall were involved in these mandatory courses in New Zealand than in Malaysia.

Data was gathered from the trainers through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. As part of the interview, a trainer was presented with an information text (see appendix), and asked how they might use it with an upper primary or lower secondary class. They read the text and when they indicated they were ready began to talk about how they might use the text. Before they did so, the fact that there were no “right” answers was emphasised.

After the interviews were recorded, they were then transcribed and checked for accuracy. Then the transcripts were coded; the codes were a shorthand way of describing what was said. An example of a short coded extract from one interview is shown in Figure 2. Note here and elsewhere in this discussion that the anonymity of the trainers is preserved; each is identified by a randomly assigned letter preceded by a country code, either My or Nz.

Once the interviews had been coded, the process of analysing and drawing conclusions from the data began. In making sense from the data, the dictum for qualitative research proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) - “you know what you display” - was applied, as will be seen in the presentation of the findings below.

DG-TYP-S RDG-TYP-O RSN-RDG-O POST-COMP-WC RSN-COMP (cf. KWL)	JM: Ok, and how will they be reading the text? MyG: So reading the text probably this time I'd allow them to read silently. Ok, after reading silently then probably I would pick students at random to read to make sure they get the reading pronunciation of words correctly and then I may elicit from them, ok we have explained and you have give me some ideas of this trunk how useful the trunk of this palm tree is, so now you are reading it, can you understand from the trunk what we can make out of the trunk or the leaf of the tree? So now you are reading this paragraph can you tell me what you have said does it match with what is in the text? So, it's like making sure that what they say and what is in the text actually is balanced.
	JM: Ok, ok, great. So that would be the final activity? That would be the closing activity / wrap up activity?
	MyG: No, the wrap up activity would be some comprehension questions for them to answer, or even like some fill in blank exercises for the weaker ones.

Figure 2. Coded interview transcription extract

Findings

This paper focuses on three of the areas covered in the discussion about using the information text with an upper primary / lower secondary class. These are:

- how learners are oriented to the text;
- how unknown vocabulary is dealt with; and
- the nature of post-reading activities.

Orientation to the Text

Thirteen of the sixteen Malaysian respondents discussed the ways in which they would orient their students to this text, and these responses fell into two categories – experience tasks and attention to vocabulary. The full range of responses is displayed in Figure 3 below, with the numbers showing how many respondents discussed that option. Experience tasks “try to narrow the gap [between the learners’ present knowledge and the text] as much as possible by using or developing learners’ previous experience” (Nation, 2009, p. 95) which can be done in different ways – simplifying or otherwise controlling the text, recalling previous experience, and pre-teaching or experiencing.

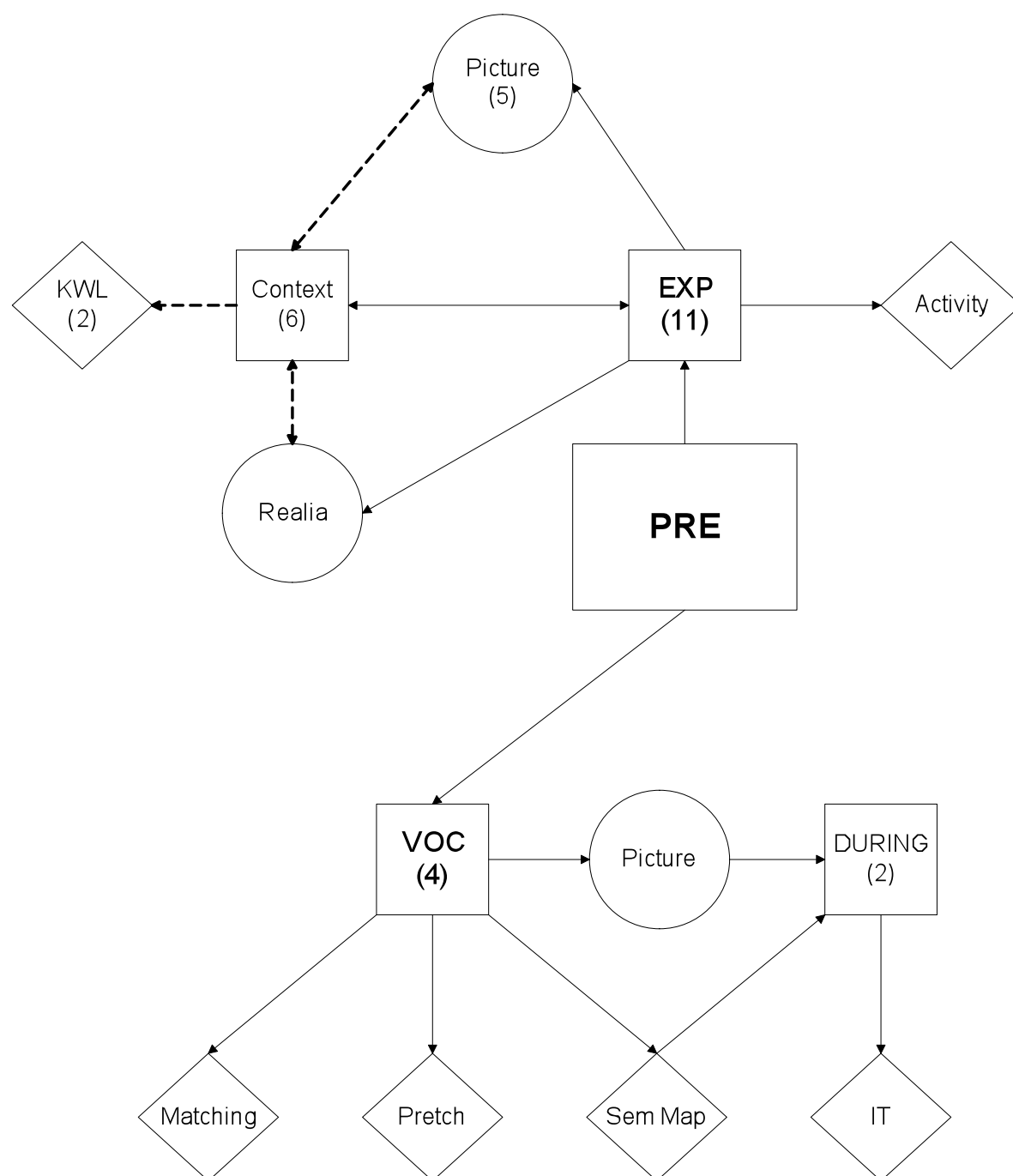


Figure 3. Malaysian pre-reading responses

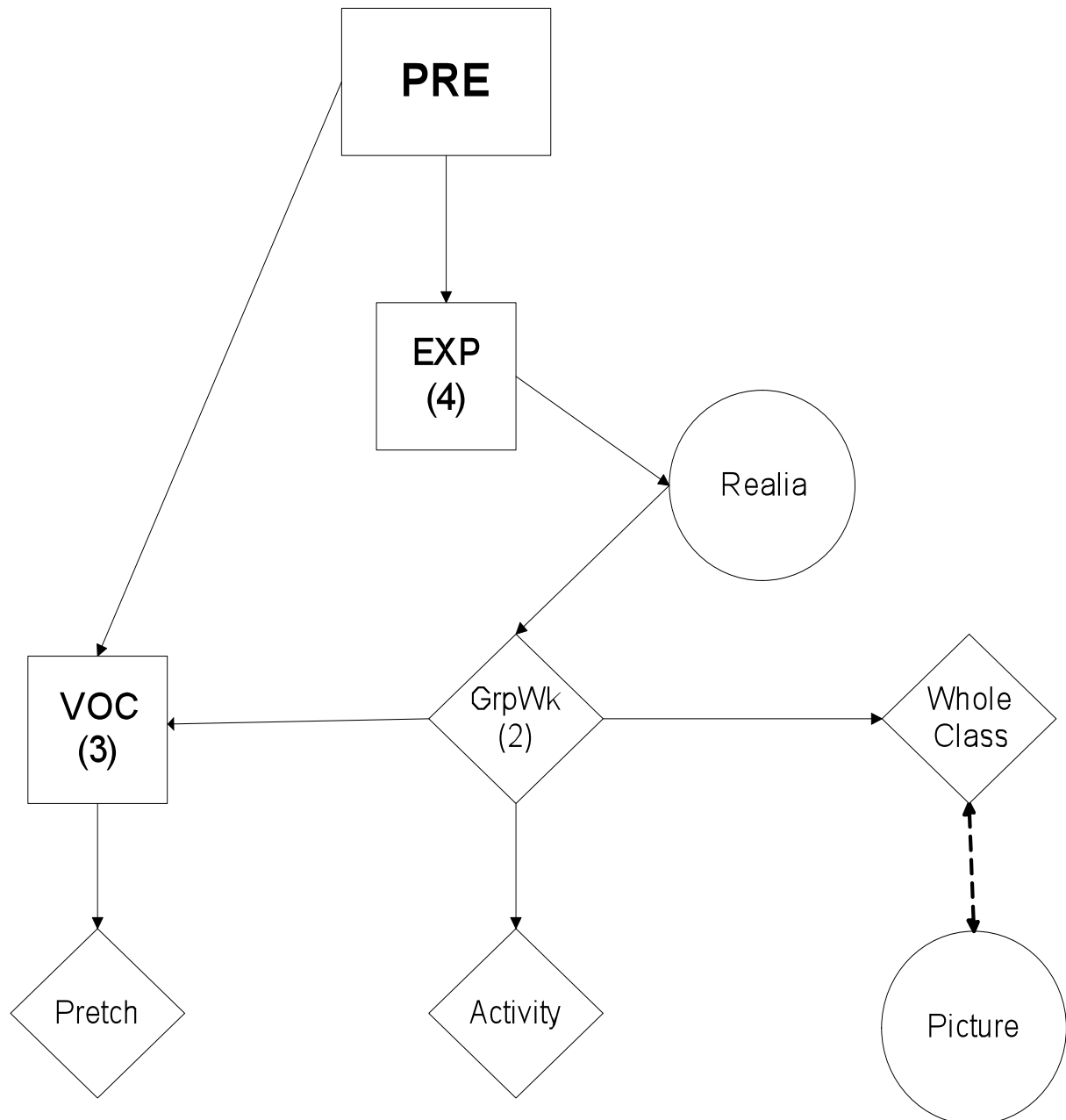


Figure 4. New Zealand pre-reading responses

The trainers recognised that their learners were likely to be familiar with the coconut palm, and that they could draw on this to prepare the learners for reading the text.

So um, again, we talk about a coconut, about coconut trees yeah, and of course they have seen, so ask if they have seen coconut tree, unless, unless I am teaching in a very urban school city for example Kuala Lumpur, Kuala Lumpur, not Penang, Penang they have coconuts . . . (MyK)

While acknowledging that learners would be familiar with the coconut from their context, almost half did however mention the use of supporting materials, usually pictures. No matter whether pictures were used or not, the recalling of previous experience tended to be teacher-directed; the teacher focus was often signalled by first-person pronoun use when describing what would be happening.

Ok, so perhaps I would say, ok, you all know what coconut trees are what are the . . . I probably talked about this before going on with the text . . . what is the usefulness of the coconut tree? (MyD)

Only one of the Malaysian respondents proposed what might be thought of as a lengthy and student-focused orientation to the text, which included learners producing a poster, and she was alone in giving a clear rationale to this part of the lesson.

Right, so it has been like, ok we know this so well now, we have presented, we have made a poster and we have presented it in class now this is a text and I would think it would be much easier than for them to you know work on understanding. (MyN)

As with the Malaysian respondents, four of the six New Zealand respondents who gave attention to this part of the lesson clearly focussed on experience tasks as the means of orientation to the text, as can be seen in Figure 4. Three of the four displayed clear appreciation of the reason for devoting time to this, similar to MyN's reasoning above, and realia and pictures were again mentioned. The greatest difference seemed to be in the manner in which prior knowledge was accessed. Rather than teacher-directed, it was student-focused activity. The students are talking with each other, rather than responding to the teacher in the traditional I-R-E pattern (Cazden, 1988, p. 29).

Um, I would start with the notion of a coconut palm, um, and I would probably start just by asking the class to talk to each other about whether they've ever heard about coconut palms, um, and if so, what they know about it, what they think they know, what ideas they have about it . . . (NzB)

The other noticeable difference between the two groups is in the approach to vocabulary. While only four of the Malaysian respondents gave vocabulary attention in the pre-reading phase, it was even less noticeable among the New Zealand respondents.

Vocabulary

In the interviews, how teachers might approach unknown vocabulary was often not mentioned, or only mentioned in response to a deliberate question. Among the Malaysian respondents, the lack of attention given to vocabulary was sometimes explained in the following terms. Either the vocabulary was not seen as difficult, or there was not time available in the lesson being envisaged.

. . . and also to find out if they have their words that they wouldn't know but here I think most of it they will know, except maybe toddy, they will not know and um copra maybe, or husk. (MyF)

Um, yes, I think um, I should also go through some vocabulary with them. But um, it depends on whether there is time; if not then maybe it will be another session on just vocabulary work. (MyO)

For those who did mention vocabulary, there was a diversity of response, with unique mentions for many things. Attention could be given at different stages of the reading process (pre-, during, post-) and a range of ways of dealing with unknown words was employed. These included pre-teaching difficult words, guessing from context, and using dictionaries. Apart

from pre-teaching, the identification of unknown items was largely student-driven in that *any* unknown word could be nominated for explanation, with only one trainer suggesting that students did not need to know *every* word in the text. Indeed, that trainer saw an affective disadvantage to an emphasis of understanding every word.

. . . yeah, because our students are quite text bound, so they'll read every word and they'll start possibly even pointing in the weaker students pointing to every word and then this is also um, to me it would be very de-motivating in that sense yeah. And every word is quite difficult so here trying to um emphasise how to focus on reading is not so tedious yeah, so you can also focus on chunks of words and those kinds of things. (MyB)

Occasionally the idea that students could learn from others was mentioned, and the notion that vocabulary learning was an additive process was recognised by a number of the Malaysian trainers, whether seen as simply adding new words to a semantic map while reading, or learning a new form for an already known concept.

. . . because there are some things that the students won't know so like for example, we can eat the white meat to some students meat is the meat, from animals in that sense so what is white meat, so this is, this is good, this is good for them to look at white meat, make cream by grating and pressing it. (MyB)

Hmm, (*pause*) and maybe because they have the background already, maybe they can learn a few new vocabularies in English. Ah, like, for example, um, what do you call, parts of the coconut palm you know, maybe they know that in Bahasa Malay, in Malay English but they do not know this in English, so this is more like translating from English, I mean sorry from Malay into English. (MyE)

The New Zealand trainers also gave attention to vocabulary at different stages and in a range of different ways but overall appeared to give much less attention to unknown vocabulary than their Malaysian counterparts. This can be seen by comparing the comments about pre-teaching vocabulary, which was mentioned once in each group of trainers. While the Malaysian trainer said

I think I'd probably use the same method looking at difficult words or other words I think they'll have problems with, dealing with those words and then going through (*pause*) reading the lesson. (MyD)

the one New Zealand trainer who mentioned pre-teaching limited attention to just one phrase:

I might pre-teach coconut palm, I mean if I saw that you know, you had a barrier to the whole text, . . . But I think, you know, you've got to say, yeah ok, it's a bit of a waste of my time but in fact we can't deal with the content unless we can deal with that. (NzE)

Decisions made about vocabulary by this group seemed to be determined by students' demonstrated need to know, and teacher judgment about the usefulness of the unknown word for future learning, an impression illustrated by the following two comments.

Um, at the point of which we went to jigsaw where they're becoming expert groups, at that point I would do vocab work if a group said to me this talks about hair oil, what is it? We don't know what hair oil is, or this talks about husks, we don't know what husks are. Then I would work with them at understanding, but they would need to tell me they needed to know that. (NzB)

. . . but you don't want to be, for example, focussing on words like husks, because husks has no value to students. (NzF)

Post-Reading Activities

Among the Malaysian trainers suggested activities following the reading of the text were noticeably greater than for pre-reading or for the treatment of vocabulary (vocabulary is excluded from consideration in this section although, as mentioned above, it could be treated in post-reading). Typically, a respondent discussed more than one possible post-reading activity, often as alternatives rather than as integrated steps in a learning cycle. At the same time, however, the majority of Malaysian trainers spoke of three main types of post-reading focus: comprehension, graphic organisers, and writing.

Attention to comprehension of the text through comprehension questions was, perhaps, not surprising. Indeed, the fact that "*the death by comprehension questions syndrome*" (Day & Park, 2005) was notably absent from responses is worth drawing attention to. Furthermore, when specific forms of question type were mentioned, they included student-generated questions and the K-W-L technique, which in turn suggested thoughtful integration with orientation to the text. (In this technique, learners begin by identifying what they already know (K) about a topic and what they would like to know (W), and conclude by identifying what they have learned (L) from the text.)

Graphic organisers were also mentioned frequently, sometimes with an explicit link to monitoring learners' understanding of the text.

The uses of the coconut palm get them to come up with a graphic organiser so that ah, they understand what the text is about. (MyA)

The graphic organiser was a form of information transfer, and took the form of either a flow chart or a spider diagram / mind map, and was sometimes linked to awareness of text structure.

. . . I will tell them that the main points are the skeleton for the whole reading passage, so they have to identify the thesis statement and topic sentences, so they build up and another graphic organiser with the thesis statement and the main points. (MyL)

The third common type of post-reading focus was writing, with learners being asked to write, typically, either a comparative text or a similar text about a different plant.

Meaning-focused output tasks were also commonly mentioned by the New Zealand trainers, with oral and written output tasks being identified by equal numbers of respondents (four of the six). Similarly, there was a clear focus on embedding the lesson in a larger unit of work, with four trainers again mentioning this.

I think I would um, I would embed this text in a bigger kind of a topic maybe on coconuts or on whatever so that they're actually perhaps ready, or you've, you know, it's all building together um, and what you've done before and what you're gonna do will all um, support each other, and that's some kind of written text or something can come from it. (NzC)

Although understanding the text was clearly important to this group, there was no mention of comprehension questions as a post-reading activity, nor of graphic organisers (although one envisaged a "spider diagram or something like that").

Discussion

The first point to make is that in both groups of trainers there was a range of responses. It is certainly *not* a case of saying all New Zealand trainers would do this or all Malaysian trainers would do that. There are, however, tendencies within each group, and this discussion looks at what appears to be generalisable. Sometimes the tendencies in the two groups are similar, and sometimes they are different. This was also the case in the questionnaire responses. The key similarities and differences about the teaching of this information text that emerged in the interviews are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Key Similarities and Differences Between Malaysian and New Zealand-Based Trainers

Phase	Points of similarity	Points of difference
Orientation to text	Strong preference for experience tasks, drawing on prior knowledge, possibly supported by pictures / realia	Group work more likely to be used by New Zealand trainers as a way of accessing prior knowledge
Vocabulary	Attention given at different stages of the reading cycle, employing a range of different approaches focussing on both strategies (e.g., guessing from context) and learning new words The way in which the text is read, and the goal(s) in using the text contribute to the way in which vocabulary is treated	Use of peers more obviously used by New Zealand trainers, and more emphasis on selecting useful words to give attention to
Post-reading	Range of different possibilities envisaged, with a focus on meaning / understanding the text generally present	Malaysian trainers more likely to focus on comprehension questions New Zealand trainers more likely to view the lesson as part of a larger unit of work

The interesting question that arises is why these differences in particular exist. To some extent, the differences can be explained simply by acknowledging the influence of context. The particular New Zealand university's research context, for instance, with its strong vocabulary focus, is reflected in the research-informed approaches to language teaching

coming through in the responses of the New Zealand trainers. Similarly, it was clear that the Malaysian trainers were often referencing their own teaching experience (which tended to be both more recent and more relevant to the future teaching contexts of the trainees than that of the New Zealand trainers), to education in Malaysia, and to the local physical environment. By contrast, the New Zealand trainers' actual language teaching experience tended to be temporally distant and knowledge and / or experience of the Malaysian education system was virtually non-existent.

It may be, however, that underlying any surface differences attributable to physical context, it is possible to discern deeper causes. One such may be indicated by comparing the following two extracts. In the first, a Malaysian trainer is explaining the use of a term that occurred repeatedly in different interviews.

JM: What do you mean by set induction?

MyK: Here we call it set induction, when you begin, when you want to begin a lesson you just tap their previous knowledge, yeah, bring it in that lesson that way you are tuning them to the lesson, so any activities pertaining to that are a set induction.

In the second extract, a New Zealand-based trainer is talking about different ways in which the text could be used, and then decides that a particular approach is the most suitable for *this* particular text.

So that would be um, and you could do all sorts of communicative activity, well this would, this would be great for . . . in fact that'd be the obvious way to deal with this one. (NzD)

One possible interpretation for the difference here is that the first is applying a method, one decreed by the curriculum, and one that would be applied to any text, whereas the other is being text-responsive, considering the nature of the text and the learning opportunities it presents before deciding how to approach it.

In a related vein, a clear impression from the interviews was that interaction, negotiation, and group work were greater features of the New Zealand trainer responses than of the Malaysian. The former tended to be more student-centred, the latter more teacher-centred. This may relate to different conceptions of the role of the teacher, which again comes back to context. Perhaps in Malaysia there has been less challenge of "the core notion of teaching as transmission" (Freeman, 2002, p. 2) than there has been in BANA environments in recent decades. It may also, however, relate to a different understanding of the language learning process and in particular the Vygotskian notion of learning "being embedded within social events and occurring as a child interacts with people, objects, and events in the environment" (Kublin, Wetherby, Crais, & Prizant, 1998, p. 287).

Conclusion

This paper has provided a taste of what the interviews with Malaysian and New Zealand-based trainers reveal about approaches to teaching, with a focus on teaching one type of text. While there are similarities, there are also differences that suggest the BANA / TESEP distinction (see Table 1) remains valid in at least some respects. The New Zealand-based trainers tended to be more learner-responsive and learner-centred and less curricularly constrained than their Malaysian counterparts. One clear departure from the earlier distinction, however, is an

absence of grammar-translation. Overall, however, the degree of coincidence between the findings from this investigation and the characteristics of the BANA / TESEP distinction suggests that the similarities and differences between this pairing of trainers are not specific to this particular situation.

It is, therefore, important to record that the idea that BANA enjoys high status and TESEP low status remains a troubling one. When working in a TESEP context, anyone from a BANA background tempted to pass judgment should perhaps bear the following in mind:

I can say, in my role as a teacher trainer, "This worked for me, as a New Zealander, in a New Zealand classroom," or even, "This worked for me, a New Zealander in a Cambodian classroom." What I can never say, and can never from my own experience know, is, "This worked for me, a Cambodian teacher, with Cambodian students, in a Cambodian classroom." (Macalister, 1996)

As a result, a BANA trainer in a TESEP setting may perhaps propose alternative ways of doing, but should never seek to impose. An important question that arises from this investigation, then, is how a BANA trainer wishing to introduce an innovation in a TESEP context can be effective. Two important considerations would seem to be these: first, to develop a sound understanding of the setting and of why current approaches to teaching exist, and second, to establish good communication so that the reasons for change are understood and accepted. In other words, drawing on the language of change theory (Nation & Macalister, 2010, pp. 177-178), it is rational-empirical and normative re-educative rather than power-coercive strategies that are likely to be successful.

It may be, however, that no matter how well planned and well delivered a training programme is, and no matter how convincing the reasons for adopting an innovation, it will be contextual factors that largely determine what actually happens in the classroom (see Figure 1). In this respect, and as an area of ongoing research interest, it will be instructive to track the ways in which the pre-service teachers who are receiving their training in both Malaysia and New Zealand negotiate the differences in beliefs and approaches that they are presented with.

Finally, it is important to emphasise that this paper is not presenting judgments about what works and what does not. Context is central in determining classroom practice in any given teaching / learning situation. At the same time, it is important to develop an awareness of differences that may exist. Such an understanding allows us to prepare for some of the differences in attitude and belief that should be engaged with, if ideas are to be successfully communicated in a teacher training programme such as that described earlier in this paper. It also allows us to be sensitive to differences in any classroom where one approach interacts with the other, and as a result, to be more effective teachers.

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Appendix
Information Text

The Coconut Palm

The coconut palm is one of the most beautiful trees in the world. It is also one of the most useful. For hundreds of years people got their food and drink and their houses from parts of the coconut palm. They used fans and baskets which they wove from the coconut fronds. They made soap and hair oil from coconut oil, and string and mats out of the fibre in the husk.

The coconut tree provides useful building material. The trunk can be used as a post or a rafter; the mid-rib of the leaf makes good walls and floors and we can also make the roof out of the frond.

The palm also provides fuel for cooking. Dry husks burn very well and fishermen use dried woven fronds as torches when they go fishing at night. Even the grey ash left behind after a fire is useful. It is good fertilizer and helps plants to grow bigger if we spread it on the soil.

The tree also provides food and drink. We can drink milk from the green coconut. We can eat the white meat or make cream by grating and pressing it. Children often drink toddy which comes from the flower-stem of the coconut tree. This juice contains many of the vitamins that a human being needs. It helps to make the child healthy and strong.

Today the coconut palm is very important for one other reason. We get copra from the coconut. We can sell copra and this brings money to buy things like petrol, timber, tools, machines, clothing, and vehicles.

Teaching Practice

Syllabus Negotiation: A Case Study in a Tertiary EFL Context in Vietnam

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Abstract

Syllabus negotiation refers to “discussion between all members of the classroom to decide how learning and teaching are to be organised” (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000, p. 1). It is one of the directions that developed from communicative language teaching during the 1980s when the widespread concern was how to make the teaching and learning process more communicative. This paper reports on a study into the feasibility of syllabus negotiation in a class at a university in Vietnam. The research used qualitative data from the researcher’s direct observation, the documents collected during the course, the course-evaluation questionnaire, and quantitative data from the pre- and post-tests. The data analyses reveal a wide range of positive impacts and the students’ generally enthusiastic acceptance of the approach. Some problems arising during the process are also disclosed. Tentative recommendations for classroom application are then offered in the paper.

For a long period, the language teaching stage in Vietnam has been set in the traditional teacher-centred educational system and dominated by grammar-translation methods. This has led to an often-heard complaint that Vietnamese learners of English are generally passive and dependent and that they are good at grammar, reading and writing, but cannot utter a proper sentence. However, the advent of the era of information and technology has called for innovative reforms in education so that Vietnamese learners will become more active and self-reliant. Moreover, as the country has become a popular destination for foreign tourists and investors, mastering spoken English has become a must for learners of English. Therefore, learner-centred and communicative approaches have recently become the focus of many a workshop and study. Nonetheless, there have been few formal discussions on syllabus negotiation, while interest in this is high in the professional literature. This fact motivated the author of this paper to research the application of this approach in the Vietnamese context. Using a sample of English majors at a university, this paper investigates the outcomes of the approach, the students’ reactions, and the problems they confronted. It consists of five main parts: literature review, method, major findings and discussions, recommendations, and conclusion.

Literature Review

The Origins of the Concept of Syllabus Negotiation in EFL Education

The idea of negotiated decision-making in the classroom can be said to stem from Bertrand Russell and John Dewey's liberal schooling agenda with its stress on "collaborative responsibility" and "choice" as opposed to "competition" and "coercion" in the early twentieth century (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000, p. 14). Following Russell and Dewey, Paulo Freire argued that learners should be given the opportunities "to negotiate learning outcomes" and "to cooperate with teachers and other [learners] in a process of discovery" (1970, as cited in Brown, 2000, p. 90). In the realm of psychology, Carl Rogers contributed to pedagogy the ideas of education as a life-long process, the learner as a whole person, and the teacher as a facilitator (Brown, 2000). In addition, research and hypotheses in the second language acquisition area during the 1970s and the 1980s have led to the increasing recognition of the importance of interaction and negotiation for meaning in the language acquisition process. Finally, the emergence of the concept of "communicative competence," coined by Hymes in reaction to Chomsky's notion of underlying linguistic competence, has resulted in the communicative language teaching (CLT) movement in EFL education. There have since been different CLT developments; one of the most recent innovations is the "learner-centred" curriculum with the emphasis on how language learning is undertaken by learners, rather than the goals and content of instruction. Advocates of the learner-centred curriculum or syllabus negotiation argued for learners' active involvement in the shared task of developing the learning programme via the process of negotiating with the teacher (Bloor & Bloor, 1988; Boomer, Lester, Onore, & Cook, 1992; Breen, 2001; Breen & Littlejohn, 2000; Markee, 1997; Nunan, 1988, 1999; Tudor, 1996).

Benefits of Syllabus Negotiation in EFL Education

An increasing number of accounts of the practicality of syllabus negotiation in EFL education has been reported (e.g., Boomer et al., 1992; Breen & Littlejohn, 2000; Huang, 2006; N. T. Nguyen, 2010; V. H. Nguyen, 2006). Studies have shown that classroom negotiation helps make the teaching programme more responsive to learners' needs and wants, increase learners' motivation and involvement in learning, enhance their confidence and self-esteem, develop their responsibility and autonomy, improve learning effectiveness, build up a mutual understanding among the participants, and extend the teacher's teaching strategies, among other things. These positive impacts suggest the high potential of collaborative forms of teaching in EFL education.

Guidelines for Syllabus Negotiation

Researchers and practitioners have attempted to conceptualise the principles, steps, and frameworks for classroom negotiation (e.g., Boomer et al., 1992; Breen & Littlejohn, 2000; Nunan, 1999). Implied in these guidelines is that there is always room for negotiative work, and the levels and degrees of negotiation depend on the participants and the contextual factors of the given educational setting. Thus, while a strong version of syllabus negotiation is feasible in situations where there is no pre-determined curriculum and all the curricular decisions are open to negotiation in the classroom, a weak form – in which negotiation helps fine-tune a programme – is more practical in contexts where there is a largely pre-set curriculum or where the teacher and students have little experience in negotiation.

In the present research, given the existence of an externally determined syllabus and the participants' unfamiliarity with the approach, a weak version of syllabus negotiation was

adopted. Through the process of negotiating, some elements in the syllabus were adapted so that the resulting programme would be more suitable for the students.

Method

The study aims to examine how the negotiative approach works in the Vietnamese context. The three questions that guide the research are:

1. What are the outcomes of this approach?
2. What are the students' reactions to this approach?
3. What are the problems the students encounter during negotiation?

Subjects

Taking part in this study was a class of second-year English majors in a university. There were six normal classes and one gifted class for second-year EFL students in the university. The participating class was the latter, which was for students who had either earned national / international awards in English or had received high marks in the university entrance examination and had passed a selective English test near the end of the first semester of their candidature. These students were considered the best of the year group. Their English levels ranged from intermediate to advanced. In addition, while the number of students in a normal class was about 40, that in the gifted class was 20. Moreover, as the strongest in the year group, the class usually had high expectations for the courses. Considering these characteristics of the class, negotiation could be implemented in wider scopes. For example, the teacher and students could negotiate decisions related to a series of lessons or the course (e.g., the order of the activities, the activities to be omitted if any, or the materials to be adapted or supplemented) rather than just a task (e.g., whether the students will work in pairs, groups or alone, the time for an activity, or how to assess the outcome of a task).

However, this class was similar to the normal classes in several aspects. The students studied the same language skills syllabi in the same amount of time. This meant classroom negotiation would only aim to fine-tune the programme to make it more relevant to their needs and interests. In terms of character traits, from the researcher's informal talks with teachers who had taught the students in previous courses, although this group of learners appeared to be more active, there were students who were passive and silent in the classroom, which is a common feature of Vietnamese classes. This would perhaps present a challenge to the effort of getting all the students to speak out in the shared decision-making process. Moreover, despite the students' high levels of English, there was a concern over the students' listening and speaking competencies. In spite of the shift of focus to CLT in recent years, Vietnamese teachers of English at secondary school and high school (grades 6-9 and 10-12 respectively) are still not familiar with communicative approaches. In addition, teaching at schools is generally examination-oriented. Hence, English classes at secondary school and high school are, in fact, not truly communicative, and grammar, reading, and writing receive more attention than listening and speaking. The students' spoken English is, therefore, generally at a lower level than their written English, which may cause some problems to the process of discussing in English. For these reasons, research on this particular group of learners is believed to give some useful insights into the viability of the approach at the tertiary level in the Vietnamese context.

In the study, the students enrolled in the Language Skills 3B: Listening and Speaking Course in the first semester of the 2010-2011 academic year. They attended a three-hour class per week for 10 weeks.

Data Collection

The four instruments utilised in the research were the researcher's direct observation of the ways the students negotiated in the classroom and their reactions towards negotiative work, the documents collected during the course delivery such as the students' work and class-designed materials, the course-evaluation questionnaire, and the listening and speaking pre- and post-tests.

The questionnaire, which was distributed upon completion of the course, consisted of open questions designed to elicit the students' evaluation of the course. Specifically, the students were asked to comment on the learning programme (including the activities and the way of assessment), their achievements and progress, the way of teaching and learning (i.e., syllabus negotiation), and the difficulties they had faced in the process. The reason for the use of open-response items was that this type of question allows respondents to freely express their opinions and attitudes, and as a result, obtains more useful information (Nunan, 1992). Given the relatively small number of subjects and the need for thorough investigation into the new approach in this particular context, open questions were employed despite the difficulty of analysing the data. The questionnaire was piloted with three students before being distributed to the whole class. The questions were in Vietnamese - the participants' L1 - to ensure understanding on the students' part. The students answered anonymously and in Vietnamese.

The researcher used the listening and speaking sections of Practice Tests 2 and 3 in Cambridge IELTS 5 (University of Cambridge Local Examinations by Syndicate, 2006) for the pre-test and post-test respectively. As it would have taken 11 to 14 minutes to finish the whole speaking test section, which was impossible for the study, the researcher made some modifications. Apart from Part 2, which remained intact, only one question in Part 1 and one in Part 3 were used. In so doing, the speaking test with each student lasted about five to seven minutes. To ensure reliability and validity, there were two scorers to mark the students' performance: the researcher and another teacher who did not teach the class. The mark of each student for each test was the average of the two examiners' scores.

Data Analysis

The students' responses in the questionnaire were translated into English by the researcher and grouped according to main ideas. Notable comments will be cited.

All the score analyses were done with SPSS 11.5. The paired samples *t*-test was employed to detect significant differences between the means of the pre- and post-test scores. The chosen α level was .05.

Comments based on the researcher's observation and the documents helped to shed some light on how syllabus negotiation worked in the study.

Major Findings and Discussions

The Outcomes of This Approach

Revealed from the analyses of the questionnaire, documents, and test scores are a number of positive impacts of syllabus negotiation on the programme, student motivation, and participants' achievements and progress.

Programme. In calling upon diversified contributions from the students, the approach resulted in an interesting programme with exciting activities proposed by the students (see Appendix A).

Most students showed favourable attitudes towards the content and the kinds, number, and level of tasks done. They found the activities useful, motivating, and diverse.

[The activities] were interesting and did encourage the students to participate in a more active, autonomous and effective way. (S12)

The majority also felt satisfied with the ways of assessment in the course, with many of them highlighting the fact that the assessment scales and criteria were the outcomes of the shared decision-making process of all the participants.

There was nothing to complain about because the teacher and students had discussed and agreed upon the assessing criteria. (S4)

Student motivation. Documents collated during the course (see Appendices A and B) revealed the students' high motivation for and true investment in learning. In order to arouse the other groups' interest in the topic and hold a hot debate, each group tried their best to search for useful information, interesting pictures, video clips, and games from books and the Internet. Regarding a drama activity, the students made elaborate preparations for plays. For example, they made beautiful PowerPoint slides to illustrate some details in the plays, looked for relevant pieces of music, and prepared colorful props and costumes. The class also organised an award and searched for certificates for Best Actor, Best Actress, and Best Script from the Internet. Not only was the activity a course requirement, but it had become an opportunity for them to showcase their abilities and creativity and to entertain themselves as well. All of these indicated their genuine interest in and commitment to the tasks, which were the outcomes of the negotiation between the teacher and the students.

Achievements and progress. As previously pointed out, being allowed to choose, adapt, and create the activities, the students were truly motivated to learn and strived for the best. Accordingly, they had generally made some progress by the end of the course. Their responses in the questionnaire disclosed a wide range of achievements, including improved listening, speaking, presenting, debating, and role-playing skills, enhanced group skills, enriched vocabulary and knowledge, increased interaction and participation, growing confidence, and better relationships.

I learnt some new ways of learning and new skills (debate skills, communication skills . . .). (S12)

There were happy learning hours and I have some better relationships with my friends. (S18)

Regarding the students' listening and speaking skills, the analyses of the pre- and post-test scores showed some positive signs. The *t*-test results are shown in Tables 1 and 2. (For the correlations, the descriptive statistics and the examination of the assumptions underlying the *t*-test, see Appendix C).

Table 1**Paired Samples Test (Listening Scores)**

		Paired Differences					<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	listening pre-test - listening post-test	-.5250	1.29244	.28900	-1.1299	.0799	-1.817	19	.085

Table 2**Paired Samples Test (Speaking Scores)**

		Paired Differences					<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	speaking pre-test - speaking post-test	-.2625	.36702	.08207	-.4343	-.0907	-3.199	19	.005

For the listening scores, the observed *t*-value was -1.817, with degrees of freedom equal to 19, and the two-tailed *p*-value was .085. Although *p* is quite small, it was greater than the α level (i.e., .05). Therefore, the means of the pre- and post-test scores were not considered to be significantly different.

The analysis of the speaking scores produced a *t*-value that equaled -3.199 and a *p*-value equal to .005. Since *p* was smaller than α , the observed difference in the two means (.2625) was considered statistically significant.

The results of the score analyses are understandable. It is not easy to improve listening skills in a short period of time. Also, the negotiation, which was conducted in English, had a more direct impact on communication skills than listening skills in doing tests. Considering these two points, the fact that the mean score of the listening post-test was slightly higher than that of the pre-test is a positive sign. As for the speaking scores, negotiation provides a genuine environment for negotiation for meaning with diversified input and output. Given that the students in this study were generally active and had high levels of English, the increased opportunities for true communication had some positive effects on their communicative competence.

Lastly, the analyses of the documents suggested that classroom negotiation was an enriching experience not only for the students, but also for the teacher-researcher. The latter also benefited from the approach. The mediation process resulted in different ways of working, which might not have been produced had the negotiative approach not been implemented. In addition, the students' search for relevant resources during the completion of the tasks helped

save the teacher much time and the produced materials were a valuable resource, contributing to the extension of the teacher's professional repertoire.

The Students' Reactions to This Approach

The students' responses in the questionnaire and their attitudes as observed by the researcher during discussion times revealed a mixed reaction. Most students expressed their satisfaction over shared decision-making in the questionnaire, realising its value in their learning. The new democratic approach, which was quite different from the traditional way of teaching in Vietnam, encouraged them to take more initiative and responsibility in their own learning and learn from their fellow students. It also stimulated their creativity, created a comfortable atmosphere in class, increased the interaction among the participants, and developed better mutual understanding, particularly between the teacher and students.

The learning way was interactive, i.e., there was a two-way interaction between the teacher and the students. (S19)

The students were given the right to choose the activities → democratic. The teacher gave periodical tasks to monitor the progress and make sure the study programme follow the textbook. (S10)

The majority of the students welcomed the application of the approach in the following course.

I want the Language Skills 4B teacher to discuss activities with the class so that the class atmosphere will be comfortable and the students will be more active and creative in their learning. (S11)

A few students, however, thought the negotiative regime was a bit too democratic and the teacher gave the class too much freedom.

The teacher and students were open in the discussions regarding the activities in class but the teacher should not have let the students decide all the activities. (S17)

Therefore, although they wanted to have the approach implemented in the following course, they felt that there should be more guidance from the teacher and more limitations on the freedom given to the students.

Yet surprisingly, when asked about the roles of teacher and students in the course, while most students recognised the facilitating role of the teacher and the important active roles of the students, several students still thought the teacher was the person who made decisions regarding the learning content and form and the students were the ones who followed the teacher's instructions.

The teacher suggested the requirements and criteria; the students supported the plan. (S9)

It seems that these students viewed negotiation as a kind of requirement from the teacher, rather than the opportunity for them to actively become involved in the decision-making process.

The students' mixed reaction was clearly manifest during discussion times. From the researcher's observation, some students enthusiastically participated in negotiation and as the course progressed, began to take the initiative in suggesting what to negotiate. For instance, on Day 2, when the teacher-researcher suggested discussing the criteria for assessing the debates in the following class meeting, one student pointed out the necessity of discussing the way to hold debates since it was the first time they had ever carried out this activity. Another example occurred on Day 7; one student called for discussion regarding the criteria for assessing the plays, which they would perform on Day 10. However, some students were rather passive and shy and rarely voiced their opinions, particularly in front of the whole class. There were also some who were active when doing activities, but did not pay much attention during negotiation times. It seems that they just waited for the teacher to conclude the negotiation and then acted upon the outcomes, which they regarded as requirements from the teacher.

The reactions of the last two groups of students can be explained by one student's response in the questionnaire:

Fairly satisfied. However, I found this teaching and learning way a bit too "democratic." That means the students were allowed to suggest too many ideas and much listened to but in fact, we sometimes did not know exactly what we needed and what was the best way to do things. Active learning is very good but after 12 years of passive learning at school, we sometimes don't expect to be allowed to give ideas and are willing to follow the teacher's instructions. (S3)

The answer revealed some students' uncomfortable feelings in the new roles, owing to many years of classroom work in which they were supposed to do what their teachers said. For these students, negotiation was implemented at so wide a scope and so quickly that they felt confused when given too much control over learning decisions. The response also suggested that after being dependent on teachers in secondary school and high school, some students might not have seen the point in negotiating. They just waited for and willingly acted upon the teacher's instructions after the negotiation sessions.

The Problems the Students Encountered During Negotiation

The first factor that caused difficulties was the students' unfamiliarity with the new way of working.

Many students had not got used to this kind of discussion in class so they did not give any ideas; as a result, the atmosphere of the discussions became less lively and the outcomes of these discussions might not satisfy everyone. (S17)

Because of their prior learning experience in the teacher-centred educational system at secondary school and high school, as pointed out above, a number of students did not voice their opinions regarding the learning content and form in class. Their shyness and passiveness led to one problem, i.e., the uneven contribution to the negotiating process.

The second problematic aspect of the approach was the use of English in negotiation. Some students had difficulty in expressing ideas in English, which resulted in their switching to L1 while negotiating. This difficulty might also have been the reason for the passiveness of some of these students in discussions. In addition, some other students were fairly good at speaking

but still fell back on the “bad habit” of using L1 in English classes, particularly when they were not engaged in any particular task.

Moreover, a number of students felt discouraged by the idea of reflection, particularly self-reflection. This was meant as part of learner training, which is crucial to an effective shared decision-making process.

The assessment done by the students (i.e., assessing the other groups and our own group) was so much that the students felt discouraged. (S17)

It seems that the amount of self- and peer-assessment made the students feel unhappy. In fact, assessment entailed choosing the appropriate scale and answering three short open questions, which were believed not to take much of their time. Each group also had to assess their group performance twice, i.e., after holding a debate and after putting on a play. From the researcher’s observation, the more active the students, the less willing they were to look back at the learning experience.

Lastly, it was difficult for the students to come to a consensus when negotiating, owing to different ideas. The problem of learner diversity, particularly in large classes, has been pointed out by Breen and Littlejohn (2000). The problem still existed, although the class in the study was quite small in the Vietnamese context, small groups had been employed as a basic unit of organisation in class, and the class had been trained how to discuss in groups on Day 2. On the one hand, this indicates that the students had their own preferred ways of working and were truly involved in the negotiation. On the other hand, it implies that teachers need to address this problematic aspect so that syllabus negotiation can be applied effectively in the classroom.

In short, the findings from the questionnaire, classroom observation, documents, and pre- and post-tests revealed quite a number of benefits of syllabus negotiation and most students’ positive attitudes towards it. However, some students still had ambivalent feelings and encountered some difficulties during the process. The problems seem to be due to the scope of negotiation and the insufficient preparation of enabling conditions for the active and informed involvement of the students in the shared decision-making process. In the study, the students were encouraged to become involved in decisions regarding the main activities and part of the assessment in the course, considering the high English levels, the small size, and the high expectations of the class. However, these factors were not adequate to facilitate syllabus negotiation at such a scale since the approach was quite new to them. Moreover, although there was some learner training incorporated into the programme (see Appendix A), it was not sufficient to help them become more proficient at managing their learning in an insightful manner. It is believed that once these problems have been solved, the positive effects of the approach may be maximised.

Recommendations

The incorporation of syllabus negotiation should be a gradual process. Teachers should help students realise its benefits first and then start by negotiating only one or two small elements in the learning programme, such as choosing a post-class task or discussing the way to do an activity in the textbook. Once students have seen the value of classroom negotiation and become accustomed to it, they will be able and willing to negotiate on larger scales.

An initial questionnaire regarding learners' needs, preferences, and expectations may be a useful way to balance learner voice and help students become used to the idea of giving their opinions in class. It may serve as a starting point to discuss learning content and form. Some students may have interesting ideas, but do not dare to express them directly in front of the whole class. Teachers may discreetly speak for them during negotiations. Hopefully, they will gradually become more confident in contributing their ideas in class.

Learner training is crucial to the success of a negotiated mode of working. Learners need to learn some essential skills (including the skills to discuss and work in groups and reflect upon the learning experience) in order to be able to participate more effectively in the shared decision-making process. Teachers can consider incorporating a brief training block at the beginning of the course, combined with regular sessions focusing on specific learning strategies relevant to the tasks in hand during the course. Regarding reflection, Serrano-Sampedro's approach of "helping learners realise its usefulness and find their own ways of doing it" may be helpful (2000, p. 124).

The use of English should also be encouraged. One technique that may be useful is to set negotiating a small element in the syllabus as a problem-solving task, which may be followed up by a section in which teachers give feedback on students' language. It may help them realise the benefit of using English and gradually form a "good habit" of using English most of the time in class as well as outside, not just when doing activities. However, with lower level students, the occasional use of their mother tongue may be allowed as it will help increase the productivity of negotiation process.

Finally, teachers have to be very patient, as it may take time to help students become familiar with the approach. As many possibilities may arise during negotiating process, teachers also need to equip themselves with a wide range of teaching-learning alternatives, including methodologies and materials, and be flexible.

Conclusion

This paper has shown the feasibility of syllabus negotiation in an Asian context in which language teaching has been dominated by traditional, teacher-centred and grammar-translation methods for some time and learners are generally assumed to be quiet and reticent. The study disclosed a variety of beneficial outcomes and the students' relatively enthusiastic acceptance of the approach. However, it does not necessarily mean that the approach is not challenging to students and teachers. Much time and preparation is essential for the success of its application. Given the growing demand for learner-centred and communicative approaches in Vietnam and other similar Asian contexts and the potential of negotiative work, further empirical research is needed so as to satisfactorily answer the question of how to effectively adopt syllabus negotiation in the language classroom.

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Appendix A

The Negotiation Process in the Study

Teacher's Preparation

Before the commencement of the course, the teacher-researcher listed the negotiables and non-negotiables in the syllabus designed by the university and prepared some alternatives for the negotiables. Specifically, the objectives, textbooks (i.e., Mosaic 1 and 2), and the assessment scales were kept intact. However, since the students had studied the Language Skills 1B and 2B Courses and might have become familiar (and thus, bored) with the activities in the textbooks (the Interactions / Mosaic series), the teacher came up with some possible new types of activities. Some speaking tasks such as the "Did you hear . . . ?" activity (see below), group-prepared discussions, and interviews of foreigners could be used to replace or supplement the activities in the textbooks, including role-plays, mini-presentations, and discussions. The proposed options were believed to expose this particular group of students to authentic language outside the classroom and encourage them to take more responsibility for their own learning. As for listening, the listening-to-the-lecture activities remained the same because they were the major tasks in the textbooks and designed to help students improve their note-taking skills. The second listening activity type, i.e., listening to short talks and answering multiple choice questions, could be modified by having students do similar listening exercises in a wide range of reference books available in the library and bookstores. The second component open to negotiation in the syllabus was the mid-term speaking test and the assessment of participation. For every Language Skills course, the mid-term mark accounted for 30% of the total mark of the course and the final mark took up 70%. The final mark consisted of the mark of the final tests (60%) and the participation mark (40%). This grading policy was generally accepted by the university and thus could not be changed. The participation mark was, however, decided by the teacher in charge, based on the assignments inside and outside class and the students' participation and contribution. This mark was negotiable. In addition, all classes had to take the same final tests, which would be decided by the university. The mid-term listening test was generally decided by the teacher in charge. Therefore, only the mid-term speaking test (i.e., the content and the format of testing) was open to discussion with the students.

Learner training helps learners play a more informed and self-directive role in the learning process. It is, however, largely ignored in learning programmes in Vietnam. As a result, Vietnamese learners generally lack necessary knowledge and skills for effectively becoming involved in the learning process. Therefore, the teacher also prepared some activities aimed to equip the students with some essential learning strategies such as group skills and reflection.

Negotiating

Before discussing the syllabus with the students, the teacher had them reflect upon their own strengths and weaknesses and suggest what and how they would like to study listening and speaking skills in the course on a piece of paper. Then, the negotiables and non-negotiables were made clear to the students. Some alternatives were drawn on the blackboard, based on the teacher's preparation and the students' suggestions. The class then divided into groups of four and discussed and decided the content and form for the negotiables. Each group then presented their ideas and a new programme gradually emerged from the discussion between the teacher and the students.

Main speaking activities:

- “Did you hear...?” (adapted from Thornbury, 2005) as a five-minute warm-up activity: at the beginning of each lesson, the students sat in pairs and shared a news item in English that they had listened to on the Internet.
- Group-prepared debate: The class divided into five groups of four. From Week 4 to Week 8, each group had to hold a 30-minute debate for the whole class in each lesson. They had to think of a question related to the topic of the chapter studied in the lesson, search for information in books or on the Internet and organise a debate for the other groups to participate in.
- Drama: Instead of the role-play activities in the textbooks (which aim to have students practise the functions taught in the chapters), the students wanted to break into three groups of six or seven, write a 45-minute play including some functions taught in the books, and perform the play in Week 10.
- Discussions

Main listening activities:

- Listening to lectures and taking notes: Since the class had learned essential note-taking techniques in the previous two listening-speaking courses with the Interactions / Mosaic series and the listening-to-the-lecture sections in this course could be seen as review and consolidation of the techniques, the students wanted to use materials from other books or sources to practise note-taking skills. The materials agreed upon were listening exercises based on the TOEFL iBT, so students could also receive practice doing the listening section of the test.
- Listening exercises for practising sub-skills: The teacher would choose exercises appropriate for the students to practise from a wide variety of materials available.

Supplementary activities:

- Listening to songs and discussing them
- Watching one scene in a film without the sound on, writing a script, and speaking for the actor(s) and / or actress(es) as the scene was played again without sound.

Assessment of participation:

- 2 listening quizzes: 5%
- Group-prepared debate: 15%
- Drama: 20%

Mid-term speaking test:

- Topics: The teacher would give questions related to the topics studied in the course.
- Format: The students would take the test in pairs and discuss the answer to the question.

Negotiation continued to occur during the course as needs arose. For example, in the following weeks, the teacher and the students discussed the framework and assessment criteria for debates, the assessment criteria for drama, dates to take the listening quizzes and mid-term tests, and the deadlines for the submission of the draft and final scripts of the plays.

Appendix B
Selected Documents Collected During the Course

Class-Designed Debate Evaluation Form

Evaluating group: _____

Organising group: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Topic: _____

Use the following key to evaluate the debate.

+ = very good

✓ = satisfactory

– = needs improvement

A. Group skills

_____ Group members cooperated well

B. Debate

Content

_____ Chose a topic that was interesting

_____ Developed topic with sufficient reasons, examples and details

Organisation

_____ Lively debate

_____ Met time limit (about 30 minutes)

_____ Discussion moved along at the right speed, without long pauses between speakers

What we liked about this debate:

What we didn't like about this debate:

Suggestions for improvement:

Overall rating:

A Group-Designed Plan for Organising a Debate

UNIT 12: TOGETHER ON A SMALL PLANET

TOPIC: BEAUTY CONTESTS

Debate's question: Beauty contests or beauty pageants are harmful. Do you agree or disagree?

OUTLINE

1/ Introduction:

- Showing pictures of beauty contests
- Showing topic, debate's question and expressions for dis(agreement)

2/ Before debate:

- 2 groups discuss in about 5-7 minutes
- Providing each group with arguments that we have

3/ Debate:

- 2 groups take turns to share their opinions in 15 minutes
- Raising some questions for 2 groups

4/ After debate:

- Summary
- Conclusion

Class-Designed Play Evaluation Form

Evaluating group: _____

Acting group: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Title: _____

Use the following key to evaluate the play.

+ = very good

✓ = satisfactory

– = needs improvement

A. Content

- _____ Comprehensible
- _____ Coherent
- _____ Meaningful
- _____ Humorous

B. Acting

- _____ Voice
- _____ Posture, Movement, Gestures, Facial expression

C. Pronunciation

- _____ Sounds, Stress, Intonation, Loudness, etc.

D. Preparation

- _____ Costume and Make-up, Props, Backdrop, Music, etc.

E. Length

- _____ Met time limit (about 30-45 minutes)

What we liked about this play:

What we didn't like about this play:

Suggestions for improvement:

Overall rating:

Some Fragments from a Play

The script was written by a group of students for the drama activity. The students included in the play some relevant pieces of music downloaded from the Internet.

“Love at first bite”

Scene 0.5:

Hayley is walking back from school, Jacob approaches her, bites her and sucks her blood. He hypnotizes her and says:

Jacob: You will not remember what just happened. You will forget about me, about what I just did.

Then he walks away. Hayley wakes up.

Hayley (feels dizzy): What just happened?

Scene 1: At Jackson house

Theme song: Only you and you alone

Emily is reading newspaper.

Malcolm (swings around the room): Good morning, sweet heart. Such a beautiful day.

Emily: Morning dear! Oh . . . Jacob's coming.

Theme song stops with the record scratch tune.

Malcolm (coughing): WHAT!!!!

Emily: He's going to be here for dinner. I know you don't like him but please, don't react like that. He's your brother anyway.

Malcolm (raises his eyebrows): . . . and a vampire.

Emily: You used to be one yourself.

Malcolm: Not anymore. Whatever! Tell him to eat something before coming.

Emily: OK.

. . .

Scene 5:

. . .

Lisa puts her arm around Hayley.

Hayley: Ouch!!!

Lisa (worried): Sorry! What's wrong?

Curtis: Are you OK?

Hayley: My neck's hurt.

Lisa: Let me see.

Hayley shows her neck.

Lisa: Looks like you got bitten by a vampire.

Hayley and Curtis stare at her.

Hayley & Curtis: You got to be kidding me.

Lisa: Don't take it serious. I'm joking. It's a bug.

. . .

Scene 7: Jacob follows Hayley.

Theme song: Summer wine

Jacob: She's so sweet, she's so beautiful. I only bit her once but I can assure how good she is. I want to be with her, for real. I want to comb her hair every morning, to make breakfast for her. But how can I do that? I can't be just like my brother. NO. I'm a vampire. I can't fall in love with my food, she is my . . . dinner. I will tell my nephew the truth and make him a vampire. That's what I will do.

Jacob (take a few steps, then turns around): Goodbye my love.

And Hayley still has no idea because she is wearing earphones.

Appendix C

Pre- and Post-Test Listening Score Analyses

The results of the analyses of the pre- and post-test listening scores are displayed in Tables C1 and C2.

Table C1
Listening Score Correlations

		Pre-test	Post-test
Pre-test	Pearson Correlation	1	.559(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.010
	N	20	20
Post-test	Pearson Correlation	.559(*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.
	N	20	20

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table C2
Descriptive Statistics for Listening Scores

	Scores		Statistic	Std. Error
Pre- & Post-tests	Pre-test	Mean	5.9125	.30092
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5.2827
			Upper Bound	6.5423
		5% Trimmed Mean	5.8472	
		Median	5.8750	
		Variance	1.811	
		Std. Deviation	1.34574	
		Minimum	4.25	
		Maximum	8.75	
		Range	4.50	
		Interquartile Range	2.6250	
		Skewness	.484	.512
		Kurtosis	-.769	.992
	Post-test	Mean	6.4375	.31407
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5.7801
			Upper Bound	7.0949
		5% Trimmed Mean	6.4306	
		Median	6.5000	
		Variance	1.973	
		Std. Deviation	1.40459	
		Minimum	3.75	
		Maximum	9.25	
		Range	5.50	
		Interquartile Range	1.7500	
		Skewness	-.243	.512
		Kurtosis	.230	.992

The correlation coefficient between the pre- and post-test listening scores was $r = .559$, $p = .010$. This correlation was significantly different from zero according to a two-tailed test at the .05 alpha level. This meant that there was a highly positive relationship between the pre- and post-test listening scores. Put another way, students with higher pre-test listening scores had higher post-test listening scores and vice versa.

The pre- and post-test listening scores also met the two assumptions underlying a paired samples *t*-test, i.e. the assumptions of interval scale and normal distribution. The listening scores were given on a .25-point interval scale. Since the *z*-values for skewness (Skewness / Std. Error) of the pre- and post-test listening scores were .945 and -.475 respectively and the *z*-values for kurtosis (Kurtosis / Std. Error) were -.775 and .232 respectively, which were less than ± 1.96 , there was 95% confidence that both sets of scores were normally distributed.

The results of the analyses of the pre- and post-test speaking scores are shown in Tables C3 and C4. (N.B. The speaking score of each student in each test is the average of the two examiners' scores.)

Table C3
Speaking Score Correlations

		Pre-test (E1)	Pre-test (E2)	Post-test (E1)	Post-test (E2)	Pre-test	Post-test
Pre-test (E1)	Pearson Correlation	1	.784(**)	.756(**)	.674(**)	.969(**)	.761(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000
	<i>N</i>	20	20	20	20	20	20
Pre-test (E2)	Pearson Correlation	.784(**)	1	.680(**)	.840(**)	.914(**)	.795(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.001	.000	.000	.000
	<i>N</i>	20	20	20	20	20	20
Post-test (E1)	Pearson Correlation	.756(**)	.680(**)	1	.785(**)	.767(**)	.955(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.	.000	.000	.000
	<i>N</i>	20	20	20	20	20	20
Post-test (E2)	Pearson Correlation	.674(**)	.840(**)	.785(**)	1	.778(**)	.933(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.000	.	.000	.000
	<i>N</i>	20	20	20	20	20	20
Pre-test	Pearson Correlation	.969(**)	.914(**)	.767(**)	.778(**)	1	.817(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	.000
	<i>N</i>	20	20	20	20	20	20
Post-test	Pearson Correlation	.761(**)	.795(**)	.955(**)	.933(**)	.817(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.
	<i>N</i>	20	20	20	20	20	20

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The figures in Table C3 indicate that the positive correlations between the pre- and post-test speaking scores marked by the first examiner (E1), between the pre- and post-test speaking scores given by the second examiner (E2), between the first examiner's pre-test scores and the

second examiner's, between the first examiner's post-test scores and the second examiner's, and between the pre- and post-test speaking scores were also significant.

Table C4
Descriptive Statistics for Speaking Scores

	Scores		Statistic	Std. Error
Pre- & Post-tests	Pre-test	Mean	5.8875	.14220
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5.5899
			Upper Bound	6.1851
		5% Trimmed Mean	5.8889	
		Median	5.7500	
		Variance	.404	
		Std. Deviation	.63596	
		Minimum	4.8	
		Maximum	7.0	
		Range	2.3	
		Interquartile Range	.9375	
		Skewness	.415	.512
		Kurtosis	-.629	.992
	Post-test	Mean	6.1500	.11670
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5.9057
			Upper Bound	6.3943
		5% Trimmed Mean	6.1250	
		Median	6.0000	
		Variance	.272	
		Std. Deviation	.52189	
		Minimum	5.3	
		Maximum	7.5	
		Range	2.3	
		Interquartile Range	.4375	
		Skewness	.827	.512
		Kurtosis	1.375	.992

The pre- and post-test speaking scores also met the two assumptions underlying a paired samples *t*-test. The student performance in the speaking tests was measured on a .25-point interval scale. As all the values of z_{skew} (.811 and 1.615 for the pre- and post-test scores respectively) and of z_{kurt} (-.634 and 1.386 respectively) were less than ± 1.96 , it can be concluded that the data did not significantly depart from a normal distribution.

Comics in the Classroom: Something to Be Taken Seriously

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Abstract

Children enjoy reading comics, so it makes perfect sense to use such a resource to enhance English-language learning. Using dialogues created for audiovisual materials that reflect curriculum requirements of English language teaching and learning, it is possible to create supplementary gap-fill activity cartoons to recycle content in line with a required schema of works.

This paper recounts an ongoing longitudinal project that is in the process of designing a comics series based on the curriculum requirements for the first six years of English language basic education (primary) in Thailand. The dialogues are based on the language found in end-of-year examination preparatory books (O Net and N Net) and input into an Internet-based comic-making application, www.makebeliefscomix.com. Early indications are that students benefit from the recycling of language and the introduction in the early years of activities such as gap-fill. Moreover, students have been able to practice writing as an additional activity.

Thailand has an archaic education system that has an emphasis on basic literacy and rote memorisation, resulting in Thailand's TOEFL scores for university entrance overseas ranking amongst the lowest in Asia (Kurlantzick, 2010). Academic expectations in Thailand have been low for many years; students rarely fail English subjects even though their English skills are weak. The idea of maintaining high standards and allowing students to fail (Andrade, 2010) is uncommon and has been reflected in the lacklustre approach to academic support for the teaching profession. Moreover, internal quality control mechanisms are lacking (Graham, 2009a), resulting in educational institutions becoming "robot factories" designed to maintain the existing class boundaries within society (Yatvin, 2010). What is needed are communicative materials that can be administered in the classroom in a learner-centred way.

The vast majority of primary school teachers of English in Thailand did not major in English language teaching and so, by their own admission (Mackenzie, 2002, 2004), do not possess the English language skills or communicative teaching style to teach in a learner-centred way in accordance with the 1999 Education Act (Foley, 2005). Thailand shares similarities with countries like Iran, in that there is a lack of personal English language skills and poor social conditions for these teachers (Namaghi, 2010).

Ujiie and Krashen (1996) explain that reading comics does not inhibit other types of reading and that it in fact facilitates heavier reading, which in time could lead to students becoming better readers (Krashen, 1993). Unlike film, comics have a “permanent, visual component” (Williams, 1995, p. 2), and by mixing comics with “dialogue, which is permanent, but not visual” (p. 3), it is possible to create an exciting new set of English language teaching materials suitable for use by primary school students. The tasks they perform are designed to motivate students to use language for specific aims (Van den Branden, 2009) where vocabulary is predominantly learned by focusing on form for better retention (Laufer, 2005, as cited in Keating, 2008, p. 381).

The process detailed in this paper started as a teacher training project and progressed to making dialogues from national examinations and adapting them to scenes for a set of DVDs (Smooth Transitions) following the primary school curriculum. After these initial tasks were completed, the dialogues were then used with speech recognition software and in the making of a series of comics.

Smooth Transitions

The concept behind Smooth Transitions is to have a communicative activity or activities that could be added on to the existing lessons that primary school teachers are teaching as a transitional stage from teacher-centred to learner-centred teaching, a type of continuous improvement (Anderson & Kumari, 2009) on what is already being taught in the classroom. It is impossible to expect these teachers of English, especially those in rural areas who have not been trained in how to teach communicative activities in a learner-centred way, to move from zero to hero overnight. However, twelve years after the 1999 Education Act, it might be expected that more progress would have been made than what can be seen at this time.

Initial training for the three primary school teachers involved in the Smooth Transitions project took approximately two hours and involved demonstrations on how to use an audio CD of dialogues adapted from O Net / N Net testing books and the use of sets of donated flashcards. Why this project succeeded when others failed was the support after training had taken place. Teachers were observed and videoed one week and then there was a reflection period before feedback was offered the following week. During the period of reflection, teachers were encouraged to watch themselves and their colleagues on the DVDs that were provided for them. Graham (2009b) gives a more detailed account of the project, which continued for more than one year.

From these feedback sessions, the idea emerged from a teacher that DVDs be made to further facilitate the learning experience of her students. They had been looking at a blank television screen when listening to the dialogues that were played on the DVD player that was connected to the television. She also asked for subtitles in English, which confirms the thinking of Stillwell (2010) that supporting listening activities with subtitles makes sense. This idea led to the production of a set of DVDs that contained dialogues with subtitles as requested by the teacher, using the same series of O Net / N Net test books.

Two central characters, Bank and Noi, played by the author’s children, appear throughout the whole series. Students watch and listen to a selected portion of the DVD several times before the teacher instructs them to repeat what was said. This only takes place after the students understand what has been said, which involves the teacher looking back at the previous part of the lesson and confirming what the dialogue means, using the students’ L1. The boys follow Bank and the girls follow Noi. Once the teacher is satisfied that the section of dialogue has

been understood, all of the students are encouraged to come to the front of the class to act as Bank and Noi. The teacher starts and pauses the DVD to make bite-size segments to avoid overloading the students. A more detailed account of how to use the DVDs is described by Graham (2010).

This type of role-play plays an important part in students' character building and life skills if it is implemented correctly. In explanation, Hayati (2006) states how it is fun and motivating for all students as they try to express themselves in another language. This can be seen in Figure 1 below. If planned well, role-plays are not monotonous and move away from the normal memorisation and grammar that are all too common in Thailand's English language classrooms. Students cooperate with each other, build trust with their peers and their teachers, and most important of all, learn not to be afraid of making mistakes. Their confidence and self-esteem increase.



Figure 1. Two second-grade students from Bantatprachanukoon School in Ban Phue District, Udon Thani Province in Thailand take their turns at role-playing the characters Bank and Noi, encouraged by the rest of the class.

SpeakIT Voice Recognition

By using the dialogues that had been created for the Smooth Transitions DVDs, it was possible to create exercises in the SpeakIT voice recognition software program (<http://www.teachingmachine.com/>) to enable students to practice their reading and pronunciation skills.

SpeakKIT has state-of-the-art technology driven by data algorithms (Marchand, Adsett & Damper, 2009). It is classified as independent Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) in that the program sets the standards as to what is acceptable pronunciation, meaning that it does not adapt to the speaker. A project conducted by Li and Topolewski (2002) shows how dependent ASR works when designing language learning simulations, and Pavlichev (2002) explains that if the program adapts to the user, the student would not benefit in the same way.

The SpeakKIT program, which contains a large vocabulary, offers continuous speech recognition (Lotto & Holt, 2011) easily capable of dealing with the different types of English that can be produced (Franco, Bratt, Rossier, Gadde, Shriberg, Abrash, & Precoda, 2010), resulting in uniformity when it comes to judgments in oral assessments (Kim, 2009).

Students are required to watch a segment of the Smooth Transitions DVD. When they are ready, they start the SpeakKIT speech recognition software that shows the dialogues on the computer screen. The program highlights what has to be said and the students speak into the microphone. When there is an error, the students have up to four attempts at self-correction before SpeakKIT advances to the next phrase. A more detailed account of how SpeakKIT works in conjunction with Smooth Transitions is contained in Graham (2011).

Although Chambers (2003) concluded from her research that computer-mediated communications (CMC) are not culturally or morally neutral, because SpeakKIT is content-neutral, it allows teachers to write their own lesson material, making it as culturally or morally neutral as they wish.

Students are encouraged to try out the speech recognition software in whatever holistic strategy they wish (Levy, 2009) in order for them to become more confident as readers and speakers as well as to practice their computer skills. Research is taking place at this time to look at the advantages of this type of activity and how it benefits the students and teachers that use it.

Comics

The website MakeBeliefsComix (<http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>) was used to create gap-fill comics based on the Smooth Transitions dialogues that were used for the DVDs and the SpeakKIT speech recognition software program. The website allows teachers to select characters and create cartoon comics with speech bubbles. Keeping to the central characters Bank and Noi was easy, as the same two characters were used throughout. Even though the cartoon characters in the comics do not look like the real life characters Bank and Noi in the Smooth Transitions DVDs, students are still able to refer to the cartoon characters as Bank and Noi (El Refaie, 2009), so that when they are completing the comic activities, the comics act as visual steps in the process of transforming the text into a mental model (Glenberg, Kruley, & Langston, 1994).

Students complete the comic activities in conjunction with the Smooth Transitions DVDs. After they watch segments of a DVD several times, the teacher plays one segment again and pauses the DVD. Students have three pieces of paper. The first two are the gap-fill comic to be completed and a list of missing words (Appendix A). The last is a paper with a series of three lines to help students with a writing activity at the end of the exercise. The lined paper is set out in such a way as to help the first grades form the letters correctly, especially the capital letters in relation to lowercase letters.

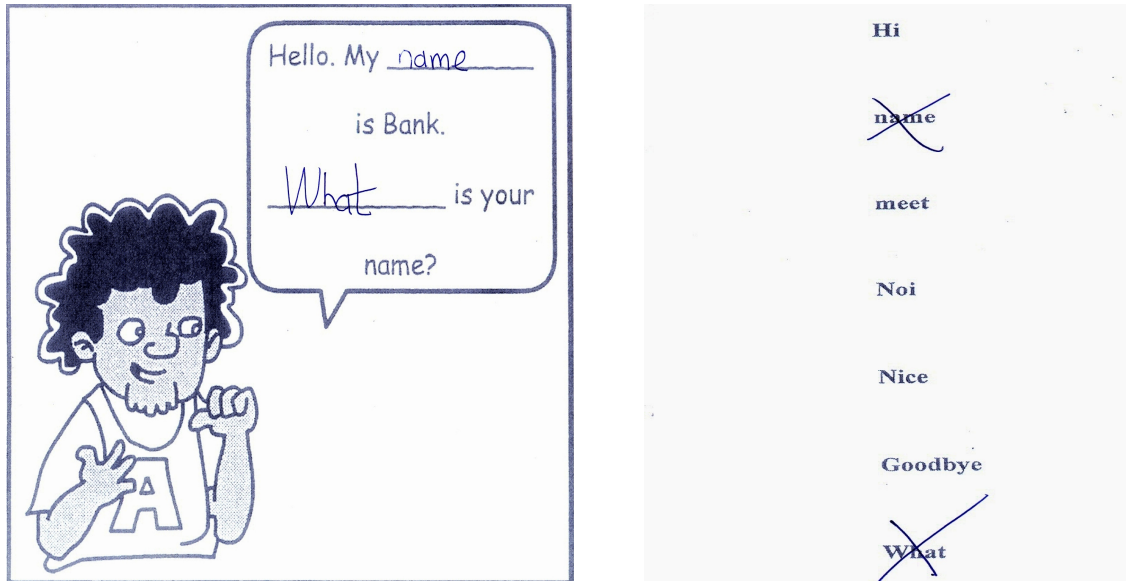


Figure 2. As students write the missing word in the gap, they cross off the word from their list of missing words.

When the DVD is paused, students look at the subtitles and work out which word is missing from the speech bubble in the comic strip. They look for the word on the list of missing words, cross it off, and then enter the missing word into the gap in the comic strip bubble, as shown in Figure 2. This is repeated until all the DVD segments are completed. Finally, students copy their completed texts onto the lined paper and the teacher gives individual feedback to students. Students are able to work in groups, allowing teachers of large classes to spend more time with individual students, maximising the opportunity afforded due to changing classroom dynamics and contexts (Blatchford, Bassett, & Brown, 2008) to manage their contact with students as effectively as possible.

The writing component following the gap-fill comic activity gives teachers the opportunity to give both written and spoken corrective feedback (Hartshorn, Evans, Merrill, Sudweeks, Strong-Krause, & Anderson, 2010) to students on an individual basis, which although time-consuming, proved very effective in producing improved written work and motivating the students. This is especially important for young learners, as writing skills need the most scaffolding (Senior, 2011).

The use of L1 in the classroom is a subject of particular academic interest; however, this project relies upon the students understanding what the English dialogues mean in Thai and how to complete the tasks they are given. There is a strategic use of L1 as a planned aid to achieve the language learning goals (Littlewood & Yu, 2009). The teachers speak a considerable amount of Thai during the presentation stage, less during the practice stage, and even less at the production stage of their lessons. Throughout this time, students produce the target language; however, they are always permitted to ask questions in the L1 to confirm any matter not at first understood (Krashen, 2006). The L1 of the teachers and students is used as a free and useful teaching resource at their disposal (Ibarra Hidalgo, 2010), resulting in students understanding what they have to learn and how they have to learn, thus increasing motivation (Gross, 2004).

Gap-fill activities have had a resurgence in popularity due to their use with CD-ROMS and web-based activities, leaving behind some of the stigma that they had attracted due to their

association with the grammar-translation method (Hughes, 2006). By using comics in context (O'Dwyer, 2010), students benefit as the comics enable the formation of their schema (Jones, 2010), recycle their text-level comprehension (Yamashita, 2003) and if used for testing purposes, improve their global-level comprehension and higher order skills, cohesion, and coherence (Bachman, 1982).

These gap-fill activities allow for confirmation of vocabulary that is taught in lexical sets following the Smooth Transitions DVDs, without the danger of interference between related words (Nation, 2000), as items are presented at different times in different contexts and then confirmed by the comics. In addition, it is important to note that the gap-fill activity does not have to be for just vocabulary; this activity can also be used for grammar as well. It is up to the teacher to decide what areas to concentrate on and when to implement the gap-fill activity.

Conclusion

In gap-fill comics, the text is presented in easy-to-understand speech bubbles (Kew & White, 2009), allowing young language beginners the opportunity to read English in an enjoyable way. Liu's (2004) study suggests that reading comprehension in low-level students is greatly facilitated when the comic strip repeats information from a previous text. It is too early to tell whether the reading comprehension of the students has been improved by the recycling of the Smooth Transitions DVD dialogues in the comics; however, early indications are positive and show students also enjoy completing the comic activities.

Having used audiovisual equipment as well as speech recognition software, there was a danger that students would not readily accept the more mundane pen and paper activities (Rajaratnam, 1988) such as the writing that follows the comic gap-fill activities; however, this was not the case. One of the first grade classes that trialled the comics and writing activities was very enthusiastic about writing, as they had not even covered the alphabet at that time. Under the guidance of their teacher, they were able to copy the text from their comic strip to the writing paper and understand the concepts of capital letters and full-stops.

By completing these gap-fill comic tasks, students are stimulated to recycle what they have learned and make form, meaning, and function relationships as they use the English language for a specific goal (Van den Branden, 2009). Keating (2008) supports claims by Laufer (2005) that by using a focus-on-form component of vocabulary instruction, word learning and retention are increased.

Future areas to be investigated as part of this study are the use of word order exercises, where students rearrange the word order in the speech bubbles of the cartoons, instead of filling in gaps. Another future enquiry by this project will be the area of voice recognition in relation to the comics dialogues. SpeakKIT has the facility to produce gap-fill activities, which allows dialogues used for the comics activities to be input into the program, in turn allowing students to read the text and put the correct word into the gap. Students will also have the opportunity to design their own comics with the MakeBeliefsComix website, with the more advanced students using their own dialogues. There has also been experimentation into the use of gap-fill comics to test students, as using the same gap-fill activities to test represents testing in the manner in which students have been taught (Shaul, 2010). Data has been collected and will be analysed at a later date.

The only way that Thailand can improve on its current weakness in English language skills is to build on innovation, such as with the use of Smooth Transitions DVDs and SpeakKIT voice

recognition software. The use of comics, in conjunction with well-planned continuous teaching in the higher grades which exposes students to authentic communicative activities in the target language at every available opportunity (Marinova-Todd, Marshall, & Snow, 2000). Once students have the confidence to use English in the classroom, they need to transfer their skills and use them outside (Woodrow, 2006), which does occur in the capital, Bangkok, but unfortunately not in rural environments in Thailand.

The main area of concern for educationalists and parents in Thailand is that innovative visions and imagination may come into conflict with the need to prepare student teachers for schools as they really exist (Kahne & Westheimer, 2000); however, this paper outlines a model for Thailand which can also be easily adapted for other Asian and non-Asian countries.

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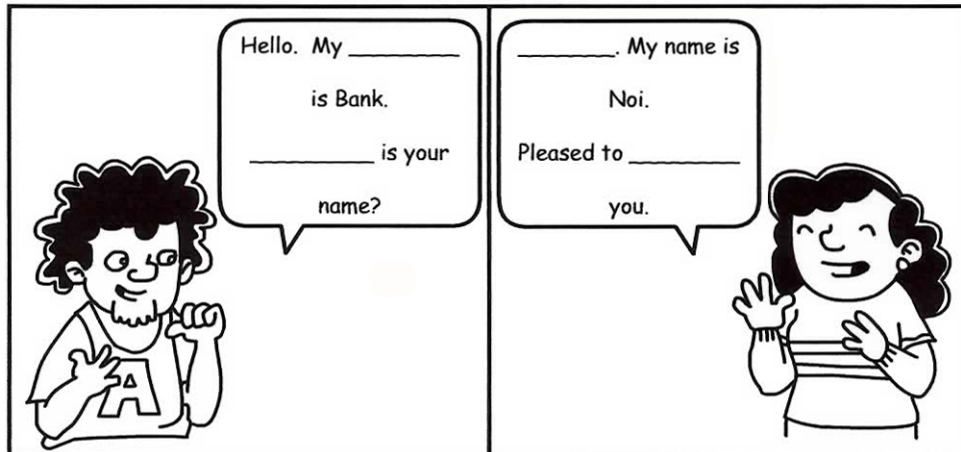
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Appendix A
Gap-Fill Comic

THIS COMIC WAS CREATED AT
WWW.MAKEBELIEFSCOMIX.COM
GO THERE TO CREATE YOUR OWN!

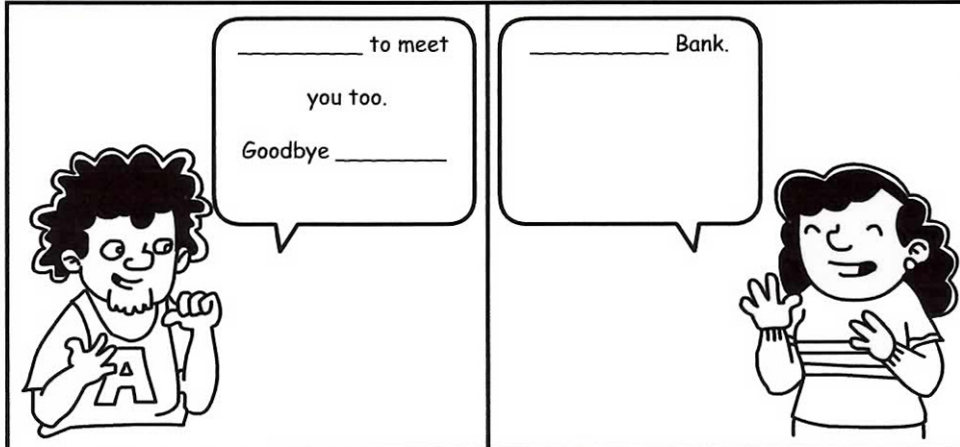
Prathom One A

Steve Graham



Prathom One B

Steve Graham



Word List

Hi name meet Noi Nice Goodbye What

Using Insights from Cognitive Literary Study to Teach ESL / EFL Reading

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Abstract

The paper presents an attempt to use literary texts to build ESL / EFL learners' critical thinking skills and intercultural competence. The proposed approach emphasizes the dialogic nature of the writer-reader relationship in texts; informed by cognitive literary studies, it taps students' affective response to fictional characters while also grounding their instinctive understanding in close reading. A small-scale study conducted to test the effectiveness of this method is also discussed. It is claimed that the subjects, undergraduate ESL students, benefited from the approach by becoming aware of their active role in creating meaning and learning to step outside their culturally determined perspective.

With the importance of reading authentic texts well established in the field of language teaching, magazine articles, essays, and short stories for several decades now have been featured prominently in ESL / EFL course descriptions. More often than not, however, tasks and activities based on these texts tend to involve merely shallow cognitive processing. For example, literature is sometimes seen merely as a source of vocabulary and sentence-level comprehension exercises or drills in skimming, scanning, and speed-reading. What is more, even if a fictional narrative is chosen for its interesting theme, students are encouraged to talk about their personal experiences and allowed to completely depart from the text and its meaning. Consequently, important opportunities for developing critical thinking and building cultural knowledge are overlooked.

It goes without saying that reading in a foreign language is especially difficult. Challenges associated with advanced reading comprehension have been extensively discussed by researchers (for a comprehensive review see Bernhardt, 2011; Grabe, 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Koda, 2005). At the same time, regardless of where one stands in the debate on literature learning and language acquisition, one has to agree that reading extensively is important and that reading narrative fiction can be enriching and empowering. The dilemma for ESL teachers is finding accessible texts and choosing appropriate methods of presenting them to students. The way of reading proposed in the present paper is informed by the cognitive approach to literature. It emphasizes honing students' analytical skills while also teaching them to read with pleasure and confidence.

Framework Built on Insights from Cognitive Literary Studies

Called one of the most promising developments in the humanities in recent years, cognitive literary studies draw on diverse disciplines such as psycholinguistics, neuroscience, philosophy of mind, or artificial intelligence. Although its contribution to narratology and the study of

metaphors has been widely recognized, this approach has not yet made a discernable impact on the way literature is taught to English majors or used in ELT classrooms. Reasons for this situation are perhaps rooted in skepticism with regard to the relationship between science and liberal arts. We know that literature can teach us how our minds work, but can cognitive science teach us how to read literature? In the author's opinion, the interdisciplinary study that explores the nature of human perception and learning as context-dependent and culturally indexed can benefit not only literary critics, but also ESL / EFL reading teachers. The insights that can prove especially useful in a foreign language classroom are those related to what happens when we read and why we can find this activity fascinating. It appears that several key concepts in cognitive literary studies could be of interest to reading teachers.

Mind attribution and mind reading. First and foremost, cognitive approaches to the study of literature emphasize that engaging in reading fiction means engaging in the process of mind attribution and mind reading. This focus legitimizes a return to discussing literary characters as "real" people, an anathema in literary criticism dominated by structuralism or post-structuralism, but something "ordinary" readers yearn to do. As cognitivists explain, ascribing feelings and intentions to others and analyzing their states of mind are an everyday activity – we would not be able to survive without it (Palmer, 2010; Zunshine, 2006). This is also how we read fiction. To quote Palmer (2010), "We all think of novels in terms of the mental functioning of characters. In fact, as readers, we *have* to be cognitivists. Otherwise we would not be able to read at all" (p. 177). Moreover, this is also why ordinary readers are interested in fiction.

From a teacher's point of view, highlighting the link between reading fictional minds and the type of mind reading practiced in real life makes literature and class activities associated with it more relevant and engaging. Many students are not familiar with literary terms and feel intimidated by approaches that emphasize stylistic and rhetorical analysis. At the same time, like all readers, they respond to fiction emotionally; they love, hate, and grow attached to protagonists, whose existence they know is purely imaginary, as if they were flesh and blood people. Vermeule's (2010) book titled *Why Do We Care About Literary Characters?* offers an extensive exploration of this phenomenon, which seems so perfectly "natural" that it is seldom given any thought. It makes sense to validate this insatiable interest in discovering what other people think and capitalize on our students' emotional investment to spark critical inquiry. Questions about the protagonist's ability to read the thoughts and intentions of others can be phrased in a way simple enough to be understood even by less advanced ESL / EFL students. Here are examples of some questions:

- Who or what is in the center of the protagonist's attention?
- How does the protagonist reach conclusions about other people's intentions and desires? Which of them are correct? Which of them are wrong? Is there a pattern?
- To what extent does the characters' success or failure in mind reading contribute to the development of the plot? How is it related to the theme?
- What is the protagonist's emotional profile?

Needless to say, texts differ in the amount of mind reading effort they require from readers. In Zunshine's words,

Although all fictional texts rely on and thus experiment with their readers' ability to keep track of *who* thought, wanted, and felt *what* and under what circumstances, some authors clearly invest more of their energy into exploiting this ability than others. (2006, p. 75)

The works of Virginia Woolf or Henry James are especially challenging from this point of view, but there is no shortage of linguistically accessible short stories that an ESL / EFL teacher can reach for (see Appendix A for a list of suggested readings). Leonard Michaels's 2007 piece, *The Hand*, is an example of a deceptively simple text that is rich in meaning:

I smacked my little boy. My anger was powerful. Like justice. Then I discovered no feeling in my hand. I said, "Listen, I want to explain the complexities to you." I spoke with seriousness and care, particularly of fathers. He asked, when I finished, if I wanted him to forgive me. I said yes. He said no. Like trumps. (p. 109)

A lesson plan built on this short text would allow students to practice critical thinking, discuss cultural issues, or talk about style and structure (see Appendix B for examples of student-generated discussion questions).

Reading as "a game of chess." To encourage students' critical thinking, it is crucial to pose an important question raised by cognitivists: *How* do we know what we claim we know about the minds of the literary characters we so strongly care about? In other words, class activities need to emphasize grounding statements about the inhabitants of a fictional world in a close reading of the text.

Cognitive literary critics talk about reading fiction in terms of a "mental game" or "a chess game" between the reader and the writer (Zunshine, 2006, pp. 64-65). When we enter a fictional world, or "storyworld," and start orienting ourselves in it, we do so based on textual clues. As Doležel (1988) states, "from the viewpoint of the reader, the fictional text can be characterized as a set of instructions according to which the fictional world is to be recovered and reassembled" (p. 489). There are several benefits of raising students' awareness of this fact. First of all, this approach promotes a search for signals planted by the author in the text. Paying attention to details, identifying main ideas, evaluating evidence, and drawing conclusions are critical thinking skills that language learners need to practice. This in turn also highlights the active role of the reader in creating meaning. ESL learners sometimes tend to see themselves as passive recipients of knowledge and need to be taught to ask questions of a text. Furthermore, practice in playing the "chess game" with the writer helps them realize the importance of the writer-reader dialogue in all texts, which can motivate them to write with more clarity.

"The reflector figure." Another concept useful in guiding students in their reading is related to "the situated nature of all perception," the fact that

. . . what can be seen, what is known about the world alters with the spatial coordinates of the embodied self that is doing the looking; . . . that a self is in part constituted by what it sees and by when and where it sees it . . . (Herman, 2010, p. 166)

Herman (2010) uses the term “the main internal focalizer” or “reflector figure” with reference to the character “whose vantage point provides a window on the action being recounted” (p. 164). The concept of the reflector figure is easy to understand for today’s learner used to visual media; moreover, it draws attention to the aspects of the fictional reality that are thematically relevant. Activities such as mapping the movement of the reflector figure or visualizing in order to fill in the gaps appeal to students’ creativity and improve their comprehension of a text.

The following questions can initiate a meaningful discussion:

- Who is the reflector figure? What is in the center of his / her attention?
- How much of the fictional reality do we see through his / her eyes? What is not shown and why?
- Does the position of the reflector figure shift in the course of the story? Is this shift important? What is its function?
- What would the fictional world look like if it were presented from the point of view of another character?

Such questions can be answered orally, in writing, or even by drawing pictures, all of which involve higher order cognitive processes. Although learners’ proficiency will impact the level of sophistication with which they verbalize their reflections, engaging in the activity will in itself increase their awareness of reading as a meaning-making process.

Shared thinking or “the intermental unit.” Works of fiction teach us to look through the eyes of others, an indispensable precondition to developing not only empathy, but also cultural competence. A literary text almost always explores complex relationships between the mind of the protagonist and the minds of other characters; it also directly or indirectly portrays the dominant way(s) of thinking in the society depicted in the narrative. Using the term *intermental unit* with reference to shared thinking, Palmer (2010) observes, “Just as in real life, where much of our thinking is done in groups, a good deal of fictional thinking is done by large organizations, small groups, families, couples, friends, and other intermental units” (p. 184). He then adds, “In fact, a large amount of the subject matter of novels is the formation, development, maintenance, and breakdown of these intermental units” (Palmer, 2010, p. 184); hence, the value of literature for building intercultural competence. A discussion of intermental units will almost inevitably lead to revealing cultural schemata, not only those represented in a work of fiction, but also those used to interpret it. A literary text provides an authentic snapshot of what a given culture looks like, how it is lived, and also, even more importantly, how it is questioned from within; great books undermine stereotypes rather than propagate them. Consequently, discussing fiction creates opportunities for talking about culture without resorting to stereotypes or using the “us and them” dichotomy.

Class activities designed to analyze a text from the point of view of the relationship between the protagonist and the intermental units would revolve around the following questions:

- Who forms the dominant intermental unit?
- How does the protagonist situate himself / herself vis-à-vis the dominant intermental unit(s)? For example, does she / he identify with it, fight it, or feel alienated from it?
- How is the relationship relevant to the meaning of the story?
- What does it tell us about the culture the text represents?

In turn, an analysis of the relationship between the reader and the text on the level of the text-reader relationship would pose questions such as:

- What type of reader does the text assume in terms of background knowledge or cognitive and emotional profile?
- How much effort is the reader expected to make to understand the mind of the protagonist and his / her relationships with other characters?
- How would the relationship between the protagonist and the intermental unit differ in students' L1 culture?
- In what ways is the L2 reader different from the intended reader?

Asked to reflect on their own culture and the target culture, students build intercultural competence (Byram, 1998; Byram, Nichols, & Stevens, 2001; Kramsch, 1993, 1998; Kramsch, Cain, & Murphy-Lejeune, 1996), one of the most significant benefits of reading literature in a foreign language. Again, the above sample questions can easily be modified to accommodate a less proficient reader while still encouraging critical thinking.

In summary, within the framework based on cognitive literary studies, students' affective response to fictional characters would be validated, but it would also be grounded in close reading. One can envision that this approach would also raise students' awareness of the dialogic nature of the writer-reader relationship. Classroom activities would explore the extent to which the protagonists' success or failure in reading other characters drives the plot and contributes to the development of the theme. On the level of the text, attention would focus on the structure of the storyworld, with special emphasis on the interaction between the protagonist and the intermental unit(s). On the level of the reader-text interaction, students would analyze the cognitive profile of the storyworld as mirroring the culture that the text is part of; at the same time, they would be encouraged to critically examine their own perspective. Thus they would be able to reach the "third place" (Kramsch, 1993), where it is possible to temporarily step outside the culturally determined boundaries of the self.

Application

The above-described approach was used with undergraduate students at Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar. The students were at the high intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency in English, as determined on the basis of their TOEFL scores, SAT verbal scores, and institutional testing. Coming from an oral culture, they had little previous experience of interpreting or even reading fiction. Since the goals of the Reading / Writing course they were taking included enculturation and critical thinking in addition to building communicative competence, using authentic literary texts in a way that would best help achieve these aims in a short period of time was especially important.

Overall, 45 students participated in the pilot project that involved a module based on the cognitive approach to literature. Information about the effectiveness of the module was collected through a pre-test, a post-test, a semi-structured interview, and an end-of-the-semester reflective evaluation form.

In the first week of the semester, the students were asked to read Hemingway's short story, *Cat in the Rain* (1987) and write for 30 minutes in answer to the open-ended question "In your opinion, what is the story about?" The answers were analyzed for the occurrence of comments on the characters' way of thinking and ability to read the minds of others; references to stereotyping or cultural differences were also noted. Although the expected length of the

assignment was approximately 250 words, the responses actually produced by students ranged from 50 to 150 words. Approximately 85% of students merely listed what the characters did and most of them dismissed *Cat in the Rain* as a story in which nothing happens. Only 12% focused on the wife's emotional profile and interpreted her wish to get the cat as a sign of being bored or sorry for the animal. No more than 4% saw the interaction between the wife and the husband as important at all in the story. Interestingly, even in terms of summarizing the plot, the students did not do very well; for example, all of them completely missed the fact that, in the end, the wife gets a different cat from the one she originally wanted. Evidently, their lack of interpretative skills was compounded by their inability to pay close attention to the text.

After this pre-test, the students were given a brief introduction to the model described in the first part of the present article. To practice applying the concepts of mind reading, the reflector figure, or the intermental unit in their own interpretation, they were asked to generate their own discussion questions for Michaels' *The Hand*. This assignment and the class discussion that followed proved that the students had grasped the idea of reading actively (see Appendix B for a compilation of submitted questions).

As a post-test, two weeks later, the students were asked to read and interpret another short story, *No Speak English*, an excerpt from *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros (1991, pp. 76-78). The prompt for the assignment was identical to the previous one. This time, the responses revealed a deeper understanding of the text. Only 7% of students saw Cisneros's narrative mainly as "a story about Mamacita, a fat woman, who is lazy and doesn't want to learn English." Approximately 75% of students identified the reflector figure and noticed the existence of multiple perspectives in the storyworld; 62% referred to the concept of the intermental unit to discuss the shared thinking of the neighborhood, and 32% commented on how the reflector figure distances herself from it. Thus it appeared that the concepts in the module were effectively used as tools to unlock the meaning of the narrative.

The class activities that followed the post-test aimed at expanding and enriching the students' initial response to the text. They included mapping the fictional world as depicted by the reflector figure, imagining what it would look like if presented from the point of view of the other characters, and writing a movie script based on the story. The students ended with a better understanding of Mamacita's nearly complete isolation; consequently, they developed a more sympathetic view of her plight. During these activities, the students also brought up the concept of "the third place," observing how the narrator situates herself in relation to the intermental unit, as both a member of the community and somebody with a different point of view. They also admitted that their own perspective was culturally determined. Their lack of knowledge about the situation of immigrants such as Mamacita, views on the role of women, and conviction about the importance of learning English were all important factors in passing a negative judgment on the character.

The end-of-the-semester semi-structured interviews and evaluation forms validated the usefulness of the module. Out of 44 students, 32 stated their interest in reading fiction in the future had increased significantly and 33 said they appreciated the game-like aspect of this type of reading; all the respondents were eager to use the same model of reading in the next semester. Since these students want to be medical doctors, they also appreciated the link between becoming expert readers of fictional minds and readers of patients coming from a wide social and cultural spectrum.

Concluding Thoughts

The module discussed here was introduced to a small number of students. Consequently, no valid conclusion as to its effectiveness can be reached. Nevertheless, the response to it was very encouraging. The value of this approach is that it builds on students' instinctive interest in fiction to sharpen their critical thinking. It also shows them how to reflect on their own culture and the target culture, an experience that can be liberating and rewarding.

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Appendix A
List of Recommended Texts

- Bradbury, R. (1997). The long rain. In R. Bradbury, *The illustrated man* (pp. 78-96). New York, NY: Morrow & Company.
- Bradbury, R. (1997). The veldt. In R. Bradbury, *The illustrated man* (pp. 7-25). New York, NY: Morrow & Company.
- Chopin, K. (2006). The story of an hour. In S. Marcus (Ed.), *A world of fiction: Twenty timeless short stories*. White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.
- Cisneros, S. (1991). *The house on Mango Street*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
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- Hemingway, E. (1987). A clean well-lighted place. In E. Hemingway, *The complete short stories of Ernest Hemingway* (Finca Vigia ed., pp. 288-291). New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Hemingway, E. (1987). Hills like white elephants. In E. Hemingway, *The complete short stories of Ernest Hemingway* (Finca Vigia ed., pp. 211-214). New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons.
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- Michaels, L. (2007). The hand. In L. Michaels, *Collected stories* (p. 109). New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Tyler, A. (2006). Teenage wasteland. In S. Marcus (Ed.), *A world of fiction: Twenty timeless short stories* (pp. 210-218). White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.
- Vivante, A. (2006). Can-can. In S. Marcus (Ed.), *A world of fiction: Twenty timeless short stories* (pp. 4-5). White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.

Appendix B
Student-Generated Discussion Questions

Questions for Michaels' *The Hand*:

Who is the "I"? What do we know about him?

Where did the narrated event happen? What kind of setting can you visualize for it?

How much do we know about the characters? What kind of mind reading is shown as going on in the story?

How does the father feel about smacking his son?

Why doesn't he tell us what made him angry before he hit him? Is it important?

Why do his feelings change? How do we know that he feels guilty?

Who is the better mind reader, the father or the son?

Who wins in this situation and why?

How do you feel about the father's problem? Is what he did acceptable? What kind of person is he?

What about the son's behavior? What does it tell us about the society he lives in?

Why is the title *The Hand*? Can you think of a different title?

What would the story be like if it were told by the son?

Using YouTube in the EFL Classroom

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Abstract

This paper addresses various ways teachers can use the video website YouTube.com (or other online streaming video websites) to teach English and stimulate learner autonomy. If students and teachers have access to the Internet, YouTube can be a valuable tool through which multiple foreign language skills can be taught. Using YouTube both inside and outside the classroom can enhance conversation, listening, and pronunciation skills. YouTube videos can also be utilized as realia to stimulate cultural lessons, enhance exposure to World Englishes, and promote authentic vocabulary development. Even reading and writing activities can be structured around YouTube videos. In-class lessons and activities will be detailed, as will homework and projects requiring the use of online streaming videos.

For EFL teachers, it is often a struggle to utilize potentially useful technology, promote student autonomy, and create stimulating lessons. If students and teachers have adequate access to the Internet, however, there is a vast online audiovisual resource generally well known to students that can function effectively in multiple ways for a variety of English classes.

The resource, YouTube.com, is an online video repository in which nearly any digital video file can be stored and exhibited free of charge. Started in February 2005, YouTube hosts videos that are cumulatively currently viewed more than 2 billion times each day ("Timeline," 2011). While issues involving copyright infringement and obscenity standards have often made the website controversial, the vast array of diverse content and its organic community interactivity make YouTube a tremendous resource for a multitude of educational endeavors.

This paper seeks to give teachers a few starting points on how the site could be used, as well as to suggest a loose framework for online video use into which SLA and CALL researchers can conduct further research. First, a brief review of existing literature will be presented, followed by descriptions of potential YouTube applications that have been implemented. The paper will conclude with a discussion of potential limitations that might come with using online video technology and suggestions for future research.

Reviewing Extant Literature Through the Lens of YouTube

The two primary benefits to using YouTube in the classroom are the exposure to authentic English as well as the promotion of a learning style that is more autonomous and student-

centered. When students regularly use a wide variety of English media, they are achieving a degree of L2 immersion that might otherwise be unavailable outside a study-abroad program (Johnson & Swain, 1997). Furthermore, immersion teaching and techniques to increase L2 input have generally positive effects on the language acquisition process (Mangubhai, 2005). Additionally, incorporating technology into second-language classrooms is a way for students to connect seemingly abstract foreign language concepts to their actual experiences (Wang, 2005). Finally, incorporating technology into the classroom—particularly among low-level learners—has also been shown to generate greater student autonomy and instill lifelong language learning skills (Leung, 2004).

Since YouTube's rise to Internet prominence is a fairly recent development, substantive scholarly work into the effects online video streaming can have in an EFL classroom is fairly sparse. Berk (2009) has examined the use of video clips in college classrooms and provided a detailed rationale and conceptual framework for the practice. While Berk's study is fairly extensive, its focus is across the field of education in general instead of EFL or even SLA pedagogy; nonetheless, his list of "learning outcomes" and review of neuro-cognitive research are engaging and enlightening enough to merit consideration by EFL teachers interested in incorporating video in their classrooms (2009). Aside from Berk's study, unfortunately, specific inquiry into online video use in the classroom is fairly rare. In light of the absence of such research, this section will use YouTube to reexamine some core issues commonly found in the EFL and SLA discussion on the use of online videos in the classroom.

This paper will examine an area of use of film clips and films that frequently receives scholarly attention, and then demonstrate how this area can be connected to YouTube. Shea (1995) describes a debate between ESL / EFL teachers who favor in-depth examination of film clips and those who maintain that extensive and lengthier exposure to films is more beneficial. Shea argues for the latter position--immersing students in long engagements with films and movies. With the rise of serialized YouTube stories and other streaming website episodes, or "webisodes," teachers and students who prefer more extensive exposure to films and videos in English can be satisfied with YouTube's content (Graham, 2005). Similarly, those who favor a more intensive approach can use YouTube to access a tremendous variety of famous scenes in film history. With YouTube, students and teachers could thoroughly examine any of these scenes with a deep focus on speech cadence, tonal shifts, grammatical nuance, conversational roles, or almost any other topic currently being examined in class.

Another common area of research in EFL is the question of who should be more responsible for the direction taken in learning a language: the teacher or the student? For teachers interested in promoting learner-autonomy and student-centered learning, YouTube is again quite useful. According to Benson and Voller (1997), the term *learner autonomy* is generally used to suggest any combination of five ideas: first, the responsibility of language development rests primarily on the students; second, students should acquire learning skills that they can apply to any aspect of their language development that they choose; third, students should have opportunities in which they can successfully learn independently from teachers or classmates; fourth, the specific course of language development is a path students ultimately decide; fifth, students innately crave self-guided education, but their desires are regularly thwarted by their academic institutions.

Each of these points can be related to the use of YouTube. First, students can, in their own time, choose to view a YouTube clip in English, evaluate possible limitations of comprehension on their own terms, and finally choose (or choose not) to pursue further academic attention for

that particular area. Secondly, after exposure to a YouTube clip, a fairly advanced and linguistically self-aware student can determine approximately which pronunciation and conversation skills are desired and then attempt to acquire them. Thirdly, a student can browse the millions of videos available on YouTube without needing help from any teacher or fellow student. Fourthly, if a student finds a particular kind of clip (or YouTube channel) particularly interesting or useful in language learning, he or she can freely investigate all clips that might be of a similar vein. Finally, if a student feels the material being studied in class is not useful, then an intelligent and self-guided examination into YouTube could be conducted to supplement what the student feels is being overlooked or suppressed by the educational institution.

Potential Applications

Listening and speaking. Since YouTube and other online videos are most immediately observed through sight and sound, creative teachers can easily find new ways to use them in listening and speaking or English conversation classes. This section will list a few possible activities for EFL teachers, but this list should not be considered exhaustive by any means.

- **Conversation analysis:** This activity is well suited for intermediate to advanced students, and it can create a heightened awareness of effective conversation techniques as well as common conversation problems that can be avoided. In the activity, students view teacher-selected clips (or browse YouTube and select clips for themselves) that demonstrate effective or ineffective conversational techniques to reinforce material taught in class. For example, students can find film or TV clips featuring conversations that suffer because of a lack of follow-up or clarification questions. Alternatively, students might search for videos in which a conversation is effective because the members are supportive by using phrases to elicit more information from each other. By searching through YouTube conversations for targeted discussion techniques, students are critically evaluating discourse and immersing themselves in English. Student effort can be assessed by the number of illustrative conversations found on YouTube and how well the conversations demonstrate concepts discussed in class. Additionally, this project can be modified into a presentation in which students share their videos with their classmates.
- **Movie trailer voiceovers:** This challenging listening and speaking project can help advanced students recognize their pronunciation difficulties and improve the quality of their spoken English. In the activity, students select any two-minute movie preview from YouTube. Then students transcribe the audio in the preview. After this, the video can be downloaded from YouTube and stripped of its audio track using a free software program called YouTube Downloader (<http://youtubedownloader.com/>). With the aid of their transcriptions, students can then record their own voices while paying close attention to mimicry and synchronization. Different students can do the voices for different characters as well as narrate the trailer. Once the recording is done, students can use Apple or Windows video editors to redub the preview. This activity involves repeated close listening to create the transcript, and then repeated recordings in which students attempt to recreate native-like cadence, intonation, and pronunciation. Assessment is based on both listening and speaking accuracy.
- **Famous movie scene reenactments:** This is a creative project that is best suited for intermediate to advanced learners to improve the quality of their spoken English in a very physical and dramatic way. Students can select a famous scene from a movie--the death of Jack in the film *Titanic* (Cameron, 1997), for example--and then reenact it, either as a

dramatic presentation in front of the class, or in a video clip of their own. The reenactment could focus on any number of concepts discussed in class. For example, if students have been learning about sentence stress, then by doing reenactments, they would focus on (and presumably, be evaluated according to) the accuracy of sentence stress in their mimicry. Assessment is based on the quality of the reenactment, particularly in the ways it reflects speech and pronunciation concepts discussed in class.

- **Vlogging:** This is a regular spoken activity that can be performed by any student who has achieved even the lowest degree of conversational proficiency. The activity allows for regular and extended extemporaneous speaking practice. Vlogging is short for “video blog,” and blog is short for “web log.” In essence, a vlog is an online diary in video form. A number of notable vlogs have emerged on YouTube, and students can be directed to them for extensive listening practice or for any other listening lesson in which authentic English realia is needed. Of greater use is the students’ regular maintenance of their own vlog. This would entail them speaking before a web-camera for a limited period of time, watching and evaluating their recorded statements before deciding to post, and then watching and listening to the vlog replies of their classmates or teacher. Due to YouTube’s privacy settings, vlogs can be uploaded to YouTube in complete privacy and made available for viewing only to the student in question, the instructor, and any invited classmates. Assessment could be performed in accordance to overall student pronunciation, level of vocabulary, use of grammar, and general communicativeness.

Reading and writing. At first glance, YouTube appears to lend itself mainly to listening activities in a foreign language, but there are also reading and writing activities that can be improved using YouTube. This section lists two, but elements from the two can be expanded upon and blended with other reading and writing activities.

- **Note-taking and summarizing:** Although this activity could be used for high beginner and pre-intermediate level students, it works best for students at the intermediate level or above. The note-taking and summarizing activity requires students to use YouTube to listen to lectures on various topics, take notes on the main points and important details, verbally check and expand their notes with a partner, listen again to further expand their notes, and then write summaries from their notes. They can then look at a transcript of the clip and compare their summaries with those of their classmates and teachers. If the students’ summaries differ considerably from the teacher’s, then the teacher can point out why he or she chose the information included in the model summary. For example, by pointing out specific discourse markers that indicate an important piece of information in a text, teachers can illustrate what students could look for in future encounters with similar texts. A good source of speeches on a variety of topics is TED Talks. TED Talks are generally limited to less than 20 minutes and most have a transcript available at the TED Talks homepage (<http://www.ted.com>). While note-taking and summarizing are difficult to master, both are essential academic writing skills and necessary for numerous standardized proficiency tests. YouTube provides opportunities to practice these skills with engaging materials. A normal assessment of notes can be labor-intensive for the teacher as it involves checking which points have been included, understood, and formulated properly. A possible alternative to checking students’ notes would be to do as Flowerdew suggests, and use tasks that require students to reintegrate knowledge from their notes, such as writing a short essay on the topic or giving a brief oral report that can instead be used for evaluation (Flowerdew, 1994).

- “How-to” writing: The “how-to” paragraph (for beginners) or essay (intermediate to advanced) is a genre that lends itself well to the use of YouTube. The teacher first models the task for the students by choosing a video of appropriate length and complexity, writing a step by step guide to what is contained in the video, creating a cloze or sequencing activity, and having students complete the activity. Students are then instructed to find a video that interests them of similar length, complexity level, and topic. Next, students create their own cloze or sequencing activity. Finally, students exchange activities and try them out. It is easy for students to understand the genre of how-to videos and any skills learned will often be used receptively and productively in both real life and academic settings. Student assessment is based on accuracy of writing the important elements of the video.

World Englishes. As has been well documented (Seidlhofer, 2005), English has developed into a lingua franca for the modern world. In the early 1980s, Kachru coined the term “World Englishes” to describe the variety of Englishes that have developed (Kachru, 1992). One of the main goals of English language education is for students to communicate not only with native speakers but also with non-native speakers. Students exposed mainly to sanitized English in materials published for learners are often shocked when they encounter English in the real world and this shock is doubled if this English is not in the most standard American or British accent. One solution to this problem is to expose students to authentic English in as many dialects as possible.

YouTube is an ideal vehicle to teach World Englishes and expose students to a variety of English dialects. Short videos in various dialects are easy to access, and the variety of content and cultures is enjoyable to students. Whole film study can be rewarding for a dedicated class, but short clips allow for the largest variety of accents and situations to be experienced. There is a significant variety of activities possible; only a few will be detailed here.

- Current events and media study: One way for students of nearly any level to study World Englishes is to compare news clips about major world events, such as 9/11, the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, or the British royal wedding of 2011. In this activity, the teacher chooses two clips about the same topic from different varieties of English, and then students watch and transcribe the clips. Afterward, students look at their transcriptions and the video and pick out key differences and similarities in focus, word choice, and pronunciation. They then can compare with a partner and add any relevant points they missed. The teacher shares his or her list of differences and explains why he or she included each point. Students are then encouraged to do the same task by themselves. They can be given a list of topics and clips to choose from prepared by the teacher or brainstorm their own topics and search for clips to fit the task themselves. As an assessment activity, students can make a presentation of their two clips, the differences they found, and why they chose those differences.
- Cultural entertainment study: This activity is best for higher-intermediate and advanced students, and it involves entertaining drama clips that demonstrate differences between cultures within the English-speaking world. In the activity, teachers prepare clips of dramas that are likely unfamiliar to most students. Since American television programs are generally the most popular throughout the world, short clips of *Neighbours*, *EastEnders*, and *Coronation Street* are great introductions to Australian and regional British English dialects. This activity is slightly more complicated, and has two primary phases followed by an assessment phase.

- In the first phase, the teacher chooses a one- to three-minute clip from the chosen drama and prepares a transcription. The teacher then chooses vocabulary he or she thinks will be difficult and provides a word list and definitions. With the difficult words, the teacher prepares a vocabulary activity, a cloze activity, or a matching activity. The teacher writes comprehension questions on all the main points in the clip and discussion questions on the issues raised in the clip. Students do the vocabulary exercise and read the comprehension questions; they then watch the clip and answer the questions. Then they check with their partners to confirm understanding. The teacher confirms the correct answers and responds to any new student questions. The teacher finally introduces the discussion questions and the students discuss the issues they raise.
- In the second phase of the activity, students choose their own videos to present. The teacher can present students with a list of clips that are acceptable or students can search YouTube for clips. Finding English language entertainment clips from countries such as the U.S.A., the U.K., Canada, and New Zealand is much easier than finding similar clips from former colony countries such as India, Singapore, or Jamaica; however, it can be done. Once students have found a suitable clip, they create a transcript, vocabulary activities, comprehension questions, and discussion questions.
- For the assessment, the teacher checks their work and they present their clips and activities to small groups of classmates. Assessment is based on the accuracy and effectiveness of the activities the students prepared and presented to classmates.

Conclusion

EFL classes with access to the necessary technology can make good use of YouTube and other online video-streaming sites. However, it is important to realize that there are some limitations. First, YouTube is limited to what copyright restrictions allow. If students are determined to focus on certain clips that are not available on YouTube due to copyright infringement laws, then students will have to procure these clips on their own. Secondly, given the vastness of the YouTube library, a certain amount of structuring and guidance from the teacher might be necessary in order to prevent students from spending unproductive hours perusing the site. A third consideration teachers might need to take into account is the nature of much of the material on YouTube. Although the site does not allow nudity, there is a fair amount of risqué content and provocative language available. Teachers of younger students would be well advised to take this into account. Finally, certain countries have placed bans on YouTube and other video streaming sites (Toksabay, 2010), meaning that classes in those countries might have greater difficulty accessing useful online videos.

However, YouTube remains a valid resource for teachers seeking to enhance their lessons with lively, topical content, and further research into the use of the site (as well as other online video-streaming websites) would be very welcome for the EFL and SLA community. Further avenues for academic inquiry might include, but are not limited to, comparing different video-streaming sites for the type of content provided and technological advantages available or determining the degree to which students are already accustomed to YouTube and the frequency with which they use it. Additionally, YouTube clips in similar genres, but from different creators, might be compared for effectiveness. Finally, different video media--VHS, DVD, and YouTube--could be compared with each other with regard to the availability of content, the quality of data storage, ease of access, and student / teacher preference.

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Feedback in Academic Writing: Using Feedback to Feed-Forward

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Abstract

Feedback is a key element of both teaching and learning in academic writing. Students generally take note of feedback on the first draft of an essay, as they are required to rewrite it and are motivated to achieve a good grade. However, feedback on final drafts is often ignored or forgotten before the next essay. This can be frustrating for teachers, as well as a missed opportunity for students to learn lessons from the final draft and take these forward to the next essay. This paper describes an attempt to implement the concept of "feed-forward" by encouraging students to engage actively with final draft feedback and be more proactive in the feedback process through feedback dialogues with the teacher. Current literature on feedback and evaluation is reviewed, followed by an explanation of the methods adopted. Results are then analyzed and, although tentative at this stage, are judged to be positive.

This paper describes an action research study undertaken at a Japanese university to facilitate active student engagement in the feedback process as a way of developing student writing skills and increasing learner autonomy. The classes followed the process writing method of drafting, revising, and rewriting with feedback given at each stage. Students were generally motivated to read and respond to feedback at the drafting stages, knowing that they would have the opportunity to rewrite and improve the essay. However, when the final essay was returned, there was a tendency for students to see it as a finished product. Any feedback given on the final draft was either not read or not acted upon.

This study was an attempt to encourage students to read and respond to final draft teacher feedback and carry forward ideas for improvement to the next essay, hence the term *feed-forward*. This paper does not claim to have invented this term, defined by Duncan (2007) as applying old feedback to a new task (see also Duncan, Prowse, Wakeman, & Harrison, 2004; Higgins, Hartley, & Skelton, 2001; Murtagh & Baker, 2009; Rae & Cochrane, 2008). This study represents a practical attempt to implement a feed-forward approach in the classroom. The next section will review current literature on feedback and evaluation as it relates to academic writing. The aims and methods of the study will then be described, followed by a discussion of the results and future research possibilities.

Literature Review

Process Writing

The emergence of process writing in the field of ESL in the early 1980s has been well documented. As its name suggests, it is characterized by a shift in focus from the final product to the process of achieving the final product (Matsuda, 2003; Myers, 1997; Tribble, 1996). The process approach has many advantages, including developing student autonomy and evaluative skills by fostering students' sense of ownership and responsibility for revising their own work (Wakabayashi, 2008). In addition, the emphasis of process over product has prompted a change in attitudes towards evaluation and assessment (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004-2005; Wada, 2006).

Summative Versus Formative Evaluation

Traditionally, assessment has been seen as a judgment on the final product, or summative evaluation, as opposed to a constructive contribution to a work in progress, or formative evaluation (see Boston, 2002; Collins, 2004; Sadler, 1989). According to Gibbs & Simpson (2004-2005), if feedback is to support learning, students must have the opportunity to act on it, while Wiggins (2004) maintains that feedback is more beneficial if given during rather than after performance. This supports the research into assessment for learning conducted by Black and Wiliam (1998), which further suggests that feedback is more effective when it gives guidance on strengths and weaknesses without a grade being assigned. Process writing lends itself to this approach since feedback on early drafts does not usually include a grade and students have the chance to act on feedback received to improve their essay and develop their writing skills (Carless, 2006; Ferris, 2003). Of course, formative feedback can be written on a final draft when a grade is assigned (Collins, 2004), but students are not inclined to read it, as they do not necessarily see how comments on one assignment might help them with an assignment on a different topic (Carless, 2006; Duncan et al., 2004). Once the final product has been submitted and graded, it is seen as the end of the process rather than as another step in a much longer process.

Teacher Feedback

This trend towards using feedback and assessment for learning has produced an increasing body of research, although more is needed (Carless, 2006; Mutch, 2003), particularly in an EFL context. Given the amount of time and effort expended on writing feedback, teachers want their feedback to be effective (Duncan, 2007; Ferris, 2003). Research has focused on what kind of feedback to give (form or content), especially in EFL writing (Myers, 1997; Newfields, 2003; Tribble, 1996; Wada, 2006), and also on ways of giving feedback (Falout, 2008). A number of studies have examined student responses to teacher feedback with some supporting the view that students take very little notice of feedback and are only concerned about the grade (Chanock, 2000; Ecclestone, 1998; Hounsell, 1987). Other findings indicate that students do value feedback (Duncan, 2007; Taras, 2003; Weaver, 2006); moreover, they expect it and feel they deserve it (Higgins, Hartley & Skelton, 2002). However, most research suggests that feedback, even when valued, is often not as helpful as students would like or as teachers would like to think (Carless, 2006; Gibbs & Simpson, 2004-2005; Hounsell, McCune, Hounsell & Litjens, 2008). Feedback has been criticized for being unclear or vague and for not providing advice or guidance (Chanock, 2000; Murtagh & Baker, 2009; Weaver, 2006). There are indications that teachers and students perceive the effectiveness of the feedback process very differently (Carless, 2006; Higgins et al., 2001; Mutch, 2003), all of which suggests the need to find new ways of giving written feedback in the context of a more formative approach to evaluation.

Feedback Dialogues

The literature has also emphasized that feedback is more effective when it allows students to take some responsibility for their own learning (Sadler, 1989; Weaver, 2006). One of the goals of feedback should be to develop autonomous learners (Murtagh & Baker, 2009) able to “self-manage” learning, and one role of teachers is to encourage them to do this (Rae & Cochrane, 2008). The process approach offers such opportunities, but requires a move away from the idea of feedback as “a linear transfer of information” from teacher to student (Higgins et al., 2001, p. 271) towards more of a dialogue (Carless, 2006; Hyland & Hyland, 2006). This allows for an ongoing process of negotiation in which students are actively engaged in order to reduce the possibility of confusion and misunderstanding (Taras, 2003). In addition, the idea of feedback as a dialogue requires teachers to consider what feedback students want and how they respond to it (Carless, 2006; Mutch, 2003), potentially improving the effectiveness of teacher feedback. The dialogue concept is also supported by research into the interpersonal aspects of teachers’ written feedback by Hyland & Hyland (2006), which emphasizes feedback as an ongoing process focusing on text, learning context, and the needs of individual students rather than simply a response to each text in isolation.

Aims

This study represents an attempt to establish a feedback dialogue approach with the following aims:

1. To facilitate active student engagement in the feedback process by encouraging students to reflect and act on final draft teacher feedback by feeding-forward to the next assignment. Despite references to the feed-forward idea in the literature, there have been few attempts to put it into practice (see Duncan, 2007; Duncan et al, 2004).
2. To increase learner autonomy by giving students the opportunity to set goals and request feedback on specific aspects of their essays.
3. To improve the effectiveness of teacher feedback in responding to the concerns of students.

Methodology

The project was carried out over a two-year period with second-year and third-year English majors at a Japanese university.

Teaching Context

Students are required to produce five or six essays during the year, with each assignment involving at least a first and final draft. After the first draft, students receive a combination of peer and teacher feedback as well as engage in self-evaluation activities in the form of checklists. Teacher feedback is written on a First Draft Evaluation form (see Appendix A). Students are given detailed feedback on organizational aspects of the essay and on content. The criteria depend on the focus of the essay and are different for second-year and third-year students to reflect the different aims of these classes. The scores from 1 to 5 give students an indication of the strengths and weaknesses of the essay and do not represent a grade. The comment box provides an opportunity for comments on additional areas such as writing style, and for advice and guidance on how to improve the essay. Grammatical or vocabulary issues are highlighted on the essay itself. On the return of the final draft, students are given feedback on a Final Essay Evaluation sheet (see Appendix B). The 1-5 scale is a way of highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the essay, but the letter grade is a holistic assessment based on the

overall impression of the essay rather than the sum of its parts. This feedback combines a summative evaluation of the essay and a formative assessment, including advice on areas for improvement in the comments section.

This Study

The study introduced an additional stage in the feedback process with a “feed-forward” form (see Appendix C). When the final draft of Essay 1 was returned with a grade and feedback, students were asked to read the feedback and identify two goals for the next essay. They wrote the goals on the form and the forms were collected. On submission of the first draft of Essay 2, students were asked to review the goals they had set, decide if they had made any progress towards achieving their aims, and write their responses on the form. They also had the opportunity at this point to write questions about their essays. The feed-forward forms were then submitted with the first drafts. On the return of the first draft of Essay 2, students received feedback on a first draft evaluation form as well as responses to their questions on the feed-forward form. They began revisions to their essays in class so they could ask questions to clarify the feedback or ask for advice on how to implement the improvements suggested. When the students submitted the final draft of Essay 2, they wrote two questions or identified two areas they specifically wanted feedback about on the feed-forward form and submitted it with their essay. Their questions could either relate to their first draft goals or to a different issue. On return of the final draft, students received comments on a final draft feedback form and also a response to the questions on the feed-forward form. At this point, the process began again; students were asked to read the feedback in class and identify two goals for Essay 3. In this way, a more cyclical process of feedback was established (Hounsell et al., 2008) which acknowledged the relationship between each essay and the ongoing development of each student.

Results and Discussion

This method has been adopted for two academic years, or four semesters. However, the data collected and analysed was based on only one semester, so the sample is small and the results not conclusive at this stage. The results will be discussed in terms of the aims stated above.

Encouraging Students to Reflect on Final Draft Feedback and Feed-Forward

In respect of the first aim, the study was successful. Students were given time to read the feedback in class. They had to think about the feedback and respond by identifying future goals based on it. The feed-forward forms established a concrete connection between each essay assignment for students. At the end of the year, a questionnaire was carried out amongst students who had participated in the study (see Appendix D). The questionnaires were anonymous and students were told that any responses, both positive and negative, would be useful for research purposes.

For Question 1, over 90% circled a combination of the first 4 answers:

1. I enjoyed it / it was helpful.
2. I didn't like doing it but it was helpful.
3. It made me think more about how to improve my writing.
4. It made me read the feedback on my essay more carefully.

Of 42 students who completed the survey, three responded that it took too much time and one did not understand why she was doing it.

The responses to Questions 2-5 are as follows:

2. Was it useful to ask questions and get answers from me on the form?
a. Yes - 39 No - 0 Not Sure - 3
3. Did you like setting your own goals for your next essay?
a. Yes - 31 No - 3 Not Sure - 8
4. Did the Feed-forward forms help you understand your mistakes better?
a. Yes - 42 No - 0 Not Sure - 0
5. Do you think the Feed-forward form helped you improve your writing?
a. Yes - 40 No - 0 Not Sure - 2

In addition, there was an opportunity for students to write comments about the feedback they received. Only a small number of students wrote responses, but all comments were positive.

The sample was small and these students are, for the most part, well motivated and not inclined to respond negatively; however, their responses are certainly encouraging. The comments written on the feed-forward forms were detailed and thoughtful; they suggest students did reflect carefully on the feedback and how to use it and did not simply do it just to get it done (see Appendix E). From the teacher's perspective, students in both classes did show improvement from the first draft to the final draft and over the course of the year, but it is not possible to say if this is directly connected to the feed-forward forms. Further research would be needed to assess the extent to which improvements related to the goals set on the feed-forward forms. In addition, the form could be modified to ask students to specify what improvements they had made rather than just asking them if they felt they had improved. This would provide useful data on how students use feedback, which is an area in need of further research.

Increasing Students' Autonomy and Sense of Responsibility for Their Own Learning

The second aim was achieved by asking students, on submission of the final draft, to be proactive and request feedback on points of concern rather than rely solely on the teacher's judgment. In addition, students were asked to set their own goals. The responses to Question 3, about goal setting, were not as overwhelmingly positive as the responses to Questions 2, 4, and 5, suggesting some reluctance or uncertainty by students. This may indicate the need for more support and scaffolding to develop students' ability to evaluate, edit, and revise their work based on their own decisions. One way to do this would be to use checklists of possible goals for students to choose from until they become confident enough to set their own. Alternatively, students could summarize the feedback they receive, discuss it with their peers and set goals for each other as a step towards setting goals for themselves.

It is possible students felt constrained by the design of the form, which asked them to set their own goals in response to feedback received. They may not have understood the feedback and so felt unable to set goals based on it, or else they wanted to set goals that were important for them, but were not based on the feedback, suggesting a possible gap between the priorities of the teacher and the concerns of the students. This raises the question of the relevance of teacher feedback, which leads to the third aim.

Improving Feedback Effectiveness by Direct Response to Student Concerns

Possibly one of the most significant benefits of this study was that, through dialogue, the teacher could provide more focused, targeted feedback that directly responded to student concerns. It can be speculated that students were more motivated to read and act on feedback that responded to their questions, thereby improving the effectiveness of teacher feedback. More research needs to be done to establish if this is the case.

Some analysis was done on the kind of questions students asked and an attempt was made to compare student priorities with those of the teacher (see Appendix F). The results are tentative and somewhat predictable. Briefly, they suggest that students focus more on grammatical and lexical problems than the teacher feedback does. In contrast, the teacher feedback emphasizes content, whereas students see this as less of a priority and are less likely to spontaneously ask for feedback on this point. The feed-forward forms provide a useful source of data for further research in this area.

Additional Benefits of the Study

1. The feed-forward form provided a record of progress throughout the semester for both student and teacher.
2. Questions asked by the students on the feed-forward forms highlighted areas of difficulty which could then be reviewed in class, thus providing valuable feedback for the teacher on the success of the lessons.

Conclusion

Overall, the study was successful in terms of its primary aims of (1) encouraging students to make use of final draft feedback and to see each essay as the next step in the process of developing their writing, (2) increasing student autonomy, and (3) improving the effectiveness of feedback by finding out what feedback students want and responding to it. Based on the questionnaire responses and anecdotal evidence, the initial response from students has been positive, but more research is needed on the connection between the feed-forward system and improvements made. As a means of enhancing the effectiveness of the feedback process, the feed-forward system described in this study has much to recommend it in both academic and general writing classes.

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Appendix A
First Draft Evaluation Form

Key Components	Comment
Introduction contained background information; thesis statement and main points of the essay were clearly stated.	
Paragraph topics were clear and supported the thesis; supporting sentences gave details and examples to support the topic sentence.	
Conclusion restates the thesis, summarizes the main points and effectively brings the essay to a close.	
Essay was appropriate length. Content was thoughtful. Ideas were well supported with evidence and examples from sources.	
Content	5 4 3 2 1
Organisation	5 4 3 2 1
Comments:	

**This form was adapted from feedback forms used in the School of International and Liberal Studies at Waseda University, Tokyo, where the author previously worked.*

Appendix B
Final Essay Evaluation Form

Name:

Your essay is graded on three elements: **content** (what you say), **organization** (how well you organize your ideas into a 5-paragraph essay structure) and **clarity** (how clearly you express your ideas in English). The scores in the box helps you understand what was good about your essay and what you need to improve. The final letter grade is awarded for the overall essay, taking into account all the strong and weak points.

5 = Excellent 4 = Very good 3 = Good 2 = Needs Improvement 1 = Poor

Content:	5	4	3	2	1
<i>(Length was appropriate, content was relevant and ideas were developed with details, explanation and examples from sources)</i>					
Organisation:	5	4	3	2	1
<i>(Essay is organized in a 5-paragraph essay structure with a clear thesis statement; thesis is supported in the body of the essay; conclusion summarizes the essay and brings it to a close effectively)</i>					
Clarity:	5	4	3	2	1
<i>(Vocabulary was appropriate; grammar errors were few and not serious, so meaning was clear and essay was easy to read)</i>					

FINAL GRADE: _____

Comments:

Appendix C
Feed-Forward Form

Return of the Final Draft of Essay 1

After reading the feedback on your essay, what two things do you want to improve in your next essay? (*Be specific – don't just say "organization."*)

1. _____
2. _____

Submission of the First Draft of Essay 2

Look at the two points you said you wanted to improve after completing the first essay. Do you think you have improved in these two areas? If you are not sure, or if you have any questions, write them here.

1. _____
2. _____

My response:

Submission of the Final Draft of Essay 2

What two aspects of your essay would you like feedback about? If you have any questions you want to ask me about your essay, write them here.

1. _____
2. _____

My response:

Return of the Final Draft of Essay 2

After reading the feedback on your essay, what two things do you want to improve in your next essay? (*Be specific – don't just say "organization."*)

1. _____
2. _____

Submission of the First Draft of Essay 3

Look at the two points you said you wanted to improve after completing the second essay. Do you think you have improved in these two areas? If you are not sure, or if you have any questions, write them here.

1. _____
2. _____

My response:

Appendix D
Questionnaire

- 1. How did you feel about the completing the Feed-forward forms?** (Circle the answer(s) you agree with – you can circle more than one)

I enjoyed it and it was helpful

I didn't like doing it but it was helpful

It made me think more about how to improve my writing

It made me read the feedback on my essay more carefully

It took too much time

It was boring

I didn't understand the teacher's responses / writing

I didn't understand why I was doing it

- 2. Was it useful to ask questions and get answers from me on the form?**

Yes

No

Not Sure

- 3. Did you like setting your own goals for your next essay?**

Yes

No

Not Sure

- 4. Did the Feed-forward forms help you to understand your mistakes better?**

Yes

No

Not Sure

- 5. Do you think the Feed-forward form helped you to improve your writing?**

Yes

No

Not Sure

- 6. Do you have any other comments on the essay feedback you received?**

Appendix E

Feed-Forward Form Example

11/9 Submission of Final Draft of Essay 1

What aspects of your essay would you like feedback about? Are there any questions you would like to ask about your essay?

1. *I want to know how to use conjunctions again.*
2. *Can I use past tense about movies?*

My response:

1. *You can make some of your short sentences into longer sentences by using conjunctions such as 'so' 'and' 'but' (see BP3).*
2. *We usually use present tense for plot summaries of films and novels but the main thing is to be consistent.*

11/16 Return of Final Draft of Essay 1

After reading the feedback on your essay, what two things do you want to improve in your next essay? (*Be specific – don't just say "organization."*)

1. *Write longer sentences!*
2. *Use conjunctions effectively!*

11/30 Submission of First Draft of Essay 2

Look at the two points you said you wanted to improve after completing the first essay. Do you think you have improved in these areas? If you're not sure, or if you have any questions, write them here.

1. *I tried to write longer sentences and I believe I could.*
2. *It's difficult to use conjunctions, but I tried hard.*

My response:

1. *I think so too! I didn't notice any sentences that were too short.*
2. *You did much better with conjunctions.*

12/14 Submission of Final Draft of Essay 2

What aspects of your essay would you like feedback about? Are there any questions you would like to ask about your essay?

1. *I quoted parts of poem in BP1. How is it?*
2. *I forgot writing "work consulted". I'm sorry.*

My response:

1. *You quoted correctly but the lines you quoted don't really support your point. Other lines would be better.*
2. *OK!*

1/11 Return of Final Draft of Essay 2

After reading the feedback on your essay, what two things do you want to improve in your next essay? (*Be specific – don't just say "organization."*)

1. *I want to choose correct quotations*
2. *I should write examples which support my idea*

Appendix F

Content Analysis of Questions and Comments on Feed-Forward Forms

Thirty forms were analyzed. Some forms were not included because they were incomplete due to student absence on the day of submission or return of the forms. The forms contained two types of questions: directed, where students had to set goals in response to feedback received, and undirected, where students could ask about any aspect of their essay without reference to teacher feedback. Common categories of feedback were identified, for example, organization, content, quotations and citations, grammar and vocabulary, style, and coherence. Each comment from each form was placed into one of the categories. The results are as follows:

Categories	Responses to directed questions	Responses to undirected questions
Essay structure / Organization	33.0%	30.0%
Content (including use of examples, details for support)	24.5%	14.5%
Quoting and citing sources	11.5%	14.5%
Grammatical accuracy	18.0%	23.0%
Vocabulary	5.0%	10.0%
Academic style	3.0%	2.0%
Coherence / Logical order	0.0%	3.0%
Other (including spelling / layout)	4.5%	2.0%

*Percentages were rounded up or down to 0.5 or the nearest whole number.

The main areas of discrepancy are in terms of content and grammar and vocabulary. Thirty-three percent of undirected questions refer to grammar and vocabulary compared with 23% of responses to feedback suggesting that students focus more on grammatical and lexical problems than the teacher feedback does. In contrast, there are more content-based responses to directed questions, suggesting that teacher feedback emphasizes content, whereas students see this as less of a priority and are less likely to spontaneously ask for feedback on this point.

Using Songs Effectively to Teach English to Young Learners

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Abstract

Songs play an important role in the development of young children learning a second language. A testament to this is the frequency with which songs are used in English Language Teaching classrooms all over the world. This paper begins by looking at why songs can be considered valuable pedagogical tools. In particular, it will discuss how songs can help learners improve their listening skills and pronunciation, and how they can be useful in the teaching of vocabulary and sentence structures. The author will also discuss how songs can reflect culture and increase students' overall enjoyment of learning a second language. The author will then attempt to show, through practical examples, how songs can be used as language tasks. Finally, the paper aims to explore how classic songs for children can be adapted to suit a particular theme or part of the curriculum a teacher might wish to teach.

Most children enjoy singing songs, and they can often be a welcome change from the routine of learning a foreign language. For the teacher, using songs in the classroom can also be a nice break from following a set curriculum. Songs can be taught to any number of students and even those teachers with the most limited resources can use them effectively. Songs can play an important role in the development of language in young children learning a second language. Yet songs may be used relatively ineffectively and the potential for language learning is not maximized.

This paper starts by analyzing why songs should be considered as useful pedagogical tools. The author then proposes using songs as language learning tasks to maximize the benefits of using songs and attempts to show how this might be done using practical examples. Finally, the paper explores how classic children's songs could be modified to help teachers use them more frequently to teach a wider variety of topics.

Songs as Pedagogical Tools

One advantage of using songs in the young learner classroom is their flexibility. Songs can be used for a number of purposes and there are many reasons why songs can be considered a valuable pedagogical tool. Songs can help young learners improve their listening skills and pronunciation, therefore potentially helping them to improve their speaking skills (Murphey, 1992). Songs can also be useful tools in the learning of vocabulary, sentence structures, and sentence patterns, not to mention their reflectivity of mother tongue culture (Murphey, 1992). Perhaps the greatest benefit to using songs in the classroom is that they can be fun. Pleasure for its own sake is an important part of learning a language, something which is often

overlooked by teachers, and songs can add interest to the classroom routine and potentially improve student motivation.

Listening. Purcell (1992) states that students can become bored by repeatedly listening to a narration or dialog as they attempt to understand the meaning of new words or phrases in context. In contrast, listening to a song over and over again can seem less monotonous because of the rhythm and melody. Some songs, such as *Hello*, contain common expressions and can be used as good listening activities. For example, the teacher could sing the first three lines of the song below, and students could respond with the following three lines.

Hello,
Hello,
Hello, how are you?
I'm fine,
I'm fine,
I hope that you are, too.

Songs can also help to improve listening skills because they provide students with practice listening to different forms of intonation and rhythm. English has a stress-timed rhythm, for which songs can help to establish a feeling. Murphey believes that music has the power to engrave itself into our brains, stating that "songs work on our short- and long-term memory" and are therefore adequate tools for using in the language classroom (1992, p. 3).

Speaking. Children are often keen to learn how to make new sounds and this can take a great deal of practice. Some teachers use minimal-pair drills, yet these types of activities are rarely interesting for young learners. Songs, on the other hand, can allow young learners to practice a new sound without producing the same level of boredom. Songs also have a natural rhythm with a recurring beat that is similar to the stress patterns of spoken English. These patterns make some songs useful for practicing rhythm and stress. The song *Girls and Boys Come Out and Play* could be used effectively to teach English rhythm and stress, for example (Richards, 1969, p. 162).

Girls and boys come out to play,
The sun above is bright today.
Leave your work and leave your sleep,
Come and join us in the street.
Come with a shout and come with a call,
Come with a smile and bring your ball.
Down the steps and up the path,
All the fun will make you laugh.

Moriya (1988) emphasizes the value of using songs for pronunciation practice with Asian learners of English due to the phonemic differences between Asian languages and English. For example, there are several problematic areas for Japanese students learning English. Ohata (2004) shows the differences in vowels, consonants and syllable types that cause difficulties for Japanese learners of English. Practicing the different sounds by singing songs can be more interesting and enjoyable than other activities such as minimal-pair drills.

Vocabulary. Songs can provide the opportunity for vocabulary practice. They are usually based around a theme or topic that can provide the context for vocabulary learning. The song

Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes, for example, could be used to review body parts, or the song *I Can Sing a Rainbow* might be useful for reviewing color names. Most children's songs are characterized by monosyllabic words, many of which are frequently repeated. This repetition offers greater exposure to these words and can help to improve vocabulary acquisition.

Some of the vocabulary and language used in traditional and popular English songs, however, can cause difficulties for language learners due to their use of low frequency and archaic words. The song and the lyrics need to be selected carefully to complement the target vocabulary. A difficulty for teachers is finding and selecting songs that are suitable both in terms of vocabulary and topic or theme.

Sentence structures and sentence patterns. Many children's songs have a simple sentence structure or sentence pattern that can become set in the mind of the learner. Songs could be used to reinforce questions taught in the classroom. The songs *Where is Thumbkin?*, *Hello, What's Your Name?*, and *Who is Wearing Red?* might be useful for practicing WH-question forms, for example. Websites such as *The Teacher's Guide* (<http://www.theteachersguide.com/>) or *NIEHS Kids' Pages* (<http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/>) provide hundreds of children's songs with lyrics for teachers to use.

The length of a phrase in a typical children's song is short and often uses simple conversational language. Murphey (1992) states that the pauses after each phrase are typically longer in comparison to the phrase itself, which can allow learners to process the language and shadow in real time. Again though, the teacher needs to take care when selecting a song because some songs have irregular sentence structures that are not typically used in English conversation.

Culture. According to Jolly (1975), using songs can also give learners the opportunity to acquire a better understanding of the culture of the target language. Songs reflect culture; Shen states, "language and music are interwoven in songs to communicate cultural reality in a very unique way" (2009, p. 88). Although this is probably more applicable to songs for older learners, young learners can be given the opportunity to learn about seasonal or historical events in the target language through songs.

Enjoyment. Probably the most obvious advantage to using songs in the young learner classroom is that they are enjoyable. Most children enjoy singing and usually respond well to using songs in the classroom, but there are more significant benefits to using songs other than just being fun. First, songs can bring variety to the everyday classroom routine. This variety stimulates interest and attention, which can help maintain classroom motivation, thereby helping learners to reach higher levels of achievement. Secondly, songs, in particular choral singing, can help to create a relaxed and informal atmosphere that makes the classroom a non-threatening environment. By reducing anxiety, songs can help increase student interest and motivate them to learn the target language. Students often think of songs as entertainment rather than study and therefore find learning English through songs fun and enjoyable.

Limitations. Although there are many reasons why songs can be considered a valuable teaching tool, there are some issues to consider. As mentioned above, the teacher needs to take care in selecting a suitable song for his or her class. The language, vocabulary, and sentence structure of some songs can be quite different from that used in spoken English (Richards, 1969, p. 163). For example, the children's song or nursery rhyme, *Jack Be Nimble*, is not likely to help the learner in the use of the *be* verb:

Jack be nimble,
Jack be quick,
Jack jump over the candlestick.

In addition, there are other difficulties placed on the teacher. To maintain variety in the classroom, the teacher needs a good repertoire of songs. Although young learners are happy to sing the same song on several occasions, interest in the same song can soon fade if the song is used too often. Some non-native English-speaking teachers may also worry about teaching the stress and timing of songs correctly, and are therefore probably more likely to only use certain songs that they feel comfortable with. Finally, Murphey (1992) points out that no matter how enjoyable or memorable, singing songs in itself will not teach anyone to use the language, and will not give students the ability to communicate in another language. The words in songs unfortunately do not transfer into use.

Songs as Tasks

One way to maximize the advantages and minimize some of the limitations mentioned above might be to develop songs into language learning tasks. Although this alone will not help teachers develop a greater repertoire of songs, it can help turn a song into a useful tool for language learning and teaching (Cameron, 2001, p. 31).

Defining a Task

Cameron defines an activity for young learners as “any kind of event that children participate in” (2001, p. 31), but adds, not all classroom activities can be classified as *tasks*. For an activity to be considered a *task*, it must have more carefully planned and structured events with learner participation as the fulcrum (Cameron, 1997, p. 346). Cameron provides “a list of defining features of *task* for use in teaching foreign languages to children” (2001, p. 31).

Classroom tasks for children learning a foreign language

- Have coherence and unity for learners
(From topic, activity and outcome)
- Have meaning and purpose for learners
- Have clear language learning goals
- Have a beginning and an end
- Involve the learners actively

Figure 1. Classroom tasks for children learning a foreign language from Cameron, 2001, p. 31.

These defining features benefit the teacher because they provide a reference point when planning a lesson or analyzing a lesson plan; for researchers, it “provides a unit around which to develop an understanding of language learning and teaching processes” (Cameron, 1997, p. 346). In addition to these five features, Cameron (2001) reports that tasks for young learners should have three stages: preparation, core activity and follow up.

Developing a Song into a Task

The Wheels on the Bus, a popular children’s song often sung by children in the U.K., U.S., and Canada, is used here to illustrate how a song could be developed into a language learning task.

The wheels on the bus go round and round,
 round and round,
 round and round.
 The wheels on the bus go round and round,
 all day long.

Figure 2. The lyrics to the first stanza of *The Wheels on the Bus*

There are several reasons why this particular song might be suitable for language learning purposes. The lyrics of the song are made up of 11 monosyllabic words, many of which are repeated several times. The phrases are short with relatively long pauses between each one and are comprised of simple vocabulary. The song also has a repetitive rhythm with a recurring beat that is similar to the stress patterns of spoken English.

The Three Stages of a Song as a Task

Cameron (1997, p. 347) states that classroom tasks for young learners have three stages that “once identified, can be analyzed, adapted, and expanded” and notes that “it has been common practice for many years to plan reading activities in three stages: pre-reading, reading and post-reading” (2001, p. 32). Cameron adds that this has been adapted for mainstream task-based learning by Skehan (1996, cited in Cameron, 2001) and adopts it herself with the following labels (Cameron, 2001):

PREPARATION → CORE ACTIVITY → FOLLOW UP

Figure 3. Three Stages in “Task” for Young Learners from Cameron (2001, p. 32)

Cameron argues that the core activity is central to the language learning task and without the core, the task would collapse. The preparation activities should help to prepare the students to complete the core activity successfully. This might include pre-teaching of language items or activating topic vocabulary. The follow-up stage then should build on the completion of the core activity (2001, p. 32).

Preparation stage. Given the goal of the task is singing the song in the core activity stage, it is useful to activate the vocabulary and to form basic sentence structures in the preparation stage. This could be done using a number of methods, depending on the resources available to the teacher or the size of class. One way of activating vocabulary might be to use a picture of a bus to elicit vocabulary and form basic sentence patterns. For example, the teacher pointing to the bus driver could ask, “Who is he?” Students reply, “A bus driver.” The teacher then asks, “What does the bus driver do?” Students reply, “The bus driver drives the bus.” The teacher might then point to the wheels and ask, “What are they?” Students reply, “They are wheels.” The teacher then could ask, “What do the wheels do?” The students are encouraged to reply, “The wheels go round.” Of course this is only one option; the teacher may not have access to images to match the song and might want to ask the students to draw a picture. The pictures could be used to elicit vocabulary and practice the sentence structures used in the song. Regardless of how the teacher chooses to activate vocabulary and form sentence structures, the

aim is that, at the end of the preparation stage, the students are ready to sing the song in the core stage.

Core stage. To involve the students and maximize interest, it would be advantageous to sing the song several times in the core, each time varying the pace or volume and having the students perform actions and sing along chorally. For example, the teacher could begin by asking the students to sing the word *wheels* at first, and have the students make a circle shape with their hands. Then the teacher could have the students turn around 360 degrees when singing *round and round*.

Follow-up stage. The follow-up stage should attempt to build on the successful completion of the core stage. In other words, the students have sung the song and now should be encouraged to use the vocabulary or sentence structures from the song. Again, this depends on the circumstances of the teacher. The follow-up stage could be used to develop written production, either through writing sentences or gap-fill activities, or oral production where the vocabulary learned is used in a situational role-play.

Maximizing the Potential of Songs

Using songs as language learning tasks can help to maximize the potential of songs as teaching and language learning tools. As stated above, there are benefits to using songs in the classroom; however, more often than not, songs are used relatively ineffectively, often as activities between learning. It was stated above that no matter how enjoyable or memorable singing songs can be, singing songs in itself will not teach learners to use the language and will not give them the ability to communicate in another language. However, developing a song from an activity into a task with preparation, core, and follow-up stages might be one way to help transfer the words in a song into use and maximize the potential of songs as teaching and learning tools.

Creating Original Songs

There are thousands of children's songs; selecting, learning, and using a suitable song for a particular class or purpose can be a real challenge for language teachers. Some teachers do not have a huge repertoire of songs and therefore tend to sing the same set of songs or avoid using songs completely. It can also be challenging to select a song to fit in with the curriculum or language point to be taught. As mentioned above, care needs to be taken when selecting a song because the vocabulary and sentence structure of some children's songs can be quite different from that used in spoken English.

With a little initiative and imagination, a children's song can easily be adapted. By slightly altering the vocabulary, grammar, or sentence structure whilst maintaining the original rhythm, a traditional song can be adapted to suit a particular theme or part of the curriculum. Below is an example that illustrates how this may be done. The song, *The Wheels on the Bus* (see Figure 2), requires only minor adaptations to make it more suitable for teaching a different topic; in this example, it becomes a song about sea creatures.

The **fish in the sea goes swim, swim, swim,**
swim, swim, swim,
swim, swim, swim.

The **fish in the sea goes swim, swim, swim,**
all day long.

The **lobster in the sea goes pinch, pinch, pinch,**
pinch, pinch, pinch,
pinch, pinch, pinch.

The **lobster in the sea goes pinch, pinch, pinch,**
all day long.

The **crab in the sea goes click, click, click,**
click, click, click,
click, click, click.

The **crab in the sea goes click, click, click,**
all day long.

The **octopus in the sea goes wiggle, wiggle, wiggle,**
wiggle, wiggle, wiggle,
wiggle, wiggle, wiggle.

The **octopus in the sea goes wiggle, wiggle, wiggle,**
all day long.

Figure 4. The modified lyrics from the song *The Wheels on the Bus* (adaptations bolded)

By adapting the song in this way, the teacher has the advantage of being able to select a particular language feature and incorporate it into the song. This feature could be an item of vocabulary, syntax, phonology, or a simple conversational expression. This allows the teacher to incorporate more songs into a curriculum and save time searching for and learning new songs.

Conclusion

The first purpose in presenting this paper is to state a case for developing songs from activities into language learning tasks. The second purpose is to highlight how, with a little initiative, teachers can adapt children's songs to better suit their teaching goals. Songs can be used as a valuable teaching and learning tool. Using songs can help learners improve their listening skills and pronunciation; they can also be useful for teaching vocabulary and sentence structures. Probably the greatest benefit to using songs in the classroom is that they are enjoyable. Unfortunately, despite these advantages, simply singing songs will not teach learners how to communicate in another language. Using songs as tasks might be one way of helping transfer words from songs into use, and maximize the potential of songs as teaching and learning tools. Adapting existing children's songs is one method that teachers can use to increase their repertoire of songs, thus giving them more opportunity to use songs in their teaching contexts.

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Fifty Ways to Develop Professionally: What Language Educators Need to Succeed

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Abstract

This paper discusses the importance and purposes of professional development in the lives of language educators in the Asian context and describes what teachers need to consider in designing a professional development plan. It provides a definition, rationale, and fifty professional development activities with references and resources found in the TESOL literature. Three steps are proposed in the formation of professional development plans: 1) determine one's strengths and weaknesses, 2) consider one's current stage of development and what one wants to accomplish, and 3) select long and short term goals and the resources needed to accomplish them. It is posited that continued development is the obligation of the professional language educator and that through reflection upon one's practice, awareness of opportunities, and a comprehensive plan, educators can obtain their professional development goals even with limited resources.

Definition of Professional Development

How does one become a professional educator? In order to answer this question, one must consider what it means to be "professional." To be considered a professional, one needs to possess the theoretical background, mentored experience, professional affiliations, and certifications to meet the standards of excellence in the chosen field. Nunan (1999) adds that professionals act as advocates for their field. Thus, professionals have the knowledge, skills, qualifications, connections, and accountability to engage in their professions as advocates. Those who are considered professional represent what is best in their fields and are endorsed and respected by colleagues.

Given this description of professional, it is reasonable to expect that becoming a professional educator does not end with one's pre-service or even in-service education. Professional development is a lifelong endeavor, a way of being, and a perspective on how one practices as well the practice itself. It is possible to never become professional, or to lose one's professionalism. Some refer to this process in education as teacher development, and note that sustained learning is key. As Lange (1990) states, "Teacher development is a term used in the literature to describe a process of continual intellectual, experiential, and attitudinal growth of teachers . . . [It permits] continued growth both before and throughout a career . . . in which teachers continue to evolve in the use, adaptation, and application of their art and craft" (p. 250).

Reasons to Engage in Professional Development

Teachers are busy people, so the first question to address is why divert precious time and resources to ongoing development? Six reasons to engage in professional development are provided below, along with corresponding professional activities, related resources, and references. For an up-to-date, comprehensive list of over 70 papers related to professional development of language educators, see TIRF's (The International Research Foundation for English Language Education) *Professional Development of Language Teachers: Selected References* (2011), available online. For examples in the context of Laos and Thailand, see Fowle & Durham (2001).

Raise awareness of strengths and weaknesses. When teachers cannot articulate their strengths as language educators, they miss opportunities to build upon their strong points to make an even greater impact. Likewise, teachers who are unaware of weaknesses in their teaching are not able to know what to change because they are not sure what is hindering their effectiveness. Awareness, or being cognizant of one's decisions and one's strengths and weaknesses in teaching, is key to teacher growth and development. Several professional development activities in the literature, therefore, deal directly with heightening one's awareness and helping one to reflect critically upon one's teaching in order to make changes and improve. See Table 1 for activities and related resources.

Most of these activities could be accomplished with little or no cost, such as keeping a journal, learning a language, peer observations, engaging in team teaching, finding a mentor, or conducting a survey. While compiling a portfolio, recording one's teaching, and engaging in action research may require extra resources and / or expertise, the other activities require only initiative, time, and discipline.

Table 1***Professional Development to Raise Awareness of One's Strengths and Weaknesses***

Professional Development Activity	Related Resources and References
1. Keep a journal and reflect on teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bailey, 2004 • Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001, Ch. 4 • Bailey & Nunan, 1996 • Johnson & Golombek, 2002 • Stewart & Lokon, 2003
2. Learn a new language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001, Ch. 6 • Rubin & Thompson, 1994 • Sauro, 2003
3. Record and view one's teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001, Ch. 7 • Richards & Farrell, 2005, Ch. 3
4. Be observed by a peer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bain, 2004 • Richards, 1998
5. Observe other teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deacon, 2003 • Wajnryb, 1992
6. Compile a portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001, Ch. 12 • Diaz-Maggioli, 2003 • Richards & Farrell, 2005, Ch. 7 • Tanner, 2003
7. Engage in team teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001, Ch. 10 • Richards & Farrell, 2005, Ch. 11
8. Find a mentor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001, Ch. 11 • Richards & Farrell, 2005, Ch. 10
9. Engage in action research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001, Ch. 8 • Burns, 1999, 2010 • Edge, 2001 • Freeman, 1998 • Richards & Farrell, 2005, Ch. 12
10. Survey students on one's teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gordon, 2003

Note. Many of the activities listed in Tables 1-6 could be listed under multiple reasons to engage in professional development, but are listed only once for ease of reference.

Acquire new knowledge. Another reason to engage in teacher or professional development is to acquire new knowledge. In the TESOL Quarterly 40th Anniversary Issue, Canagarajah (2006) mentions several areas within TESOL that are new to the field, such as World Englishes (WE), digital communication, and critical pedagogy. These are examples of how the field of TESOL has changed, and professional educators need to keep abreast of these changes. See Table 2 for a list of activities to gain new knowledge and their related resources. Although activities such as attending a conference or enrolling in an advanced degree program may require financial resources, many of the others can be completed with no funding. For example, some professional journals are available online. Reviewing, writing, or editing a book requires some

previous knowledge and expertise, but one can collaborate with more experienced educators and learn from them in the process.

The possibility of attending conferences or getting an advanced degree should not be ruled out if funding is the only obstacle. Many conferences offer competitive travel awards which are often reserved for presenters from developing countries (see http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/seccss.asp?CID=362&DID=1979), and there are also scholarships available for degree programs. In addition, choice of universities should not be limited to those in the West. Attending university in countries in Asia is more affordable and would likely be more appropriate for those who plan to teach in Asia.

Table 2

Professional Development to Acquire New Knowledge

Professional Development Activity	Related Resources and References
11. Attend a conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AsiaTEFL, CamTESOL, ETA-ROC, JACET, JALT, KATE, KOTESOL, TEFLIN, TESOL, ThaiTESOL
12. Read professional journals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For a list of ELT journals, see pages 3-45 of this document: http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/bin.asp?CID=334&DID=1026&DOC=FILE.PDF
13. Become active in organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Braine, 2003 Eisterhold, 2003
14. Write a book review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kupetz, 2003
15. Write a textbook manual or textbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant, 2003 Tjandrawidjaja, 2003
16. Become a reviewer of textbooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See publishers' websites for more information
17. Enroll in an MA or PhD program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Miller, 2003 http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/seccss.asp?CID=1770&DID=9326
18. Launch a teachers' reading group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sato, 2003 Richards & Farrell, 2005, Ch. 6
19. Teach a different level or course, or in a different context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conrad, 2003

Solve a particular problem. Perhaps there is a particular problem to solve, such as how to take advantage of the different levels of English proficiency in one's classroom or how to address the use of L1 in the classroom. Professional development activities that may help target a particular issue are listed below with related resources in Table 3. Once again, many of these, such as engaging in a case study, interviewing colleagues, analyzing a critical incident, joining an online discussion list, or finding online resources, can be completed with few resources.

Table 3***Professional Development to Solve a Particular Problem***

Professional Development Activity	Related Resources and References
20. Engage in a case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001, Ch. 5 Richards & Farrell, 2005, Ch. 9
21. Interview colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gorsuch & Beglar, 2003
22. Present at a conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Andrade, 2003
23. Analyze a critical incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Borg, 2003b Richards & Farrell, 2005, Ch. 8
24. Conduct an online survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See www.surveymonkey.com
25. Join an online discussion list	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Algren, 2003
26. Find related online resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chao, 2003 Paulus, 2003
27. Start a special interest group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Braine, 2003

Upgrade skills due to changes in society or the field. Ongoing in-service training and retooling is necessary for a professional language educator due to changes in both society and the field of language learning and education. This is perhaps most evident in the use of technology in the classroom. Knowing how to use these tools may require additional training, but much can be learned on one's own by going online. Professional development activities that lend themselves to practical hands-on retooling are listed below with related resources. Many of these require funding, but finding ways to learn from colleagues or perhaps offering help to others to upgrade their skills should not be overlooked.

Table 4***Professional Development to Upgrade Skills***

Professional Development Activity	Related Resources and References
28. Attend a workshop in desired area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richards & Farrell, 2005, Ch. 2
29. Find ways to learn from colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Murphey, Connolly, Churchill, McLaughlin, Schwartz, & Krajka, 2003
30. Apply for a grant to learn a skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Averill, 2003 Seymour, 2003
31. Take an online or distance course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green, 2003 Pawan & Jacobson, 2003 Roessingh & Johnson, 2005

Advance one's career. Professional development that is initiated by teachers and not just the institution has a better chance to succeed. The desire to get a promotion, tenure, or raise, or find a more challenging assignment can be a strong source of motivation. Professional activities that hold potential for advancing one's career are below in Table 5. Most of these, such as writing journal articles, co-writing a book, or creating a language program or school require some level of expertise or skills, but the simple act of volunteering in a professional

organization or helping to produce a newsletter or publication can help one learn from others in the field at no cost.

Table 5
Professional Development to Advance One's Career

Professional Development Activity	Related Resources and References
32. Get an advanced degree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miller, 2003
33. Engage in and write up research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borg, 2003a • Cohen, 2003 • McKay, 2006
34. Write a chapter or journal article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mattix, 2003
35. Co-write or edit a book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murphy, 2003
36. Apply for administrative positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smith, 2003 • Stapa, 2003
37. Seek out positions as a teacher trainer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bailey, 2006 • Carbery & Croker, 2003
38. Develop a language course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graves, 1996, 2000
39. Create a language program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richards, 2001
40. Establish a language school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richards, 2001
41. Volunteer to serve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Braine, 2003 • Eisterhold, 2003

Find fulfillment in one's work to prevent burnout. Promotions and advancement are not the only motivating factors to develop professionally. Finding fulfillment in one's work and preventing burnout are also good reasons to seek to grow in one's profession. Activities that respond best to this orientation include many of those already mentioned as well those listed in Table 6. A sabbatical may not be possible for most educators unless they are at a well-funded university; if that is the case, other options on this list, such as mentoring others, organizing a conference, or teaching less advantaged students, can be considered. Curtis (2006, 2008) notes that collaborative professional development has a better chance to succeed than individual efforts. Relationships formed through volunteer service at professional organizations are invaluable, as noted by many leaders in the TESOL, Inc. organization (see Christison & Murray, 2009).

Table 6***Professional Development to Find Fulfillment and Prevent Burnout***

Professional Development Activity	Related Resources and References
42. Take a sabbatical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seymour, 2003
43. Start a student scholarship fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> http://us.scholargrants.info/how-do-you-start-a-scholarship-fund
44. Organize a local conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eisterhold, 2003
45. Volunteer in an organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Braine, 2003
46. Engage in international collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbery & Croker, 2003
47. Mentor other teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waldschmidt, Dantas-Whitney, & Healey, 2005
48. Teach less advantaged students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boucher-Yip, 2003
49. Start an ELT organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Braine, 2003
50. Be an advocate for students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/seccss.asp?CID=32&DID=37

Steps of Designing a Professional Development Plan

The three steps in designing a professional development plan are to determine one's strengths and weaknesses, consider one's current stage of development, and select one's long-term and short-term goals.

Determine one's strengths and weaknesses. A helpful way to determine what to focus on in one's professional development plan is to consider three areas, or domains, in which one can develop: knowledge, attitude / awareness, and skills. This can be thought of one's head, heart, and hands. Since there are many possibilities under each domain to consider, language educators may want to choose one particular area of strength to build upon as well as one particular area of weakness to develop, and focus their plans around those two.

Head: General knowledge of teaching and specific subject matter knowledge. In terms of knowledge or the cognitive domain, there are two types of knowledge to consider developing. The first is general knowledge of teaching, such as knowing about various theories of learning and current research in education and its implications. The other area of knowledge that language educators need to consider is what they know about the specific content areas that they teach, whether it is grammar, pronunciation, writing, or culture.

Heart: Attitude / self-awareness. Attitude is key for the successful completion and sustaining power of any professional development plan. The literature on autonomy in language learning can be applied to teacher professional development. Essential elements in learner autonomy are motivation, choice, and responsibility. Teachers must consider how they can stay motivated to develop, be aware that they have choices about what and how they develop, and think about how they can be held responsible for their professional development plans. For example, teachers might seek out travel grants (which can help with their motivation) to present papers at conferences (on topics of their choice), and then share what they have learned with local colleagues upon their return (thus taking responsibility).

In terms of self-awareness, educators who cannot articulate their strengths and weaknesses could focus their professional development plans on raising awareness of their teaching. A helpful tool to consider “blind spots” in one’s teaching is the Johari Window (see Table 7). One’s “open self” reveals aspects known to oneself *and* known by others. The fact that a teacher may teach in a nonlinear style may be evident to others as well as to the teacher herself, for example. The “secret self” is that which a person knows, but others are unaware of. For example, a teacher may feel insecure about teaching, although it may appear he has adequate confidence; this is known to the self, but hidden from others.

Table 7
Johari Window of the Four “Selves”

	Known to self:	Unknown to self:
Known to others:	OPEN SELF	BLIND SELF
Unknown to others:	SECRET SELF	HIDDEN SELF

The “blind self” has the most potential for growth. It is what others see, but which the individual is ignorant of. For example, a teacher may assume that his instructions in class are clear, but students may actually find them confusing. Or a teacher may think he is open to hearing students’ comments and eager to listen to their questions, but his tone and nonverbal signals are sending unwelcome messages. Getting feedback from students, peers, and supervisors about what one does in the classroom and how one is perceived will reveal aspects of one’s “blind self.”

The bottom right window contains the “hidden self” which is concealed from others and oneself. It may be the hidden potential one has as a speaker, writer, motivator, or mentor, for example, just waiting to be discovered. Being willing to take some risks and try new things may open one’s eyes to the hidden potential one has as a professional language educator.

Hands: Skills such as language proficiency and pedagogical expertise. Skills is another area one may wish to develop. Some teachers may feel they need to improve their English pronunciation if students find their spoken language difficult to follow, while other teachers may need to improve their skills in using software or technology. Improving one’s teaching skills, whether it is designing better assessment instruments or becoming more skilled at providing specific feedback to students, is part of being a professional. However, the question is, which areas are one’s greatest needs and which strengths should be developed?

Table 8 provides a space to write down a domain (Head, Heart, or Hand), a strength, a weakness, and corresponding professional development activities that support them. Examples have been provided.

Table 8***Strengths, Weaknesses, and Related Activities***

Domain	Strength	Related Activity
Develop skill (Hand)	I am good with and enjoy using computers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find ways to learn even more from colleagues Join an online discussion
Domain	Weakness	Related Activity
Raise awareness (Heart)	I'm not sure what needs to be improved in my teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep a journal Ask a peer to observe me and observe a peer

Consider one's current stage of development. Before determining where to go, one must take stock of where one is. Questions to consider are: What is lacking in one's education or experience to move forward? What is needed in order to be regarded as a professional educator? A useful tool to determine the answer to these questions is a curriculum vitae, or CV. Samples of CVs can be found online. A CV contains a list of evidence that documents one's professional accomplishments and activities. Most CVs contain the following categories: formal education, teaching experience, presentations, publications, professional memberships, leadership positions in professional organizations, and professional services. Sharing one's CV with colleagues and asking for suggestions in terms of what to add or delete can be useful. One can also look for "gaps" or items not present that a potential employer may be looking for or items needed for an ideal position, and use this knowledge to create a professional development plan.

Surveys have shown that novice teachers are often more concerned with the "what and how" questions, such as "What do I teach on Monday?" and "How do I get quiet students to participate more?" while more experienced teachers ask the bigger questions of "so what" and "why" (see Richards & Lockhart, 1996). More experienced teachers might ask, "Why teach this way, and what difference will this course make to this student in the future?" Asking the big questions is important when considering who one wants to become as an educator. An important outcome of teacher or professional development is a renewed vision of the world and one's place in it. While it is impossible to produce final solutions to world problems, it is important to envision the world one hopes to create and consider what type of person is needed to sustain such a world. As educators, the task is to consider what type of learning experiences will help prepare students who will fashion such a world.

It is this vision and the process of re-envisioning that will help both faculty and students find hope when faced with the complexities and harsh realities of a world that is marked by glaring injustices and inequality. This process becomes both a starting and ending point of learning

and development, for it encompasses that which impels one to start the journey (the vision), sustains one in it (hope), and can produce evidence of change once through it (responsibility and respect). Palmer's (2007) book, *The Courage to Teach*, is one that thousands of teachers have found to be useful in rekindling a passion for teaching, students, and the subject that one teaches. Palmer speaks about teaching who one is and exploring one's inner-self, finding an integrity which can sustain teachers. Thus, questions of not only where one is, but who one is, why one is teaching, and who benefits from it can be compelling inquiries that help one chart a course in professional development.

Select long-term and short-term goals. One's strengths and weaknesses, one's journey thus far, who one wants to become, and one's professional aspirations should be kept in mind when filling in Table 9 below. A long-term goal (7-10 years), three supporting short-term goals (2-5 years) that will help accomplish the long-term goal, the resources, obstacles, potential solutions, and deadlines for each can be listed. What sources of funding may be available to help accomplish these goals? Who might be interviewed to find out how they accomplished their professional goals? What support groups or networks can be used to help ensure the plan will not be abandoned?

Table 9
Goals, Resources, Obstacles, Solutions, and Deadlines

Long-Term Professional Goal	Resources	Obstacles	Solutions	Deadlines
PhD in Applied Linguistics	PhD colleagues	No funding	Loans? Scholarships?	2021
Short-Term Professional Goals	Resources	Obstacles	Solutions	Deadlines
1. Identify programs	Online search	Too many to sort through	Keep notes of best options	2013 spring
2. Create finance plan	Mentor or university staff	Not aware of options	Email universities	2013 fall
3. Complete application	Colleagues	Writing a good essay	Ask colleagues to help edit	2014 spring

A final and important overarching consideration is whether the plan allows one to maintain and sustain a balanced social and family life. Cohen (2003) discusses the importance of nurturing relationships with friends and family when planning career goals.

Conclusion

This paper has argued for the importance of professional development, discussed several reasons why teachers might make it a priority, and provided numerous examples of how it can be accomplished in spite of limited resources. It has outlined possible steps for language educators to take to create a professional development plan based on a reflective approach on one's practice, specific context, and personal goals.

I will conclude with a personal anecdote. After one of my very first TESOL presentations, entitled *Ten Communicative Projects to Energize Listening / Speaking Classes*, a woman rushed up to me with a pen and paper in hand and said, "I am so sorry, but I came in late. What was the name of your book again?" I was stunned by her question, because she obviously thought I had written a book. But I started thinking, well, why not? If she thinks I could write a book, then maybe I really can. On the plane home, I made a long list of possible titles for "my book," and some years later, it really happened. Those ten activities became ten chapters, and Cambridge published that book, which was on the market for over a decade. I don't know who that woman was, but she launched me on my professional journey. Sometimes all we need is someone to believe in us, someone who plants a seed of possibility that takes root and grows. So I put it to you: What's the name of your book?

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About *Language Education in Asia*

Background Information

Language Education in Asia is a publication of papers that presents well-researched aspects of language education and learning, innovative, practical approaches to classroom practice, and discussion of relevant issues in the field of TESOL in the Asian region. Papers can be submitted by educators, educational leaders, and researchers; all papers are blind-reviewed by members of the Editorial Board. Beginning with this 2011 Volume, accepted papers will be published on a biannual basis in Summer and Winter Issues. Submissions are welcome and will be considered in an ongoing process throughout the year. Each summer issue will highlight exceptional papers presented at the annual CamTESOL Conference Series during that publication year.

The current publication includes papers presented at the 7th CamTESOL Conference held on 26-27 February 2011. Each volume is initially online for public viewing on the CamTESOL website: http://www.camtesol.org/language_education_in_asia.html

Language Education in Asia Editorial Board

In 2011, IDP Education invited a number of eminent ELT professionals, including several recent CamTESOL plenary speakers, to join an Advisory Board for the *Language Education in Asia* publication. The Advisory Board will offer advice as the publication is developed and expanded.

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Notes to Prospective Contributors

The readership of *Language Education in Asia* is comprised of Asian and expatriate educators as well as those from international institutions. *Language Education in Asia* encourages the submission of papers presenting innovative approaches of interest to both local and international audiences. The development context of Asian TESOL should be considered; most schools have limited resources and teachers often have to contend with large numbers of students in their classrooms. The Editorial Board takes into account the regional context as well as areas of interest for international participants when selecting papers for publication. The *Language Education in Asia* online publication includes three sections:

- **Research** highlighting ongoing projects in the Asian region, based on and emphasising a practical focus in the discussion and conclusion sections. Maximum 5,000 words.
- **Teaching Practice** focusing on classroom-based and action research more directly related to the realities of language teaching in the region. Maximum 3,500 words.
- **Commentary** focusing on a well-researched, balanced report and discussion of a current or an emerging issue in the Asian region. Maximum 2,000 words.

For more details concerning specific guidelines and formatting, please refer to the *Language Education in Asia* page on the CamTESOL website, <http://www.camtesol.org/>. To submit a paper for consideration for the Summer Issue of Volume 3, an electronic copy of the paper in Microsoft Word or Rich Text Format should be emailed as an attachment to the Assistant Editor-in-Chief, Ms. Kelly Kimura, at language.education.in.asia@gmail.com by 7 March 2012. Papers for consideration for the Winter Issue should be submitted by 6 June 2012. Papers submitted in only printed form or through other means will not be considered for publication.

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The language learning and teaching context in the Asian region is as varied and complex as the countries encompassed in this part of the world. Each context is defined by the history and culture of each specific country and the region as a whole and the language policies and languages involved, including a myriad of local, indigenous, colonial, and “global” languages.

In 2010, in response to the ever-changing and challenging linguistic landscape in this area, IDP Education (Cambodia) established the fully peer-reviewed online journal *Language Education in Asia* as a forum to highlight and exchange research and insights into language education in this dynamic region.



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