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Editor's Note

Reflective Teaching Practice: The Instructor as Researcher

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Research. The mere mention of the term in a professional development workshop with teachers can result in a slight increase in tension in the session, not so casual glances at watches, and murmurs signifying physical discomfort for what lies ahead. In a western setting, all of the above could be accompanied by a slight rolling of the eyes, communicating the idea that "this is not going to be useful for me as a practical teacher, it will be a waste of my time, and I won't understand (or be interested in it) anyway." While there may be some justification for such responses from teachers to more esoteric, theoretical research, far too often all research and classroom practice are artificially divorced, resulting in separate research and practical streams in conferences, and even in the current publication, distinct research and practically-oriented articles. In many cases, research has been seen as the domain of the university professorate (May, 1998), with little or no relevance to what "real" teachers do in the classroom (I can imagine the signs of agreement and silent applause in the aforementioned professional development workshop in response to such statements!). In reality, the distinction between research and practice is much more fluid, and the relationship much closer.

Many authors have suggested that action research can fill the gap between theoretical investigation and practical application (Avison, Lau, Meyers, & Nielsen, 1999; Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003; Nunan, 1992; Waters-Adams, 2006). The nature of action research challenges the traditional paradigm of centralized research. No longer is research limited to university professors controlling variables, primarily statistically analyzing results, and seeking to publish in academic publications. Action research is classroom and school based, descriptive and critical, with the goal of greater understanding leading to effective change in the local context (May, 1998; Mills, 2000). Whereas neutrality and objectivity are central in traditional or classical research, this contextualized focus of action research allows for more collaboration between those involved to understand professional practice more clearly, resulting in enhanced learning opportunities (Chandler & Torbert, 2003; Ferrance, 2000; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; May, 1998; Mills, 2000; O'Brien, 2001; Stringer, 1996).

While many credit Kurt Lewin with first using the term *action research* in the early 1940s (Ferrance, 2000), it was later in the 1950s and again in the 1970s that this approach to research methodology became more widely accepted and employed in educational settings (Berg, 2004; Ferrance, 2000). Notable authors have more recently defined action research in relation to the field of English language education: Richards and Farrell (2005) refer to action research as

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"teacher conducted classroom research that seeks to clarify and resolve practical teaching issues and problems" (p. 171). Burns (2010) suggests that action research is based on teachers "taking a self-reflective, critical and systematic approach to exploring [their] own teaching contexts" (p. 2). Action research is "teacher initiated investigation in order to increase understanding and bring about change" (Richards & Lockhart, 1996, p. 12).

As these authors indicate, action research is based on practitioners' systematic investigation of classroom activities in order to carry out deliberate actions to improve the teaching and learning situation (Burns, 2010; Richards & Farrell, 2005). As a result, action research is situation or context specific (Nunan, 1992; O'Brien, 2001), conducted in regular classrooms, and typically small scale (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Such research is carried out, often collaboratively, by practitioners (teachers, principals, or others working in a school setting), who engage their students as active participants in the process rather than viewing them as research "subjects" (Avison, Lau, Meyers, & Nielsen, 1999; Brydon-Miller, Greenwood & Maguire, 2003; MacIsaac, 1996; Lovat & Smith, 1995; May, 1998; McKay, 2006; Stringer, 1996; Tripp, 1998). Burns (2010) focuses on the process of what she has termed *problematizing*, through which a practitioner considers an area of teaching that can be improved, questions the current process, and develops new ideas or alternatives to improve the educational outcomes.

While the terminology is slightly different, many authors have described the step-by-step process through which practitioners critically examine their educational situations. This process often begins with reflection, and can be led by questions related to persistent or significant problems students are having in class, or why the teacher's efforts in class are not producing the desired results (Nunan, 1992; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Richards & Lockhart, 1996). Once this initial focus is identified, discussing the situation with peers and colleagues can often help to further narrow the research question. Investigating what has previously been discussed related to the issue in the literature is also key (McKay, 2006).

Once a topic or question is identified and specified, planning a course of action is important (Burns, 2010; Ferrance, 2000; Lovat & Smith, 1995; Mills, 2000; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Richards & Lockhart, 1996). During this step, focus may be placed on determining what is occurring in the classroom setting to better understand the problem at hand, or if the problem is clear, steps that can be initiated to improve the situation can be identified. Action researchers need to determine what data is necessary to answer the research question or to evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention. Where, how, and when data can be gathered and later analyzed need to be considered. Here again, working together with peers and colleagues and consulting the literature are effective methods to pool resources and find and lend support.

After a plan (or methodology) has been formulated and then initiated, data is collected and analyzed. It is important to keep in mind that no plan will be executed exactly and flawlessly due to the organic nature of the educational and research processes. What is more important is to anticipate the necessity to alter the plan and make systematic and recorded notes of the logical alterations so that they can be reported in detail at a later time (Ferrance, 2000; McKay, 2006; Mills, 2000; Nunan, 1992; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Richards & Lockhart, 1996).

Once the analysis has been completed, reflection on what has occurred becomes the focus. What has been learned about what is happening during the educational process, or how effective the planned intervention was, are questions that can be addressed at this stage (Burns, 2010; Lovat & Smith 1995; O'Brien, 2001; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Richards & Lockhart,

1996). Through such critical reflection, curricular changes or innovative teaching methodologies, techniques, or assessments can be recommended (Richards & Farrell, 2005). A word of caution may be useful at this stage: results from research, particularly in the social sciences, including education, are rarely definite and finite. While research should and does provide a deeper understanding of what is occurring at a specific time and in a specific context, research often results in the formulation of more questions than it answers, leading to further reflection and investigation. Kemmis developed a frequently referenced representation of the action research process that illustrates how the investigative process leads to findings and conclusions, then reflection, and then on to further questioning and continued investigation in an ongoing process (1990, as cited in MacIsaac, 1996, Mills, 2000, and O'Brien, 2001).

The final step in the process is sharing your insights with others (Nunan, 1992; Richards & Farrell, 2005). While academic publications and conference presentations and proceedings are formalized avenues to share research results, other less formal or informal opportunities exist through school-based professional development activities or scheduled report-back or topic-based discussions. The nature of the way in which insights are provided to a wider audience is not as crucial as the process itself: sharing your experiences and knowledge with others concerned with the same or similar issues leads to the development of professional learning communities. Others are interested in what you as a teacher have to say about what you have observed and learned in your own teaching context. This step-by-step process is a hallmark of scientific study (O'Brien, 2001), and provides a framework that helps to ensure reliability and allows others to generalize your findings to their own teaching contexts.

Nevertheless, some teachers may be less than enthusiastic when considering the possibility of engaging in action research. One of the most common retorts may be that "I'm a teacher, not a researcher." While that job description may be accurate, as practitioners, we all engage in sharing our experiences with colleagues about what has happened in our classes. The action research process takes this a step further, beyond what happened in class, to why and how this happened in class, and how the learning process can be improved based on this more detailed understanding (Burns, 2010). Many practitioners engage in this process of reflection informally and individually, learning from their experiences (O'Brien, 2001). Action research systematizes this process of reflection so the knowledge we have gained individually can be shared and used by others to improve their teaching outcomes, providing an opportunity for the teacher to become the researcher (Waters-Adams, 2006).

Time is a concern and is seen as a major constraint to engaging in action research by many teachers. There would be little argument that a teacher's schedule is hectic and busy, yet within that schedule, many of the activities related to action research may already be present. Often teachers reflect on the successes or challenges faced in their classes and share these insights with colleagues (reflection). Teachers often consider and implement methods or techniques to improve their teaching or assessment of students (taking action), consider the impact of those changes on students' motivation, achievement, or attitude (data collection and analysis, further reflection), and again share these experiences with colleagues. The action research process takes the activities in which teachers are already engaged and provides a basis for a more systematic consideration of what occurs in the classroom setting so that the complexities of the learning process can be highlighted, leading to a better understanding of problems, challenges, and solutions (Burns, 2010).

While many teachers may suggest that doing research is not part of their job, most would agree that maximizing the effectiveness of the learning process in the classroom is. To accomplish this goal, understanding and studying the teaching process in your own context is necessary

(Lovat & Smith 1995). This greater understanding allows teachers to be able to make informed decisions about what they do in their classrooms, and assess their own results (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Mills, 2000; O'Brien, 2001). Such empowerment and realized success can lead to positive change, professional development, and a renewed interest and passion for teaching (Burns, 2010).

Lastly, teachers may question what they can add to what is already available in the literature, incorrectly assuming they have nothing new to say. As mentioned earlier, a hallmark of research is that it leads to more questions than conclusions. There continue to be questions to be investigated, problems to be solved, new and innovative methodologies and techniques to be implemented and evaluated, and lessons to be learned from our shared experiences: all teachers can contribute to this dialogue within the professional community as to how they have understood the learning process more clearly in one way or another (Ferrance, 2000; Waters-Adams, 2006).

Action research has also been criticized. This approach to research does not often result in the identification of clear cause and effect relationships or the testing of hypotheses in the traditional sense. Others have questioned the reliability or generalizability of action research findings (McKay, 2006). Yet others support the approach. While attention to methodology to ensure reliability is a concern, Nunan (1992) points out that action research activities "fulfill a professional development function" and should be considered acceptable forms of research "if they address questions of interest to other practitioners, if they generate data, and if they contain analysis, and interpretation . . ." (p. 19). While the debate related to the validity of action research and with which criteria the process should be evaluated will continue, what is clear is that there is support for the approach and that action research has become common in social science investigation, particularly in education (Avison, Lau, Meyers & Nielsen, 1999; Berg, 2004; Checkland & Holwell, 1998; Susman & Evered, 1978; Waters-Adams, 2006).

What many can agree on is that the goal of action research is improving the teaching and learning process (Richards & Farrell, 2005) through systematic investigation and problem solving (Waters-Adams, 2006). The process is collaborative, carried out by teachers studying themselves and their students (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Waters-Adams, 2006). Few would discount the benefits of the action research process, not only as a tool to understand the teaching process more clearly, but also to further personal professional development (Burns, 2010; Ferrance, 2000; Waters-Adams, 2006).

The authors in the current volume examine issues in language teaching in Asia, from both classroom-based and broader perspectives. Timor considers choices surrounding the language of instruction in elementary and secondary schools in Israel. Basing her research on teachers' attitudes and practices, she offers a model for the effective use of students' mother tongue in the language-learning classroom.

Two papers look at the way technology is integrated into the learning experience of our students. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is the subject of Nicholes' research. He investigates to what extent CALL can support students' understanding and learning of grammatical structures at a university in China. A paper by Nguyet and Mai in Vietnam looks at the effective use of video as an instructional tool to teach conversational strategies.

Overall motivation of students is the topic of the article by Chen. In Taiwan, the author examines how the broader social context affects the way in which students view themselves as language learners and speakers of a second language.

Writing is the focus of other papers in the teaching practice section in this volume. In Japan, science and engineering students in a university in Japan combined computer-based text analysis with more traditional paper-based analysis while studying writing structures. In this context, Oghigian and Chujo found that students at varying levels benefitted from this approach. In Vietnam, Loan examines how to best prepare students for international standardized tests. She presents a communicative model of writing instruction that is appropriate to the cultural context of both Vietnam and other countries in the region. In Japan, Bankier examines the effectiveness of feedback provided on students' writing. He sought to determine the impact of alternative modes of feedback on students' successful writing revisions.

Two papers here focused on approaches to learning and related activities of students in Vietnam. Diem reports on the success of a project-based learning approach, resulting in an alternative to the traditional classroom environment. The results indicate that both students' skills and motivation were improved. Also in Vietnam, Thanh and Huan researched the effectiveness of task-based learning with students at a community college. Focusing on developing students' vocabulary, the authors found that motivation and achievement increased with such an approach.

There are many who contribute their time and energy to make this publication a success. Most important are the practitioners, teachers, and researchers throughout the Asian region who continually strive to provide exceptional learning opportunities to their students. Special appreciation is extended to those authors who were willing to share their knowledge and experiences with a wider audience through the inclusion of their papers in this volume. The additional contributions of the Advisory and Editorial Board members, as well as the Assistant Editors, Mr. Chea Kagnarith, Dr. Ben Fenton-Smith, Ms. Deborah Harrop, Mr. John Middlecamp, and Ms. Alice Svendson are crucial in the publication of each volume, and are very much appreciated. Additionally, Ms. Kelly Kimura, as the Assistant Editor-in-Chief, plays a leading role in bringing together the contributions of the authors in each issue. I would like to express a great deal of gratitude for her consistent professionalism and dedication to the development of each issue.

The future of language education in Asia will continue to change, adapt, and meet new challenges. By taking on the role of not only practitioners, but also researchers, educators in the region can not only have an impact on the effectiveness of their actions in the classroom and the achievement of their learners, but may also make an impact on the policy initiatives and the development of the field in the region. Who better to research and evaluate teachers in the region, than those teachers themselves?

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Research

Use of the Mother Tongue in Teaching a Foreign Language

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Abstract

This article addresses the controversy around teacher use of the mother tongue (MT) in foreign language (FL) teaching. Empirical and theoretical knowledge advocates that the MT should be incorporated by teachers in FL classrooms. The present study was conducted among 112 English language teachers in Hebrew-speaking elementary and secondary schools in Israel. The research tool was a questionnaire designed specifically for the purpose of the study. Findings demonstrate that teachers' overall attitude towards MT use in FL classrooms is positive; they report using the MT for teaching purposes and a small number use the MT for classroom management purposes. Elementary and secondary school teachers differ in their use of the MT. Findings may be useful to language education policy-makers in designing more formal and concrete guidelines to help FL teachers use students' MT judiciously. The article offers a model for an efficient use of the MT in FL classrooms.

The question whether the students' mother tongue (MT) should be used in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Israel has been re-opened to controversy recently, after many years in which the MT was discouraged on pedagogical grounds in the teaching of foreign languages (FL). This situation exists in many other countries where English as a foreign language (EFL) is taught, given the processes of globalization worldwide, e.g., German as the MT in EFL lessons in German schools or Thai as the MT in EFL classrooms in Thailand. In the state of Israel, it was difficult in the past for teachers to incorporate Hebrew as the MT into EFL classrooms for two reasons: (a) Israel was founded by Jews who immigrated to Israel from all parts of the world; thus, many English teachers were newcomers and did not speak Hebrew themselves, and (b) classes were characterized by a multiplicity of MTs. However, later, when Hebrew became a commonly spoken language for more teachers and students alike, teachers often avoided using it in teaching because it was considered pedagogically inappropriate.

In Israel, EFL lessons start in Grade 2 or 3 of elementary school. Although most secondary school graduates speak English at different levels and may be exposed to English on the Internet and television, English is rarely heard or spoken on the streets.

This article addresses the controversy that revolves around the pedagogical appropriateness of teacher usage of students' MT in FL teaching. It presents findings from a study conducted

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among English teachers in a Hebrew-speaking environment: elementary and secondary schools in Israel.

Literature Review

Change of Attitudes Over Time Towards the Use of the MT

For over 120 years, the prevailing attitude in FL teaching has been anti-MT and discouraging of the use of students' MT in language teaching (Cook, 2001). The main principle of FL teaching was monolingual or intra-lingual, rather than cross-lingual (Cook, 2001). The prevailing method of instruction was the Direct Method, which did not encourage the use of comparative analysis between the MT and the FL. MT-free lessons were a "badge of honor" (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009, p. 24). Translation had pejorative overtones in teaching and was often avoided. Only more recently have researchers concluded that "translation provides an easy avenue to enhance linguistic awareness" (Cook, 2001). They recognized the importance of comparative analysis between the MT and the FL and that the FL does not aim at substituting for the MT. This paradigm shift to the Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis has occurred recently (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; Cummins, 2007) and indicates a welcoming attitude to teacher usage of students' MT in teaching. However, in practice, the "judicious and principled use" of MT (Turnbull, 2001, p. 536) remains an unresolved issue; teachers often feel guilty for straying from the path of teaching using only the FL and feel the use of the MT is professionally inappropriate (Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Swain, Kirkpatrick, & Cummins, 2011).

An example of how attitudes have changed over time can be seen in the *English Curriculum for All Grades* (Spolsky, Ben Meir, Inbar, Orland, Steiner, & Vermel, 2001), which refers to the usage of MT as an integral part of English language education. The curriculum consists of "four domains of language abilities and knowledge: social interaction, access to information, presentation [of information], and appreciation of literature, culture, and language" (p. 8). Appreciation of language in particular "is based on the principle that learning a new language provides an ideal opportunity to become aware of the nature of language, how languages are structured, and the differences between languages" (p. 11). Thus, students can develop awareness into their own MT by the teacher's use of their MT in teaching EFL. Despite changes in attitude, the present curriculum does not provide clear-cut instructions with regard to the acceptable extent of teacher use of students' MT.

Arguments Against Teacher Use of Students' MT in FL Classes

Arguments against teachers using students' MT are mainly pedagogically based. Turnbull (2001), in his response to Cook (2001), mentions that students do not benefit when teachers over-rely on using their students' MT, particularly when the EFL teacher is the sole linguistic model and main source of FL input. Classroom situations can create various experiences for students such as real-life situations through simulations (McDonald, 1993); if the teacher uses the MT to a great extent, students may lose the chance to benefit from these situations. In addition, teachers who overuse their students' MT deprive these learners of an important language process in which students try to make sense of what is being said in class (Ellis, 1994). The use of the FL in class influences students' achievements and proficiency in FL because of the experiences they gain in class.

In addition to pedagogical factors, followers of the monolingual principle support the compartmentalized language pedagogy that inhibits the interdependent nature of the MT and the FL. Hence, they perceive the introduction of the MT in FL teaching as an inhibitive factor. The three assumptions of the monolingual principle in FL teaching as reflected in Howatt's (1984) history of teaching EFL are: (a) FL teaching should be done exclusively in the FL; (b)

translation between the MT and the FL should be avoided; and (c) in bilingual programs, the two languages should be kept separate.

Arguments in Favor of Teacher Use of Students' MT in FL Classes

The issue of teacher use of students' MT in FL teaching has been explored with a variety of languages and mainly relates to the Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis, to universal principles of foreign language acquisition, and multi-linguistic models. Studies on the transfer between the MT and the FL indicate a linguistic interdependence (Jessner & Cenoz, 2000) with regard to multiple subsystems (phonological, syntactic, semantic, and textual) within the MT and FL systems (Herdina & Jessner, 2002). Bouvy (2000) supported the theory of cross-linguistic transfer with regard to literacy skills. Similarly, Hauptman, Mansur, and Tal (2008) used a trilingual model for literacy skills among Bedouins in Israel whose MT is Arabic and found that it "created a support system for Arabic, the mother tongue, through English [FL] and Hebrew [MT2]." Other researchers stated that the MT catalyzes the intake process of the FL (e.g., Ellis, 1994), as well as saves time and enhances understanding (Turnbull, 2001). Cook argued that a "systematic use" (2002, p. 403) of the MT would minimize the guilty feelings of teachers when using their students' MT. Cook (2002, p. 23) also argued that "given the appropriate environment, two languages are as normal as two lungs."

A number of psycho-linguistic arguments contribute to the stance that advocates teacher use of students' MT:

1. Teacher use of the MT cannot present a threat to FL acquisition because learners already have a language basis from their MT. Because of this basis, learners are more socially developed and have more short-term memory capacity and more maturity when they become acquainted with the FL (Cook, 2002). Therefore, there is no competition between their MT and FL.
2. The belief in the 20th century was that the MT and the FL make distinct systems in the brain. However, evidence shows that languages are interwoven in the brain in vocabulary, syntax, phonology, and pragmatics. Therefore, FL teaching should match the invisible processes in the brain and should not be separated from the MT, assuming that the ability to transfer between languages (code-switch) is a normal psycho-linguistic process (Cook, 1996; 1997).
3. The process of foreign language acquisition involves cognitive, social, and emotional factors that are inseparable and equally related to the MT and the FL.

It seems then that the sole use of the FL by the teacher is not justified theoretically or practically.

Implementation

While advocating the use of the MT in FL teaching, it is important to note that there are no criteria with regard to the right dosage of the use of the MT. Quite often teachers feel at a loss and decide to avoid using the MT altogether because they fear this will contradict the stance supervisors and headmasters take. Cook (2001) presents criteria for the judicious use of the MT: efficiency, learning, naturalness, and external relevance. *Efficiency* relates to doing something more effectively through the MT. *Learning* concerns whether FL learning is enhanced by the use of the students' MT. *Naturalness* relates to whether students prefer the use of their MT rather than the FL regarding certain topics. Finally, *external relevance* is whether the MT helps students with uses of the FL they may need beyond the classroom. The last criterion may be associated with the use of English for communication purposes; it may refer to

everyday topics, life skills, and pragmatic language such as conversing or participating in online chats in English.

Although these criteria may be useful to clarify the general teaching circumstances for using the MT with regard to a certain class or topic, they certainly cannot substitute for formal guidelines that should be defined practically and in terms of specific topics, situations, and frequency. Examples for such guidelines could be "while teaching tenses that exist in the student's MT, you may use comparisons to facilitate understanding" or "avoid literal translations and try synonyms or pictures instead." The use of clear instructions may reduce teachers' feelings of anxiety and guilt, and legitimize the use of the MT to a certain extent.

The language areas for which teachers would prefer to use the MT should also be considered. Previous studies indicate that teachers use the MT in EFL classrooms to explain new vocabulary and grammatical structures (Cook, 1997), organize tasks and give instructions (Cook, 2001), and maintain discipline in class and create rapport with individual students (Macaro, 1997).

Goal of the Study

The study focuses on the examination of English teachers' attitudes and ways of implementing the MT in EFL teaching in elementary and secondary schools in Israel. EFL teachers' attitudes will be explored as part of the abovementioned paradigm shift. Findings will demonstrate what pedagogical stance teachers in Israel take with regard to Hebrew as the MT in EFL classes.

After understanding teachers' attitudes, the study will attempt to explore whether there are gaps between attitudes and implementation. Findings will exemplify more concretely the situations and topics in which teachers feel that the use of the MT will facilitate the learning and teaching process.

As the study comprises two populations of teachers, a comparison will be made. Findings will allow for the identification of differences between elementary and secondary school teachers. The findings will also enable supervisors of language education and decision-makers to design formal guidelines that will help teachers use the MT in a balanced and effective manner.

Methodology

The participants in this study were 112 randomly selected EFL teachers in Israel: sixty elementary school teachers (EST), and fifty-two secondary school teachers (SST). All are speakers of Hebrew and have more than five years of teaching experience. Their ages range from 35 to 55. The research tool was a questionnaire that included seven questions (Timor, 2010). The first two questions related to teachers' attitudes with regard to the use of Hebrew as the MT in EFL teaching, and the remainder of the questions related to implementation issues (frequency of use, grammatical topics, language areas, and other uses). The comparison between the two groups of teachers was conducted with reference to all questions.

Three of the questions (1, 2, 3) are on a Likert Scale. Whereas in Questions 1 and 3 the score of 1 indicates an anti-MT attitude and the score of 5 indicates a pro-MT attitude, in Question 2, the score of 1 indicates a pro-MT attitude and the score of 5 indicates an anti-MT attitude. Three questions are multiple-choice (4, 5, and 6), and four are open-ended (1, 2, 5, and 7). Questions 1, 2, and 5 provide both a multiple choice / Likert part and an open-ended part. The full questionnaire can be found in the appendix. Findings were calculated and are presented in percentages.

Findings

Question 1: Arguments for MT Use in EFL Teaching

The teachers' answers indicate that they can see the benefit of using the MT in English lessons (EST, 100%; SST, 87%). When asked to explain their reasons, teachers brought up the following arguments:

- "The MT helps me to explain complicated issues."
- "Young learners in lower grades demonstrate limited understanding of English. I find that when I speak in English and they don't understand what I am saying, they mentally zone out, so a good mix of the FL and MT is useful to keep them going."
- "Weaker students will be discouraged and frustrated if I do not use their MT; for them it is easier to understand grammar and vocabulary when they get an additional explanation in their MT."
- "Explanations can be more thorough in the MT."
- "Explanations in the MT provide confidence."
- "Explanations in the MT save time."
- "In many cases the use of the MT clarifies issues in the shortest and most efficient way."
- "Because of the overpopulated (42 pupils), heterogeneous classes, the use of the MT is a must, or else my weak pupils will become disruptive."
- "The MT reduces anxiety among students with learning disorders."

Question 2: Arguments Against MT Use in EFL Teaching

Only 13% of SST are against the use of the MT in teaching EFL. When asked why, teachers responded with the following arguments:

- "If I make more efforts to prepare teaching aids, students can understand me without using the MT."
- "If the need arises, I will make the students use the MT rather than myself."
- "We should always explain in English, only if there is no other choice we should switch to the MT."
- "Teachers should be committed to the FL in their teaching although students will always try to drag them into using the MT."
- "All immersion programs advocate the use of the FL in order to upgrade students' knowledge."
- "Once the teacher starts using the MT, there is no way back."
- "The use of the MT slows down the process of learning."

Question 3: Frequency of MT Use in EFL Teaching

More than half of the EST and SST ranked the frequency of their use of the MT as average (3 on the scale): 65% and 62% respectively. The lower reports of frequencies (2 on the scale) were observed among SST (32%), more than among EST (15%). The higher reports of frequencies (4 and 5 on the scale) were observed among EST (20%), more than among SST (6%).

Question 4: MT Use for Grammatical Structures Not Found in the MT

Most teachers use the MT to teach grammatical structures that do not coincide between the MT and FL (EST, 70%; SST, 75%). The examples teachers provided for structures that exist in English but do not exist in Hebrew were the present perfect, present progressive, and past progressive, or structures that have specific rules in English, such as back-shifting in reported speech.

Question 5: MT Use in Teaching Grammar

Both EST and SST report using the MT to a great extent in grammar teaching: EST use the MT mostly to teach simple tenses (75%), modals (29%), and comparative forms (16%); SST use the MT to teach complicated tenses (87%), modals (63%), conditionals (56%), relative clauses (44%), reported speech (44%), and phrasal verbs (25%).

Question 6: MT Use in Teaching Language Skills

SST report using the MT to teach vocabulary (75%), reading comprehension (25%), and writing skills (18%). EST also use the MT to teach vocabulary (79%), reading comprehension skills (54%), and writing skills (33%).

Question 7: Other MT Uses in FL Teaching

Other cases exist in which teachers make use of Hebrew as the MT. SST use it when they need to explain complex issues, give instructions, handle discipline problems, or explain grammar rules; EST use the MT to explain complex issues, teach learning habits, give instructions, or handle discipline. Both groups use the MT to create rapport with individual students.

Discussion

This article revolves around the question of whether or not the MT should be "brought back from exile" (Cook, 2001, p. 419). It aims at the examination of English teachers' attitudes and ways of implementation with regard to the use of Hebrew as the MT in EFL teaching in elementary and secondary schools in Israel. This was done by conducting a study among EFL teachers and presenting their attitudes and practical implementation regarding the use of Hebrew as the MT in class. Findings demonstrate that teachers' attitudes are positive and most of them see the benefit of using the MT in EFL teaching. Both EST and SST clearly saw the benefit in the use of Hebrew as the MT in the English classroom and only 13% of SST objected to it. At the same time, it seems that the use of the MT is moderate among both EST and SST (65% and 62% respectively). In addition, the higher frequencies of use of the MT were found among EST, whereas the lower frequencies were found among SST. These findings support Cook's (2001) criterion of "learning," indicating that teachers' attitudes may derive from their experience that the introduction of the MT in EFL classes enhances learning.

Teachers reported using Hebrew mainly for structures that do not coincide with structures of English. This may be accounted for by the fact that it is more difficult to explain structures that do not exist in one's MT, so the use of the MT might facilitate understanding. For example, in Hebrew, there is one present tense and one past tense, whereas in English there are four present tenses (present simple, present progressive, present perfect, present perfect progressive) and four past tenses (past simple, past progressive, past perfect, past perfect progressive). Another example is reported speech, which is difficult for speakers of Hebrew because the rules of back-shifting in time and place do not exist in Hebrew. It is noteworthy that both EST and SST use the MT for structures that do not coincide between English and Hebrew. These findings support Cook's (2001) criterion of efficiency, indicating that some topics can be taught more effectively through comparisons to the MT.

SST use the MT for more grammatical structures than EST, because the structures taught in secondary schools, according to the *English Curriculum for All Grades* (Spolsky et al., 2001), are more numerous and complex (e.g., complicated tenses, conditionals, modals). Students in secondary schools are more capable of writing in English and must meet standards for graduation. Therefore, it is quite surprising that both SST and EST reported the use of the MT to teach vocabulary to almost the same extent (75% and 79% respectively). Obviously, teachers

referred to different levels of vocabulary, and SST possibly referred to idioms and figurative language, which may explain the findings.

The following example further advocates the use of the MT in EFL teaching with regard to vocabulary and also clearly demonstrates the relationship between language and culture: an EFL teacher needs to teach the idiom "making a mountain out of a molehill," which has an equivalent in Hebrew: "making an elephant from a fly." If the teacher is able to provide the equivalent idiom in the students' MT, it will facilitate the explanation, which, in this case, requires higher language skills and an understanding of figurative language. The obvious relationship between language and culture that needs to be set in language lessons is sometimes neglected for reasons of ethics or pedagogical inappropriateness. However, this methodology might help students benefit from the comparison of the idiom in English and their MT. In this case, the MT should be considered an enabling factor because it enhances understanding in a quick, efficient way, and does not present an ethical issue at all. Therefore, the belief that the use of the MT in FL classrooms should be discouraged might be limiting rather than enabling language learning.

A small number of teachers report on relying on the MT for a variety of classroom management situations as well, such as setting rapport with an individual student, giving instructions, or handling discipline problems. These findings make sense because it might sound artificial to use the FL to scold when both the teacher and the student have the same MT. These findings agree with Cook's (2001) criterion of naturalness as well as that of other researchers, by indicating that the student would feel more at ease in their MT with regard to certain classroom activities (e.g., Brooks & Donato, 1994).

Conclusion

The contributions of this study are threefold:

Firstly, it offers an updated picture of this controversial issue: the findings demonstrate a positive pedagogical stance teachers in Israel take with regard to Hebrew as the MT in EFL classes, and reveal that the MT is used for teaching topics in EFL such as grammatical issues or reading comprehension, and in a small number of cases, for specific classroom management situations.

Secondly, this study helps in paving the way onwards: the findings show that teachers already use Hebrew as the MT with an average to high frequency and for different purposes in the classroom, but do so with guilt feelings of almost "cheating the system." This situation calls for an urgent need to devise standards and formal guidelines for using the MT in FL classrooms by ministries of education and policy-makers. However, until guidelines are provided, in meetings with supervisors or subject coordinators, FL teachers should advocate for the MT as a teaching tool in classroom practice by indicating that using the MT works. They should argue that the use of the MT saves time and enhances understanding, particularly among slow learners, and that comparisons between the two languages enhance understanding about how languages "behave." This will eventually move the discussion toward greater acceptance of the MT by policy-makers who rely on theories and worldwide trends, but also on teaching practices.

Finally, the study suggests a model that depicts the link between the MT and the FL on a continuum (Figure 1). Whereas in earlier times, professionals strongly discouraged the use of the MT in class altogether (Option 1), minimized it (Option 2), and advocated a maximum use of the FL, the present study advocates enabling the use of the MT at different degrees

depending on circumstances (Option 3), but at the same time maximizing the use of the FL. Circumstances include the level of class, the goals of teaching, learners' age and motivation. Of course, unlimited use of the MT by the teacher should not be considered a feasible option because it clearly contradicts the objectives of teaching FL. It is recommended that further research be conducted on a larger number of participants and dwell on the more specific differences between EST and SST, so that more specific guidelines could be designed for them.

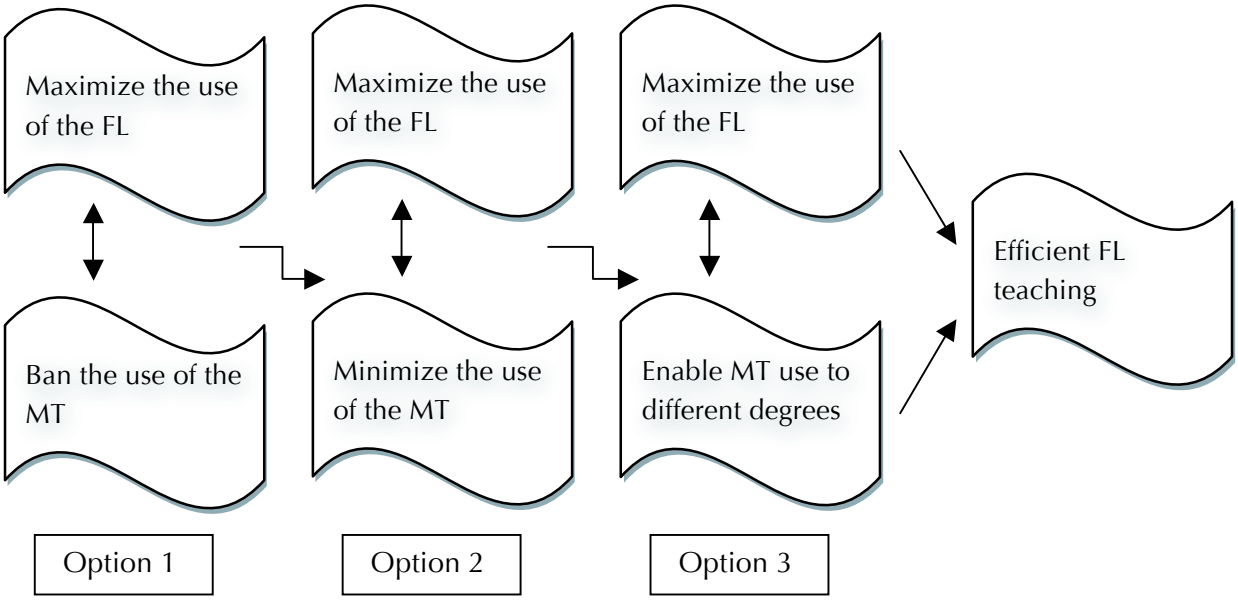

Figure 1. The continuum of use of the MT in FL teaching

Since updated research and brain theories as well as classroom reality welcome the MT in FL classrooms, it is high time that FL teachers realize that they do not "betray" their mission and profession by introducing the MT into their classes. The MT is an important asset that facilitates FL teaching, and teachers must understand that a broad exposure for students to the FL does not justify a ban of the use of the MT in teaching the FL. The present study supports the stance that the combination of the already existing positive attitudes of EFL teachers coupled with clear guidelines by policy-makers will lead to a systematic "front-door use" rather than the former "back-door use" of the MT in teaching foreign languages.

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Appendix
Questionnaire

(Timor, 2010)

The Use of Hebrew as the MT Among EFL Teachers

Dear Teacher, the questions below refer to the use of Hebrew as a mother tongue in EFL teaching. In questions on the scale of 1-5, 1 means *strongly disagree*, whereas 5 means *strongly agree*. Your opinion is highly appreciated.

1. I can see the benefit of using Hebrew in EFL teaching 1 2 3 4 5 (circle relevant answer) mainly because _____
2. I'm against using Hebrew in EFL teaching 1 2 3 4 5 (circle relevant answer) mainly because _____
3. I refer to Hebrew in my EFL teaching 1 2 3 4 5 (1 = *quite rarely*; 5 = *quite frequently*).
4. I refer to Hebrew mainly when structures in English and Hebrew coincide / do not coincide (please circle relevant answer).
5. I refer to Hebrew when I teach the following grammatical topics (please circle relevant answers and specify):

   Tenses (which ones?) _____

   Relative Clauses (which ones?) _____

   Comparative Forms (which forms? "as…as" "...er than" "the ...est")_____

   Reported Speech (reported questions? negations? statements?)_____

   Phrasal Verbs (e.g., _____)

   Modals (which ones?) _____

   Conditionals _____

   Other _____
6. I refer to Hebrew when I teach vocabulary / reading comprehension skills / writing skills / other_____ (circle relevant answers)
7. I use Hebrew in the following cases in my EFL teaching_____

Thanks a lot for your input!

Accuracy Development Through Computerized Storytelling: A Preliminary Study on Student-Generated CALL

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Abstract

This preliminary study explores how student-generated computer-assisted language learning (CALL) materials can help students acquire verb tenses. The participants were 23 Chinese university sophomores in an integrated-skills English Composition 101 course. The students were earning U.S. Bachelor of Business Administration degrees in China through a cross-border program. After taking pre-tests, students viewed a video that contextualized tenses. Students then wrote narratives using target tenses and incorporated images using presentation software. After showing presentations to classmates, students took post-tests. Open-ended questionnaires measured interest in CALL and grammar learning. Target verb forms were the simple present, present progressive, present perfect, simple past, past progressive, and past perfect tenses.

This preliminary study responds to Chinese Department of Higher Education directives. In China, teacher- and test-centered language classes have dominated, sometimes producing learners with weak speaking and listening skills. The Chinese government, however, has called for change. Lu, Li, and Du (2009) have discussed the Department of Higher Education's call for more student-centered, communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches in English language classes, especially through the incorporation of computer-assisted language learning (CALL). Shen and Suwanthep (2011) have given direction to China-based English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers, showing that "e-learning constructive role plays" represent one way CALL can improve Chinese students' speaking abilities (p. 23). Li (2007), however, listed challenges to change in Chinese educational settings, such as hardware and software availability, a shortage of technical and theoretical knowledge regarding CALL, stubborn traditional teaching models, and questions about how to manage students engaged with CALL materials. This study seeks to contribute to the body of research guiding English teachers in China toward sound CLT and CALL use, with implications for teachers across Asia.

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CALL, Task-Based Learning, and Sociocultural Theory

According to Gruba (2004), "CALL is now widely regarded as the central acronym to refer to studies concerned with second language and computer technology" (p. 623). This definition of CALL, according to Shield (2009), provides a relatively broad "interpretation of the ways in which computers may be used by language learners (and teachers)" (p. 13). Chapelle (2002) described CALL materials used in the classroom as having the following qualities: "(1) language learning potential, (2) learner fit, (3) meaning focus, (4) authenticity, (5) positive impact, and (6) practicality" (p. 499). In addition to meaning-focused tasks, Godwin-Jones (2009) emphasized a need for pre- and post-CALL form-focused activities and suggested that putting students into active roles "makes it more likely that form features will be noticed and retained" (p. 8). Fang (2010), Tschichold (1999), and Milton (1997) also acknowledged the importance of learner autonomy and motivation in CALL environments, while Gobel (2008) recommended teachers help students "understand how each individual task type relates to learning and student progress" to keep students motivated and on task (p. 15).

Sociocultural theory offers helpful ideas for meaningful, motivating CALL design and use. According to Vygotsky (2002), all learning begins in social environments; later CALL researchers have drawn from Vygotsky and proposed CALL materials simulate or describe real-world situations so that language can become internalized into privatized thought, which enables "autistic and logical thinking" (Vygotsky, 2002, p. 35). Papert (1980) advanced the idea of using simulated microworlds to present tasks that simulate a controlled reality. Since then, others have argued for the benefits of providing students with simulated realities (Hmelo & Day, 1999), arguing that language encountered in simulations can be later used for higher mental processes.

Building from Vygotsky, Lantolf (2002) asserted that ESL students' engagement with tasks and technology leads to cognitive development in terms explained by sociocultural theory, since both task-based second language (L2) learning and first language (L1) acquisition hold a theoretical parallel. In this view, computer-assisted tasks should help L2 learners become meaningful members of a target culture. Foley (1991) supported the importance of tasks, arguing that "task-based learning figures as an 'enabling process' that allows learners to recognize their agency as linguistically constituted beings [and] meaningful member[s] of the target linguistic community" (p. 73). In addition, Donato (2000) expressed that learners should not be "separated from the cultural institutions and historical conditions in which they learn" (pp. 46-47), offering further theoretical justification for task-based learning. Artifact mediation also involves technology (Lantolf, 2002), and Gánem-Gutiérrez (2003) provided a "blueprint as to how [researchers] can implement and empirically investigate computer-based tasks in the second language classroom from a sociocultural perspective" (p. 94), saying computer-based tasks should involve "collaboration, negotiation of meaning, and problem-solving endeavors" (p. 97).

Since Slamecka and Graf (1978) found self-generated texts were more memorable than already-generated texts, researchers and designers of materials have looked for ways to recreate the generation effect. By creating simulations that ask learners to generate language for unique, memorable situations, teachers may help students recognize language as it exists in the target sociocultural context, which in turn, according to Vygotsky (1978), facilitates the internalization of privatized speech. Willis (1996) composed a helpful framework for task-based teaching to guide teachers: (a) a pre-task step, in which students review the task's topic, view models of language used to complete the task, and engage in other activities that help them learn language needed to finish the task; (b) a task-cycle step, in which students work through the task while being monitored by the instructor, after which they report on the steps

taken to succeed; and (c) a language-focus step, in which students analyze language the task elicited, allowing them to continue practicing forms used in real-world social contexts.

Such a framework also ensures that needs of language learners are met, such as the input, feedback, and output needs mentioned by Mayo and Pica (2000), who said that communicative tasks alone cannot meet the needs of EFL learners. Accordingly, tasks should do more than allowing learners to generate output in real-time, in simulated real-world situations, in response to authentic native speaker (NS) input. Tasks should also provide learners opportunities to internalize aspects of language used in the simulated reality through self-scaffolding (by which learners help themselves develop through cognitive or social language learning strategies as well as through the use of their L1) and, additionally, peer-scaffolding, which remains an important aspect of tasks informed by sociocultural theory. To return to Gánem-Gutiérrez's (2003) work, peer-scaffolding happens when tasks encourage collaboration, negotiation of meaning, and problem-solving (p. 97). Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976), Antón (1999), and Donato (1994) further detailed ways EFL learners can scaffold each other, just as an instructor might scaffold a beginner.

Integrating CALL and multimedia to simulate worlds may present challenges. For instance, Caspi, Gorsky, and Privman (2005) reported participant frustration with video, caused by "context retrieval, involving rewinding and replaying" as well as "cognitive overload" when learners had to listen, watch, and also take notes (p. 44). To avoid such overload, Sabet and Shalmani (2010) recommended "presenting texts as narrations so that both visual and auditory channels are engaged" (p. 31). Ultimately, if its integration prevents frustration, multimedia can scaffold language learners. Multimedia researchers have supported the use of still images, text, and sound in language acquisition (Erben, Ban, & Castañeda, 2009; Hubbard, 2009; Jones, 2004), and more specific research on video has further justified its use (Çakir, 2006; Hemei, 1997; Lin, 2010; Rhodes & Puhfahl, 2003). Akbulut (2007), as well as Kim and Gilman (2008), explored how multimedia leads to vocabulary acquisition at a much more rapid rate than other more analytic approaches to vocabulary teaching. Jones (2004) found that words, when contextualized with pictures, were more likely to be remembered. Hu and Deng (2007) attributed greater vocabulary retention to students' paying more attention to instruction that coupled sound and image. Finally, Smidt and Hegelheimer (2004) noted the potential for incidental vocabulary acquisition through CALL involvement.

Research Method

Research Design and Primary Objective

Utilizing a one-group pre-test and post-test design, this preliminary study explored how student-generated CALL in an integrated-skills writing class could help Chinese learners acquire verb tenses. Surveys elicited feedback about motivation toward working with computers, and open-ended questions further sought feedback on student motivation and perceptions toward CALL. Helping students do well in content courses, such as marketing, figured as a long-term objective by recycling marketing vocabulary and key concepts for language learning.

Participants

Twenty-three sophomore-level students working toward a U.S. degree of Bachelor of Business Administration at a Chinese university associated with a U.S. higher education institution agreed to participate in the study. The participants were Chinese nationals in their early twenties. All students had taken freshman-level Oral English courses taught by teachers who

are native speakers (NS) of English. All learners were taking a sophomore-level Oral English class, an English Composition 101 class (in which this study was conducted), and a Marketing class—all of which were taught entirely in English by NSs. Outside of these classes, students used the Mandarin dialect in educational contexts, as well as provincial dialects.

Instruments

Students completed 30 sentences with missing verbs on the pre- and post-tests (see Appendix A). Each of the six target verb tenses was represented by five sentences. Each item in the test was worth one point; the maximum score was 30.

A video podcast entitled "Office Talk" (EF podEnglish, n.d.) was shown. A structure of "watch," "learn," and "try" organized the video lesson, with study points of past continuous questions and answers. Though the video did not present authentic NS input that learners might actually encounter in the real world, this three-part structure resembled the framework for task-based teaching that Willis (1996) developed; it also resembled Afsar and Rasheed's (2010) proposed pedagogical framework for grammar teaching. The video alternated scripted office conversations with cloze exercises, in which viewers mentally filled in blanks to complete sentences with missing verbs.

Students generated CALL materials using presentation software. Since students in this major were taking a marketing class, they were asked to narrate an experience with their favorite brand. The task was meant to recycle key marketing concepts and vocabulary. Student narratives involved two parts: in the first part, students told the story as if describing it to a friend on the phone in real time; in the second part, students recounted the event as if it had occurred in the past.

A motivation assessment survey (see Appendix B) measured student-reported motivation to study English after class, asking students to circle a choice from the following list: never, only when I have to, sometimes, most of the time, and every day. The open-ended questionnaire elicited students' thoughts on using presentation software to learn grammar and to teach grammar to classmates.

Procedures

On Day 1, (a) learners finished a verb tense accuracy pre-test; (b) the researcher explained the objectives of the following activities, and learners viewed the video; (c) learners were given verb tense explanation sheets, on which tenses were diagrammed and explained for reference. Learners were randomly placed in groups of three to four members. In groups, learners planned and drafted narratives as if describing them to a friend in real time on the phone and, secondly, as if recounting the event so that tenses concerning the past time would most accurately convey meaning. The ultimate CALL products were supposed to introduce tenses to fellow students in a way similar to how the video podcast presented and contextualized tenses.

On Day 2, (d) learners met in a computer lab on campus. There, they retrieved Internet images to complement narratives and complete early drafts of presentations. Groups finished presentations at home for the next class.

On Day 3, (e) groups showed presentations (see Appendix C for an example) to learners in the audience, who were supposed to complete checklists to see whether presenters had incorporated all target verb tenses, and (f) learners took post-tests.

On Day 4, (g) learners completed the motivation-assessment instrument.

Results and Discussion

Paired t-tests were performed on the mean scores of pre- and post-tests. In addition, a second t-test examined groups placed into levels of Excellent (with scores ranging from 30-27 out of a possible 30), Good (26-24), Average (23-21), Low (20-18), and Weak (<17). Finally, surveys and open-ended questionnaires measured motivation.

Learner Acquisition of Verb Tenses Through Student-Generated CALL

While the mean did improve among students by two points (18.78 to 20.78), the paired t-tests on the mean scores of pre- and post-tests (0.111) indicate this overall improvement lacked significance (Table 1).

Table 1

Mean Score Comparisons Between Pre-Test and Post-Test

Student *N*	Assessment	Mean	*SD*	Sig. (2-tailed)
23	Pre-test	18.78	9.33	-
23	Post-test	20.78	8.44	-
		+2.00	5.77	0.111

The findings underscore weaknesses of the preliminary study as a final analysis; it also highlights the inability to definitively determine the effectiveness of student-generated CALL used here. Standard deviation also reflected a feature of the student sample: learners of early-beginner English skills were mixed with students of early-intermediate levels.

Table 2

Mean Score Comparisons Between Pre-Test and Post-Test Among Student Groups

Student Groups	*N*	Assessment	Mean	*SD*	Sig. (2-tailed)
Excellent	5	Pre-test	28.2	0.45	-
(30-27)		Post-test	25.6	4.28	-
			-2.6	4.16	0.234
Good	4	Pre-test	25.00	0.00	-
(26-24)		Post-test	27.25	2.22	-
			+2.25	2.22	0.135
Average	6	Pre-test	22.17	0.75	-
(23-21)		Post-test	26.17	2.86	-
			+4.00	3.41	0.035
Low	0	Pre-test	--	--	--
(20-18)		Post-test	--	--	--
			--	--	--
Weak	8	Pre-test	7.25	5.09	-
(<17)		Post-test	10.50	4.38	-
			+3.25	8.01	0.289

Another t-test (Table 2) looked more closely at pre-test-determined student groups. Although all groups but one (Excellent) showed increased mean scores, the t-test indicated that only the Average group showed significant improvement (0.035).

Though the mean score improved (+3.25), the Weak group's improvement was least significant of all. The weakest students seemed to have very little understanding of what the target verb tenses communicate. Working through the study's process did not allow significant change to occur within that group, although some members were able to improve their performance modestly by, it seems, merely noticing context cues (such as adjectivals that signaled which tenses most accurately communicated the appropriate meaning). Although between the Good and Average groups, only the Average group showed statistically significant improvement (0.035 to the Good group's 0.135), these two groups were among the most significantly changed groups from pre- to post-test. As opposed to the Weak group, whose members showed a lack of understanding of all tenses except for the immediate simple present, the Good and Average group members seemed able to turn attention toward lower-frequency tenses (such as the past perfect progressive) since they had already internalized the form-meaning connection of more accessible tenses (e.g., those with present aspects: simple present, present perfect, and present progressive).

Notably, the Excellent group from pre-test results performed worse on the post-test (though significance of that change is also lacking). Though the standard deviation for Excellent students' post-tests (4.28) was higher than in pre-tests (0.45), it is still worth exploring reasons why Excellent students made greater accuracy errors *after* working through the study. Afsar and Rasheed (2010) have written on the negative effects of teaching situations that make grammar rules explicit without giving enough time for learners to internalize forms through skill integration, specifically through speaking, listening, writing, and reading. "Excellent" students, who had perhaps drawn on procedural knowledge in the pre-test, may have questioned previously formed hypotheses (declarative knowledge) about when and how to use the target verb forms, overthought the post-test prompts, and hypercorrected in response to heightened attention to forms. Ultimately, this finding seems to be an additional justification for combining form-focused and meaning-focused activities in task-based CLT lessons, since making rules explicit (and not following through with meaning-focused activities over a longer period of time) sometimes results in students' forming inaccurate hypotheses of how to use explicitly presented grammatical forms.

CALL and Motivation to Learn Grammar

Genç and Aydin (2011) noted that "age, gender, grades, compulsory and optional status, types of high school, parents' educational background, the period of the participant's language-learning process, and the experience toward computer use have effects on the learners' motivational levels" (p. 185). In this preliminary study, learners who scored within the Excellent to Average levels on the pre-test reported higher motivation levels to study English outside of class. This supports the findings of Masgoret and Gardner (2003), who identified motivation as the primary indicator of achievement in CALL classrooms. In open-ended questionnaires, learners from the Excellent to Average levels also reported unanimous interest in using CALL. Many reasons may account for this. For instance, Hong and Samimy (2010) found that "students with higher computer literacy skills were more likely to have positive attitudes toward incorporated CALL modes than did those with lower computer literacy skills" (p. 340). Others have noted the importance of learner confidence in task performance (Coryell & Chlup, 2007; Hubbard, 2004; Ushida, 2005), with Ayres (2002) finding that face validity results from the value learners append to using computers for language acquisition. Excellent to Average learners may have more experience using computers, may have more confidence in

their ability to use English through past experiences of success, and also may be more likely to view a teacher's in-class activities as having internal and external validity. Ultimately, all Excellent to Average learners in the study expressed opinions that CALL could help them acquire tenses.

Table 3

Analysis of After-Class Motivation to Learn English by Student Group

Group	*N*	Mean	*SD*
Excellent	3*	3.33	0.58
Good	4	3.25	0.50
Average	6	3.33	0.82
Low	0	--	--
Weak	8	2.50	0.76

Note. 5 = every day; 4 = most of the time; 3 = sometimes; 2 = only when I have to; 1 = never
*Two of five participants from the pre-test Excellent level were absent on the day of questionnaire administration.

Learners who scored within the Weak level, however, showed lower motivation and also were more likely to believe CALL, at least as used in this study, lacked external and internal validity. Student 8, for instance, who scored within the Weak level, reported, "I think if the [presentation software] is useful to writting class or to our future, we should learn it, but, if it not maybe, we will lose time on making [the presentation]." In addition, when asked whether using presentation software was a good way to learn grammar, Student 6, who also scored within the Weak level, wrote, "I do not think so. We always want to use some pictures or somethings to help us show the story means, but not use some verb tense exchange or words to show our thinks."

Among participants in this study, most had never used presentation software before, and all had no choice about whether to study English. These factors may have influenced measurements of motivation, as well as perceptions of the benefits of using CALL to learn grammar. Ultimately, teachers cannot downplay student perceptions. As Cooper and McIntyre (1994) have noted, "pupils exhibit a clearer and more detailed understanding than their teachers of how particular strategies interact with their learning processes" (p. 94). This preliminary study's limitations may have been more apparent to struggling learners, and this apparent lack of face validity may have stunted motivation and performance.

Directions for Future Research

The most obvious limitation of this study concerns time constraints. The researcher had educational and departmental objectives to meet with these participants and failed to adequately pace procedure steps. Another limitation concerned the small participant sample. Future research can prevent such limitations by the allocation of more time in a pre-task stage. More video and CALL materials can model student-generated products. In addition, students need more practice in creating CALL materials so that the technology becomes easier to use and products better scaffold peers. Finally, delayed post-tests could further measure the effectiveness of student-generated CALL and the acquisition of tenses.

Implications for Teachers

Teachers looking to apply these findings might follow this sequence as adapted from Willis' (1996) framework for task-based instruction:

1. Pre-task step (Noticing): One to two hours might be spent on gleaning meaning from texts that exhibit target verb tenses, either contextualized in real-world English or given in a student's presentation from an earlier lesson. As in Afsar and Rasheed's (2010) pedagogical model for grammar teaching, this beginning stage could be highly communicative and meaning focused, allowing students to consider the language in a top-down process.
2. Pre-task step (Planning): One to two hours might be spent on students planning their presentations. Students can sketch "frames" on paper and write out the language needed to explain the situation to fellow students. Students will implicitly notice and implicitly reconstruct target verb forms.
3. Task-cycle step (Creating): Three hours may be needed for students to put together presentations; ideally, this can happen at a university computer lab, where the teacher can monitor and assist. Collaboration and explicit manipulation of target forms should happen here (Afsar & Rasheed, 2010).
4. Task-cycle step (Communicating): While students are presenting their narratives that contextualize target forms, the audience should listen actively, perhaps to complete information-gap tasks. After each presentation, audience members might paraphrase narratives and also comment on funny situations or memorable parts of the speakers' experiences. In this way, the audience will need to reconstruct target verb forms for clear communication.
5. Language-focus step (Reinforcing): Students should work on form-focused activities that elicit declarative knowledge about when target forms usually appear in real-world language.

With institutional imperatives to prepare Chinese students in particular, as well as Asian learners in general, for real-world communication in English, it behooves ESL teachers in China to seek out ways to incorporate CLT to help prepare learners who desire further education in ESL contexts where educators and administrators untrained in TESL may decry both real and perceived language deficiencies (Swan, 2003; Zamel, 2000) and to ready learners for local contexts that may require real-world interaction with native and non-native speakers of English. With further research, student-generated CALL in which learners tell stories may prove to provide another interesting, motivating way to boost students' accuracy through implicit and explicit grammar activities. Presented as part of an integrated-skills, task-based approach, student-generated CALL may assist in preparing Asian learners for authentic real-world and academic ESL contexts where speakers may expect high levels of grammatical accuracy.

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Appendix A
Pre- and Post-Test

Name: _____
*This is not a test. This is not for a grade.

COMPLETE these sentences with a verb form.

(Run) I always _____ in the morning.
(Give) My teacher _____ us a lot of homework every day.
(Eat) Every night, I _____ rice.
(Make) My mother _____ excellent food whenever I go home.
(Study) I _____ English one hour every day.
(Sleep) My friend _____ right now.
(Bring) The waiter _____ our food right now.
(Take) I _____ an exam right now.
(Cut) The man _____ my hair right now.
(Wait Right now, I _____ for my friend.
(Eat) I _____ lunch already.
(Travel) She _____ to several countries before.
(Pass) She _____ the TOEFL exam already.
(Finish) He _____ his homework already.
(Date) He _____ a girl before.
(Win) In 2008, China _____ many gold medals in the Beijing Olympics.
(Be) In 2008, there _____ a big earthquake.
(See) I _____ a beautiful bird this morning.
(Call) My friend _____ me this morning on the phone.
(Come) I _____ to Sias in 2007.
(Play) When I opened the door, my friends _____ the computer.
(Study) Students _____ in the library when the lights turned off.
(Sing) The children _____ when I opened the door.
(Sleep) My friend _____ when I called her on the phone.
(Shine) The sun _____ when I woke up.
(Eat) I wasn't hungry. I _____ already when my friend brought me food.
(Finish) By the time I got home, my roommate _____ her homework already.
(Go) I wanted to see my friend, but when I arrived, she _____ already.
(See) I wanted to watch a movie with my friend, but he _____ the movie already.
(Leave) I could not go home. When I got to the train station, the train _____ already.

Appendix B
Motivation Assessment and Open-ended Questionnaire

This is not a test. Just answer these questions about using PPTs to learn grammar.

(1) Do you enjoy practicing English after class? Circle one:

a. Never
b. Only when I have to
c. Sometimes
d. Most of the time
e. Every day

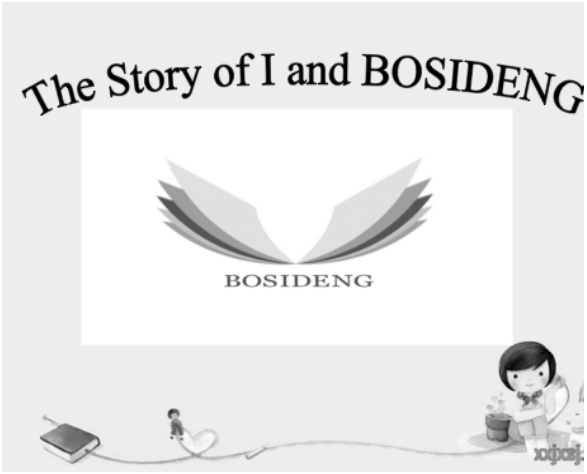
(2) What do you think about writing stories to learn grammar?

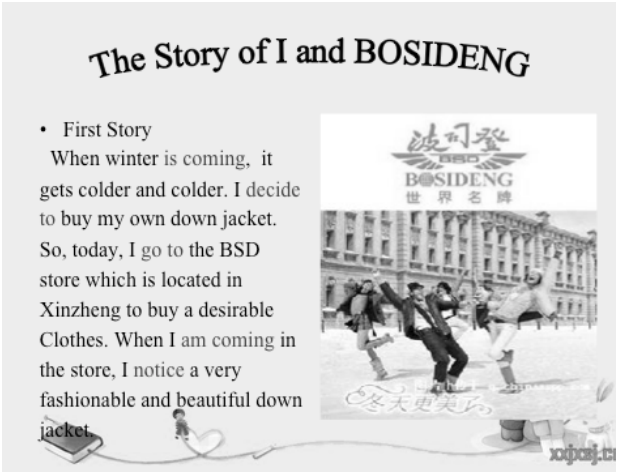
(3) What do you think about using PPT to write stories?

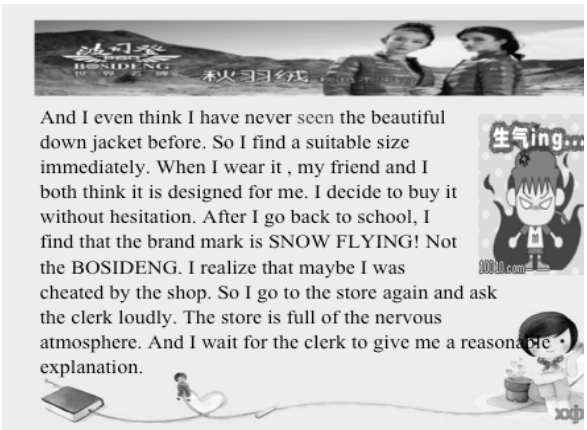
(4) Do you think using PPT to write stories is a good way to learn grammar? Explain.

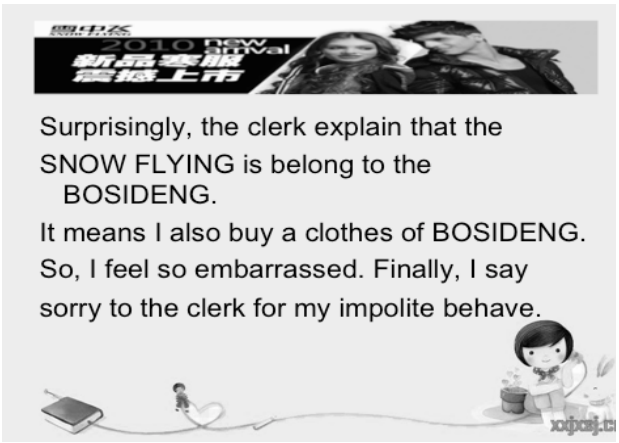
(5) Do you think students can use PPT to help other students learn grammar?

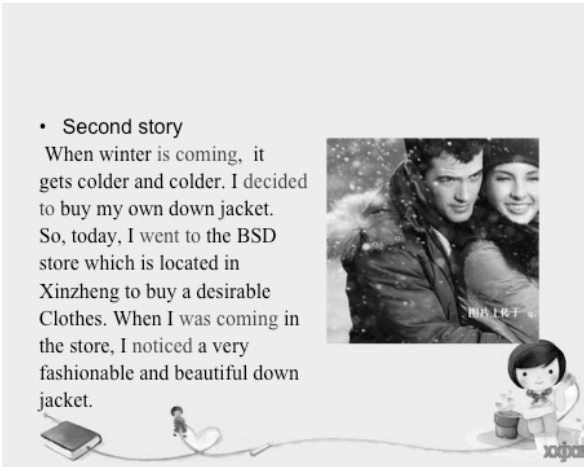
Appendix C
Student Example of a Presentation

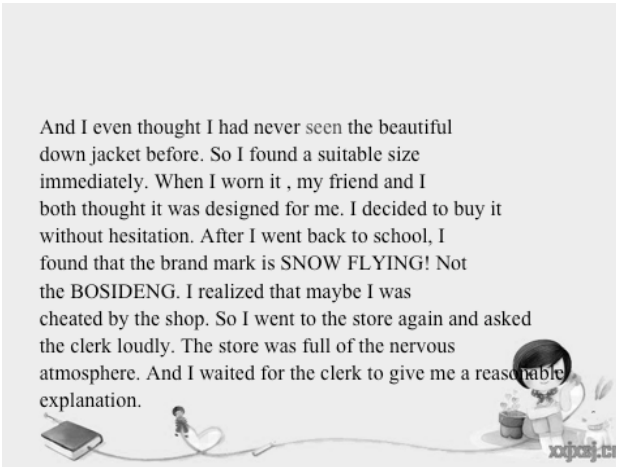












Teaching Conversational Strategies Through Video Clips

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Abstract

This study explores the effects of teaching conversational strategies through video clips on learners' speaking performance. It was designed as an experimental study conducted with two groups of English majors. All participants received six weeks of instruction on four conversational strategies. The control group received direct instruction from the teachers' handout while the experimental group viewed six video clips and participated in observation tasks. Data was collected via pre- and post-tests on speaking performance and semi-structured interviews. The results showed that after the treatment with video clips, (a) the frequency of the use of these strategies increased, (b) the learners' speaking performance was enhanced, (c) there was a low correlation between the frequency of strategy use and the learners' speaking performance, and (d) the learners expressed a positive attitude towards the treatment.

After years of learning English, many students in Asia cannot communicate with confidence or success to meet the demand to use English for their careers (Chuanchaisit & Prapphal, 2009; Kawale, 2011; Xiao & Petraki, 2007). This is also a common problem for Vietnamese learners, even university graduates (Phương Nguyên, 2006). Possible reasons for learners' inefficiency in communication are low levels of language proficiency, lack of vocabulary to express ideas, shyness or lack of confidence, lack of an environment for practicing and using English, or simply lack of some necessary strategies to maintain a conversation (Thanh Ha, 2008).

Although some dynamic and proactive learners can improve their communicative abilities in their own way (finding chances to talk to English speakers or watching English films or TV programs), finding effective ways to prepare students for spontaneous communication is one of the biggest challenges for all current language teaching methodologies (Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1994). Hence instruction in class is important to provide students with conversational strategies to help them avoid or overcome communication breakdowns. Dörnyei and Thurrell (1994) stated that conversational strategies are particularly helpful for language learners who frequently face difficulties in conversations, because these strategies provide them with a sense of security in the language.

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Depending on the teaching context, conversational strategies can be taught to students through various ways, for instance, through picture dictation tasks (Kebir, 1994), pair-taping (Washburn & Christianson, 1995), or telephone conversation role-plays (Ting & Lau, 2008). In the current study, video clips were applied in teaching conversational strategies, as Hill (1989) claimed that carefully handled videos could provide a good base for speaking tasks. For EFL / ESL learners in Asia, the teaching of conversational strategies through video clips may also familiarize them with how conversational strategies are used in native English speakers' cultures.

Literature Review

Conversational Strategies

According to Riggenbach (1998), conversational strategies are certain conscious ways to help maintain communication (as cited in Walter, 2008). Dörnyei & Thurrell (1994) took these strategies to mean "an invaluable means of dealing with communication 'trouble spots', such as not knowing a particular word, or misunderstanding the other speaker" (p. 44). Finally, Kehe and Kehe (2004) proposed that conversational strategies are helpful methods for speakers and listeners who wish to continue a natural flow of conversation.

Conversational strategies are also viewed as a sub-division of communication strategies; sometimes the two terms *conversational strategies* and *communication strategies* are believed to be interchangeable. The term *conversational strategies* indicates those strategies which help speakers to maintain a conversation and to achieve their communicative goal.

Types of Conversational Strategies

Conversational strategies could be divided into nine types in order of significance: message adjustment or avoidance, paraphrase, approximation, appeal for help, asking for repetition, asking for clarification, interpretive summary, checking (for comprehension and confirmation), and use of fillers/hesitation devices (Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1994).

Impact of Conversational Strategies on Communication

Conversation is a natural part of life in which people exchange information and create and maintain social relationships. However, not many English learners can make sense of conversational rules or patterns; hence, they face trouble in keeping their conversations going (Walter, 2008). Using conversational strategies has been suggested as one effective way to overcome problems in maintaining conversations. Dörnyei and Thurrell (1994) proposed that with these strategies, learners are well equipped to handle instances of naturally arising conversations. Walter (2008) also claimed that conversational strategies help raise learners' awareness of both form and function of the language. In short, conversational strategies are worth attention because they can facilitate interaction and fluency.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Video Clips in ESL / EFL Classes

Teaching English using video clips can be beneficial for students. Firstly, "video can give students realistic models to imitate for role-play [and] can increase awareness of other cultures by teaching appropriateness and suitability" (Arthur, 1999, as cited in Çakir, 2006, p. 68). Moreover, it is stated that only 7% of information is sent through words; the remaining 93% of communication is non-verbal (Mehrabian, 1972). Swan (1996-1997) proposed videos display a range of verbal and non-verbal behaviors that may make the material more meaningful to learners. Likewise, Gower, Phillips, and Walters (2005) stated additional information, provided by facial expressions, gestures, and physical backgrounds, makes the material easy to understand. In addition, when watching videos, learners can become more inquisitive and

intellectually stimulated (Denning, 1992). Videos are also useful for group work, for tasks from which learners can apply appropriately what they have learned with higher cognition skills (Denning, 1992). EFL learners can enrich their knowledge of culture when viewing authentic communication among native speakers (Rammal, 2006). Generally, video clips are a useful medium to help expose learners to the target language, from which many aspects of the language, including conversational strategies, could be acquired efficiently.

Apart from the benefits, by using video clips in ESL / EFL classes, teachers may face some difficulties. According to Çakir (2006), the main disadvantages are cost, inconvenience, maintenance, and in some cases, fear of technology. Moreover, the video sound and images, or quality of the copies, may not be ideal. Teachers should be especially well trained in using and exploiting videos and video clips, otherwise, their usage may become purposeless for students.

The Study

This study was conducted in an in-service center in the Mekong Delta. At in-service centers, learners who work attend university courses. The courses, for a variety of majors, can be on weekdays, weekends, or at night.

The learner participants are English majors, but most of them usually had difficulty in maintaining conversations although they had been provided with vocabulary and some basic structures. The problem was presumably in the way they negotiated the meanings in conversations. Thus, the researchers wanted to discover if and how this problem could be reduced or avoided when conversational strategies were taught to these students.

The conversational strategies in this study focus on checking for comprehension, confirming, asking for clarification, and using fillers / hesitation devices for two reasons. First, these strategies are believed to help learners negotiate the meanings in conversations and avoid communication breakdown. Second, the choice of these strategies was also decided by the choice of the clips and the content of the course textbook chapters so that the strategies could be taught and practiced effectively.

The research aimed to examine the effects of teaching conversational strategies through video clips on learners' speaking performance and to obtain insights into learners' attitudes towards the treatment.

The study was conducted to answer the following questions:

1. Does teaching conversational strategies through video clips increase the frequency of the use of these strategies by the learners?
2. Does teaching conversational strategies through video clips enhance the learners' speaking performance?
3. Is there any correlation between the frequency of the learners' use of conversational strategies and their speaking performance after the study?
4. What are the learners' attitudes towards learning conversational strategies through video clips?

From these questions, it was hypothesized that teaching conversational strategies through video clips could increase the frequency of the learners' use of these strategies and enhance their speaking performance; moreover, there could be a connection between the learners' use of conversational strategies and their speaking performance; and finally, the learners' attitudes towards learning conversational strategies through video clips would be positive.

Methodology

Research Design

This experimental research was implemented with a two-group design. The two groups attended the same listening / speaking course for first-year students, which included a six-week supplementary course on four types of conversational strategies (checking for comprehension, confirming, asking for clarification, and using fillers / hesitation devices). The course classes and the treatment were primarily conducted in English; Vietnamese translations or explanations were used only when learners were confused. The control group received handouts and direct instruction on the strategies while the experimental group was taught with six video clips and video clip-based tasks. After the strategies were taught, both groups practiced the strategies with some pair and group activities such as discussion and role-plays.

Participants

Teachers. Four teachers, three Vietnamese and one American, were involved in the research. One of the researchers was the teacher of the experimental group. Another Vietnamese teacher who had been teaching English for over five years and was taking a master's course in English Methodology taught the control group and also rated tests with the researcher. The third Vietnamese teacher assisted in transcribing the recordings of the students' performance to measure the frequency of strategies used, as well as to check the learners' scores in case they were not compatible. The American teacher, a professor who teaches English using films and video clips, helped evaluate the video clips' content and the conversational strategies used in the clips and checked the transcripts of some clips.

Students. Sixty-four first-year English majors in two English language listening / speaking classes held in the evening at an in-service centre in the Mekong Delta participated in this study. The participants are from different socioeconomic backgrounds, and range in age from 18 to 32 years old. They were randomly divided into an experimental group and a control group whose general language ability was believed to be similar, based on their admission requirements. The participants were considered to be at the beginner level. Six of 32 participants in the experimental group, two with the highest, two with the average and two with the lowest scores, selected on the basis of their achievement in their speaking performance post-test, were individually interviewed on their attitudes towards conversational strategy instruction through video clips.

Research Instruments

Two speaking tests (a pre-test and a post-test) and semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect quantitative and qualitative data for the study. The pre-test was given to the participants in both groups at the beginning of the study to measure the frequency of conversational strategy use and also to confirm both groups were at similar levels. All participants discussed the assigned topic in pairs with seven discussion questions (see Appendix A) for approximately five minutes. The post-test, which was given after the six-week intervention program, aimed at examining the change in the learners' speaking performance within and between the two conditions. This test had the same content as the pre-test, which was adapted from the textbook. That is, each pair had seven questions to discuss the similarities and differences of cities and towns.

A comparison was then made of the results of the pre- and post-tests of the same group to see whether there were any significant improvements in speaking performance and whether the frequency of use of these strategies by the two groups increased after the supplementary course. The learners' pre- and post-tests were recorded, transcribed, and then graded on the

same marking scale, comprising five components: range, accuracy, fluency, coherence, and interaction. All five components of the marking scale were used to grade speaking performance; the fifth component – interaction – was directly related to strategy use.

The semi-structured interviews, conducted in Vietnamese, served as a source of qualitative data to gain an insightful understanding of learners' attitudes towards conversational strategy instruction and the use of video clips in conversational strategy instruction. Of the eight interview questions, four focused on what learners thought of the conversational strategy instruction in the listening / speaking course and the other four aimed to discover learners' attitudes towards the use of video clips in the instruction of the strategies (see Appendix B).

Piloting

The pre-test and interview questions were piloted on two randomly chosen learners of English at a similar level with the participants at the school where the study was conducted to see if any modifications should be made. The interview questions were piloted on one learner in the research context. There were no significant changes after the piloting of the test and the interview questions.

Materials

The textbook used in the curriculum for the two groups was *Interactions Access Listening / Speaking*, Silver Edition, by Thrush, Baldwin, and Blass (2007). The students studied the first five chapters in this book. Six three- to five-minute video clips were carefully selected for the intervention program with the experimental group. The conversations in these clips were carried out by native speakers of English and did not contain subtitles. Five of the clips were compatible with the five chapters of the aforementioned textbook and the sixth clip served as a review for all of the strategies used in the supplementary course. The vocabulary and structures used in the video clips were at the level of the students in the experimental group.

Although the two groups followed the same textbook, the lesson plans for the supplementary course were designed differently for each group to serve the objectives of the study. The participants in the control group were provided with a handout of four conversational strategies (see Appendix C). For every chapter (one to five), they practiced one strategy when discussing any issue related to the topic of the chapter with their partners. In each subsequent chapter, they practiced a new strategy and simultaneously reviewed the previous one(s).

For the experimental group, each lesson plan began with a video clip with a topic relevant to that of the corresponding chapter in the textbook. Video-based observation tasks that raised learners' awareness on which strategies were used, and why and how they were used then followed (e.g., students watched the clip and then checked off items in a list of expressions as they were heard, found examples of the speaker confirming his / her understanding, or found examples of the speaker checking the listener's comprehension). From every video clip, there were one or more strategies that could be utilized for maintaining communication; therefore, the learners might explore one or more strategies from one clip and review these strategies from another clip. The strategies explored from the clips were then explained by the instructor and summarized on the handout provided to the learners. Only the learners in the experimental group had access to the transcripts of the videos.

Data Analysis Procedures

First, the learners' speaking pre- and post-tests were recorded and transcribed to measure the frequency of conversational strategy use by the learners. The formula used in Lam's (2004)

study and in Kongsom's (2009) study was adopted to calculate the frequency counts.

$$F = \frac{T}{W} x100$$

F (frequency per 100 words)
T (total raw frequency of strategy use)
W (total number of words)

Second, the results of the pre- and post-tests, graded by two raters, were used to examine the learners' speaking performance before and after the intervention program. To assess the inter-rater agreement on each test, a correlation test was run on the mean of the scores given by the two raters. The average scores on the pre- and post-tests were then analyzed by a descriptive test and a paired- samples T test with the SPSS program to measure whether there were any significant changes in the two groups after the intervention. Third, a correlation test with SPSS support was conducted to check for the interaction between the frequency of strategies use and learners' speaking performance in the post-test.

The interviews with the six learners were transcribed and translated into English. The English version was then organized into two categories: similarities and differences among the answers to each question. The categorized data were finally interpreted to gain a more insightful perception on the learners' attitudes.

Analysis and Findings

Frequency of Conversational Strategy Use

Through the researchers' observation during the course, some learners' factors presumably violated the results of the tests, including infrequent class attendance, lack of basic vocabulary or structures, and uncooperative attitudes when taking tests. The researchers set the requirement of at least 100 words per conversation by the learners on the pre-test and post-test for the reliability and convenience of the study. Since some of the students' conversations did not meet this requirement and some recordings were of poor quality, eventually the frequency was counted for 20 recorded conversations (ten pairs per group) for both the pre-test and post-test.

Table 1

Pre- and Post-Intervention Frequency of Conversational Strategy Use: Control Group

Conversational Strategies	*T / W*		*T / W* x 100 = *F*		Pre-Post Gains
	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test	
Checking for comprehension	1 / 2286	3 / 3161	0.04	0.09	+ 0.05
Confirming	1 / 2286	15 / 3161	0.04	0.47	+ 0.43
Asking for clarification	0 / 2286	3 / 3161	0.00	0.09	+ 0.09
Using fillers / hesitation devices	26 / 2286	35 / 3161	1.14	1.11	- 0.03

Note. *T* = total raw frequency of strategies use; *W* = total number of words; *F* = frequency of strategies use per 100 words.

As shown in Table 1, the use of three conversational strategies (checking for comprehension, confirming, and asking for clarification) increased. There were minimal changes in the

frequencies of strategy use for checking for comprehension (+0.05) and asking for clarification (+0.09), and rather significant changes in the frequency of strategy use for confirming (+0.43). The increased numbers of the three mentioned strategies indicated that the intervention in the control group led to positive changes in the use of strategies by the participants; however, the changes were slight.

In contrast, the frequency of using fillers / hesitation devices decreased in the post-test (-0.03). Moreover, the transcribed recordings showed that in both the pre-test and the post-test, the participants usually used *uh* or *um* whenever they hesitated. The decreased numbers showed that the learners hesitated in communication less than before the intervention. In other words, some of the participants paid attention to the appropriate use of filler devices in the post-test. One possible explanation for the learners' frequent use of *uh* or *um* whenever they hesitated was that teaching conversational strategies by giving the handout and explanations on the strategies could not raise learners' awareness much on how to use the strategies. As a result, just some learners could use the strategies appropriately when communicating with their partners.

Table 2

Pre- and Post-Intervention Frequency of Conversational Strategy Use: Experimental Group

Conversational Strategies	*T* / *W*		*T* / *W* x 100 = *F*		Pre-Post Gains
	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test	
Checking for comprehension	0 / 1627	12 / 2756	0.00	0.44	+ 0.44
Confirming	2 / 1627	21 / 2756	0.12	0.76	+ 0.64
Asking for clarification	1 / 1627	10 / 2756	0.06	0.36	+ 0.30
Using fillers / hesitation devices	28 / 1627	46 / 2756	1.72	1.67	- 0.05

Note. *T* = total raw frequency of strategies use; *W* = total number of words; *F* = frequency of strategies use per 100 words.

Table 2 shows that the use of three conversational strategies (checking for comprehension, confirming, and asking for clarification) increased in the experimental group. The changes in the frequencies of strategy use were +0.44 for checking for comprehension, +0.64 for confirming, and +0.30 for asking for clarification. The increased numbers meant more participants were able to use these three conversational strategies after the intervention. As with the control group, the use of fillers / hesitation devices decreased in the post-test for the experimental group (-0.05). However, the variety of devices used by the participants showed that the intervention program with video clips raised learners' awareness on the more appropriate use of various fillers / hesitation devices.

Speaking Performance

Descriptive statistics measured the mean scores of the two groups' speaking performance and paired-samples T tests compared the participants' speaking performance.

Analysis of the data shows that the experimental and control groups had similar speaking performance scores before the intervention program. However, after the program, the experimental group showed greater progress than the control group, as illustrated in Figure 1.

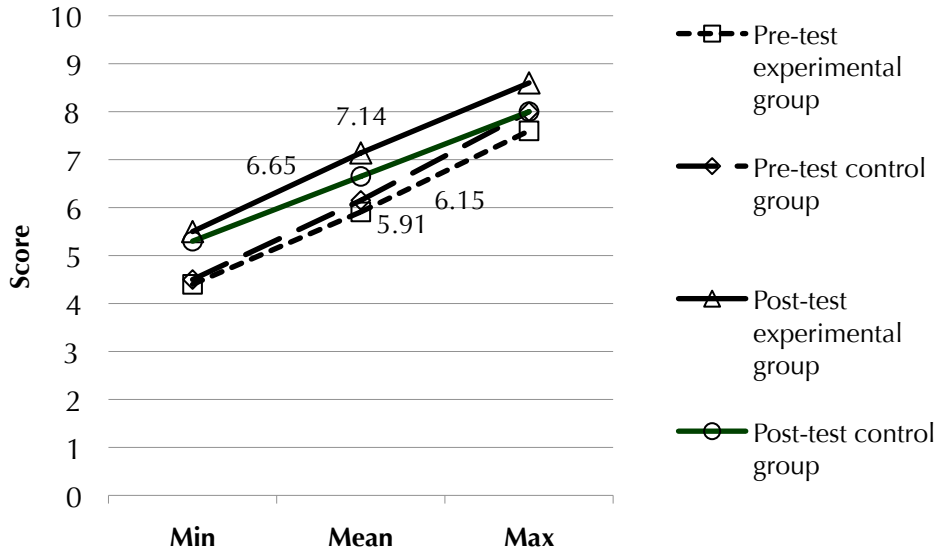

Figure 1. Pre- and post-test speaking performance scores of the experimental and control groups.

As seen in Figure 1, in the pre-test, both groups had similar minimum scores, but the but the experimental group gained slightly higher maximum post-test scores than the control group. However, the total mean scores of the two groups were similar at the beginning. After the intervention program, the lowest scores of the two groups, while increased, were still fairly equal, but the highest score of the experimental group was slightly higher than that of the control group. Noticeably, the total mean scores of the two groups in the post-test were different. The participants in the experimental group (M = 7.14) generally had much more improvement in speaking performance than the control group (M = 6.65). It is evident that using video clips in teaching conversational strategies was beneficial.

Correlation

A correlation test was conducted to check the interaction between speaking performance and frequency of conversational strategy use by the participants in the experimental group after the intervention. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Correlation of Post-Intervention Speaking Performance and Frequency of Strategy Use: Experimental Group

		Frequency	Mean
Frequency	Pearson Correlation	1	.447(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.048
	N	20	20
Mean	Pearson Correlation	.447(*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.048	.
	N	20	20

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

As seen from Table 3, the interaction between the speaking performance and the frequency of strategy use was statistically significant (p = .048). However, the correlation coefficient was small (r = .45). These figures mean that conversational strategies had a positive effect on the learners' speaking performance.

Interviews

Learners' attitudes towards learning conversational strategies. All six interviewees had a positive attitude towards receiving instruction in conversational strategies. For example, Learner 1 said, "I like the four strategies I have learnt. They are very useful and easy to apply in communication . . ." Learner 4's interest was in the teaching materials. She stated, "When learning these strategies, I like the materials the most because the clips are interesting. I can watch them in class, and sometimes when I cannot understand the clips well, I can watch them again at home. The handout of the conversational strategies is new, but necessary for me . . ." Generally, the interviewees found it useful to learn the strategies because these strategies could be applied in actual situations to solve oral communication problems and enhance fluency. The learners' positive attitudes showed that these strategies should be applied in listening / speaking courses since they help solve oral communication problems, enhance fluency, improve communication skills, and promote confidence.

Learners' attitudes towards conversational strategy instruction through video clips. The learners expressed positive attitudes towards conversational strategy instruction through video clips. Some reasons for their attitudes were that their learning and memorizing process was facilitated through hearing and watching simultaneously, the roles of the conversational strategies were revealed in the clips, the learners could learn how to use gestures in communication, and the clips attracted the learners' attention and motivated them to learn. Nonetheless, according to the learners' ideas on their difficulties and their suggestions, teaching the strategies through clips would be more beneficial if more careful consideration was given to the choice of clips so that they could be tightly woven into the curriculum.

Discussion

Research Question 1

The results showed that teaching conversational strategies through video clips could generally lead to greater use of the first three strategies. This result might be predictable since the use of video clips in teaching conversational strategies can attract learners' attention (Gower et al., 2005), and the observation tasks could raise the learners' awareness on the strategies used in the clips. Contrary to the researchers' hypothesis, the use of fillers / hesitation devices decreased after the intervention program. It was evident from the transcribed data that most of the participants showed excessive hesitation in their conversations before the strategy instruction, which led to the high frequency of filler / hesitation devices. Therefore, the total frequency of strategy use in the pre-test of both groups was high. After the treatment, the transcribed recordings from both groups illustrated that the strategy was utilized in a more appropriate manner. In particular, the recordings from the experimental group showed that in the post-test, many participants were able to use a wider variety of fillers / hesitation devices than in the pre-test.

Research Question 2

The results indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the post-test (p = .040) although the speaking performance of the two groups was the same in the pre-test (p = .368). The findings also showed that in the post-test, the experimental group made greater progress after the pre-test (p = .00). One possible explanation for the greater progress of

this group was that strategy instruction using video clips could better demonstrate how to avoid communication breakdown and enhance their conversational fluency. Moreover, it was observable that the clips could effectively illustrate how the conversational strategies are used with both verbal and non-verbal behaviors and equip the learners with more vocabulary, speaking expressions, and frequently used grammatical structures.

Research Question 3

The correlation test showed that there was a relationship between the learners' speaking performance and the frequency of strategy use in the experimental group (p = .048), but the correlation coefficient was small (r = .45). The performance of some participants was highly correlated with the frequency of their use of the strategies. However, some participants had a high frequency of strategy use, but their speaking performance was less than satisfactory, whereas other participants with a lower frequency of strategy use were able to perform well. As explained for Research Question 1, the reason for some of the less than satisfactory speaking performances is that the learners did not use the strategies appropriately, especially filler / hesitation devices. It could also be seen from the transcripts that using conversational strategies cannot enhance some weak learners' overall speaking performance if they lack essential vocabulary or grammatical structures. The results revealed that frequent use of conversational strategies could enhance the learners' speaking performance if they knew when and how to use the strategies in an appropriate manner.

Research Question 4

The interviews showed that the learners had positive attitudes towards learning conversational strategies through the video clips. Interviewees stated that conversational strategies played a vital role in solving oral communication problems, enhancing fluency, improving communication skills, and promoting confidence. Likewise, clips could facilitate the learning and memorizing process, display verbal and non-verbal communication in a dynamic context, and attract attention to the lessons. The interviewees recommended that more conversational strategies be taught with video clips.

Pedagogical Implications

For syllabus designers, it is vital to include conversational strategies in course books or teaching materials on listening / speaking since these strategies are very necessary for learners to maintain their conversations and avoid communication breakdown. These course books should be accompanied by additional materials, such as class audio CDs and video clips, to illustrate how the strategies are used in real situations. Additionally, the lessons on strategies should be designed in a manner that suits learners' levels.

EFL or ESL teachers of listening / speaking should flexibly and creatively choose conversational strategies, teaching methods, teaching materials, and tasks that suit learners' levels and needs. In the study, a method suggested as an effective way for teaching conversational strategies is raising learners' awareness of these strategies, particularly through watching video clips and doing observation tasks, and then practicing the strategies in role plays of similar situations. These tasks should be carefully planned and designed for each clip. In addition, when conversational strategies are taught through video clips, the topics, the content, the number and the length of video clips should be suitable for learners' levels. Moreover, unfamiliar words and expressions in a chosen clip should be explained in advance to minimize learners' problems when they watch the clip. Particularly for learners at a low proficiency level, video clips with subtitles – the first half of the clips does not include subtitles while the rest repeating

the same content does - could be used to motivate them to watch from which they can learn the strategies.

Conclusion

This paper focuses on teaching conversational strategies that help facilitate interaction and maintain fluency in conversations. Video clips, together with observation tasks, are suggested as an effective tool for carrying out this teaching process. Videos may also serve as a bridge to show Asian EFL / ESL learners how conversational strategies are used in native English speakers' cultures. Finally, it is vital for instructors to choose conversational strategies, video clips, and observation tasks to suit their learners' needs.

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Appendix A
Pre-Test and Post-Test

(Adapted from Thrush, Baldwin, & Blass, 2007)

Questions for Discussion

1. How are the buildings in a city? Are they different from the ones in a town?
2. What do you think about the traffic in a city? How about in a town?
3. Is the air in the city clean or polluted? Is it the same with the air in a town?
4. What means of transportation do people often use in a city and in a town?
5. Do a lot of people live in a city? How about in a town?
6. How is the lifestyle in a city? Is it different from the life in a town?
7. What are some similarities and differences between a city and a town?

Appendix B
Semi-Structured Interview
Learners' Attitudes Towards Conversational Strategy Instruction and Strategy Instruction Through Video Clips

Today we will together discuss learners' attitudes towards teaching conversational strategies and using video clips in teaching conversational strategies in listening / speaking class. Everyone has his / her own view on teaching conversational strategies and using video clips in teaching conversational strategies. Therefore, you can share your thoughts without concerning about them. Now we will begin.

Question 1: How did you feel when you received the conversational strategy instruction in class?

Question 2: Why did you have such feeling?
Is it because. . . ? (Some clues in case learners give positive answers but cannot explain)
- you can apply these strategies to the actual situations and solve your oral communication problems
- the strategies help improve your speaking skill
- the strategies help enhance your fluency
- the strategies give you more confidence
- the strategies expand your English knowledge and provide more speaking techniques

Question 3: What did you like about the instruction of conversational strategies?
Did you like. . . ? (Some clues in case learners cannot answer)
- the conversational strategies taught
- the opportunity to practice speaking English
- the teacher and teaching method
- the materials and handouts
- the content of the instruction
- the class atmosphere

Question 4: What didn't you like about the instruction of conversational strategies?
What about. . . ? (Some clues in case learners cannot answer)
- the application of some strategies
- the instruction session
- the opportunity to practice speaking English

Question 5: What do you think about instructing conversational strategies through video clips in class?

Question 6: Why do you think so?
Is it because. . . ? (Some clues in case learners give positive answers but cannot explain)
- the strategies are comprehensible because you can see as well as hear the strategies are being used
- the strategies are real-to-life because the speakers use them in daily life interaction
- you can understand the strategies easily when you can see facial expressions, the gestures and the physical background of the speaker
- the use of video clips motivates you a lot when you attend listening / speaking course

- video clips are more interesting, appealing and draw your attention better than other kinds of materials

Question 7: What did you like about using video clips in instructing conversational strategies? Did you think. . . ? (Some clues in case learners cannot answer)
- the content of the clips is interesting
- the strategies are clearly displayed through the clips
- the images attract your attention
- the video-based tasks are effective

Question 8: What didn't you like about using video clips in instructing conversational strategies?
Did you think. . . ? (Some clues in case learners cannot answer)
- using video clips wastes your time
- the quality of some video clips is not good
- some technical problems may occur when you are watching the clips
- you cannot hear or understand the speakers in the video clips

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

Appendix C
Handout of Conversational Strategies

(Summary of the four conversational strategies for the control and experimental groups)

Conversational Strategies

(Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987, and Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1992)

1. Checking for Comprehension

One speaker attempts to determine whether the other speaker has understood a preceding message.

Checking Questions	**Responses**
Ok?	Mmm. . .
Right?	Uh-huh. . .
Is that clear?	(Yes,) sure
Are you with me?	Oh, yes, go on.
Do/ can you follow me?	Of course.
All right?	Yes, get on with it!
Got/ get it?	More or less, yes.
Do you see what I mean?	Well, not really. . .
Do you know what I'm getting at?	Er. . .
Am I making myself clear?	Well. . .
Have I made myself clear?	
Does that make sense (to you)?	
Am I making sense?	
Do I make myself clear?	
Do I make myself understood?	
Do you understand me?	

2. Confirming

One speaker seeks confirmation of the other speaker's preceding utterance through repetition, with rising intonation, of what was perceived to be all or part of the preceding utterance.

If I (have) understood you correctly. . .	What you're trying to say is. . . ?
You mean. . . , right?	Are you saying that. . . ?
Do you mean to say. . . ?	So you're saying. . .
So you mean. . . ?	In other words, . . .
Do you mean. . . ?	If I've got it right, then. . .
Does that mean. . . ?	So am I right in saying that. . .
What you mean is. . . ?	So the basic idea is that. . .
What you're saying is. . . ?	So the general idea is that. . .

3. Clarification Requests

One speaker seeks assistance in understanding the other speaker's preceding utterance through questions, statements such as "I do not understand," or imperatives such as "please repeat . . ."

(I'm) sorry?
(I) (beg your) pardon?
(I'm) sorry, I didn't { hear / catch / get / understand } { the last part. / part about. . . / last/ first word. / . . . }

Sorry, what did you say?
Sorry, what was that again?
What was that word again?
Would / could you repeat that, please?
Would / could you repeat what you said, please?
Could you repeat that for me, please?
Would you mind repeating that?
Sorry, can / could you say that again please?
Sorry, can / could you repeat it more slowly?
Sorry, would you mind speaking a bit slower?
I'm sorry, I couldn't / didn't hear what you said?
Sorry, did you say ". . ."?
What? / You what? / When? / Where? / Who? / What kind of. . . ?
Hang on / just a minute, say that again?
I didn't quite catch that.

4. Using Fillers / Hesitation Devices

These are used to fill pauses, to stall, or to gain time to think when in difficulty (e.g., *Well, Now let me see*, or *The thing is*). Excessive and inappropriate use of fillers can be considered "bad" for native speakers and language learners alike, but in times of need, hesitation devices can be an invaluable aid to communication.

Well. . .
Um. . . / er. . .
Actually. . .
You know. . . / you see. . .
I see.
I / you mean. . .
As a matter of fact. . .
Let's see (now).
Now let me think / see.
I'll have to think about it.
Frankly, . . .
To be (quite) honest / frank, . . .
In fact, . . .
I wonder. . .
The thing is. . .
I see what you mean.
It's like this, you see. . .
Let's say. . .
What I'm trying to say is. . .
(Now) where should I start. . .
What I would say is. . .
How shall I put it?

Motivation and Possible Selves: An Interview Study of Taiwanese EFL Learners

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Abstract

This article is based on an interview study which the author conducted to conceptualize Taiwanese EFL learners' L2 motivation through using the possible selves framework. Based on this interview study, the recently developed L2 Motivational Self System exerts its explanatory power in the Taiwanese EFL context; the *ideal L2 self* and the *ought-to L2 self* are helpful in informing the analysis of student motivation. The ideal L2 self illustrated with empirical evidence corresponds to its theoretical construct proposed by Dornyei (2005). Interestingly, however, the ought-to L2 self found amongst the student interviewees seems inconsistent with the original theoretical concept as it probably contains a mixture of prevention- and promotion-focused instrumentality in studying English. The shaping of the Taiwanese ought-to L2 self by the broader social context will be discussed in this article.

Motivation is one of the most important variables of language learning, especially in second language (L2) acquisition. The extent of wanting to learn can make a difference in how willing and successful L2 learners can be. Discussions on L2 motivation theory were once dominated by goal-directed learning orientations in social psychological terms. Language learners would be classified as either integratively- or instrumentally-oriented (Gardner & Lambert, 1972) to achieve a needed proficiency in L2 use for identification with a specific ethnolinguistic group or for pragmatic gains. Over the past decade, this theoretical focus has shifted to a new realm of self and identity in explaining the internal identification process within learners' self-concept to stimulate motivation for L2 competence. Motivation to learn a particular language can be interpreted through inward aspirations towards certain kinds of linguistic, cultural, personal, or professional identities or possible future selves speaking the language fluently.

The new L2 Motivational Self System proposed by Dörnyei (2005; 2009b) facilitates this conceptual shift through the concepts of the *ideal* and *ought-to L2 selves*. Mental images of possible future L2-related selves that learners aspire to can motivate them to learn the L2 well. Some L2 researchers began empirical testing of the L2 Motivational Self System at different levels of education in different countries (e.g., Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Henry, 2009; Kormos & Csizér, 2008; Ryan, 2009; Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009) or tried to connect this approach and other established motivation constructs to examine its explanatory power (e.g., Kim, 2009; Lamb, 2009; Noels, 2009; Yashima, 2009). Large-scale studies generated empirical support for the applicability of the possible selves dimension of the L2 Motivational Self System in EFL

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contexts worldwide (e.g., the studies in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009a), adapting measurement techniques and statistical procedures. Such quantitative methods are important in testing and validating a new model in a variety of contexts.

Exploring the local uniqueness of EFL learners and any EFL context-specific features of their possible selves often necessitates a more qualitative approach. This article presents empirical evidence from an interview study of Taiwanese secondary-level EFL learners conducted with a possible selves framework.

Literature Review

The L2 Motivational Self System

Dörnyei (2005; 2009a; 2009b) followed the speculative conclusion in his study with Csizér (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002), and further developed the L2 Motivational Self System by drawing on the possible selves and self-discrepancy theories. As Markus and Nurius (1986, p. 954) suggested, possible selves refer to people's mental imagery of "what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming." These possible images of future selves are likely to fuel people's desire for goal accomplishment and to initiate motivating behaviors to become their possible selves. According to Higgins' (1987) self-discrepancy theory, it is human nature to approach pleasure and avoid pain by bridging the gap between current self-states and desired end-states. Therefore, among many possible selves held by the individual, the *ideal self* and the *ought-to self* function as the most influential future self-guides. Motivation and action can be energized to progress towards what one wishes to become. Drawing on Carver and Scheier's (1981; 1990) self-regulatory system, Higgins (1998) suggested that the ideal self with a promotion focus (e.g., advancement, growth, accomplishment) involves internally-driven motivation and self-regulation to achieve positive outcomes as the valued reference point. In contrast, the ought-to self with a prevention focus (e.g., safety, security) aims to avoid matches to undesired results through more externally-regulated duties, obligations, or necessities. Moreover, the ideal self is reflected by one's own future self-images, whereas the ought-to self represents the hoped for end-states others have for the individual (Higgins, 1987).

Dörnyei (2009b, citing Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006) further defined the ideal and ought-to selves and clarified the impact of immediate context and interpersonal relationships on one's construction of possible selves. Since possible selves are shaped by social influences, the ideal / ought-to self does not necessarily originate from the individual, but is probably a product of one's conformity with socio-contextual influences embedded within the wider world. The degree to which people internalize the ought-to self may differ from what others expect. Deci and Ryan (1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000; 2002) classified these varying levels of internalization of non-intrinsically motivating tasks in their Self Determination Theory [SDT], which illustrates the process of internalization along a continuum of the extent to which one's extrinsic motivation originates as part of the self. SDT has four subtypes of extrinsic motivation (external, introjected, identified, and integrated regulation), ranging from complete external to complete internal regulation of fulfilling achievement demands. The further one feels self-regulated, the closer one's extrinsic motivation approaches the self-determined end of the continuum. Drawing on SDT, Dörnyei (2009b) related the ideal self to identified and integrated regulation with higher degrees of perceived autonomy and the ought-to self to external and introjected regulation. Additionally, Ryan and Deci (2000) claimed learners may experience a situated orientation shift moving either way along the self-determination continuum. The facilitation of internalization with regard to extrinsic motivation relies on supportive, meaningful others (e.g., parents, teachers, peers) who can satisfy one's

psychological needs of relatedness, competence, and autonomy. The ought-to self is likely to be shifted towards the more autonomous end of extrinsic motivation, be fully internalized into learners' self-concept, and turn out to be the ideal self, if social contextual conditions render one connected, effective, and agentic in achieving extrinsic goals.

Interpreting through the self theory, Dörnyei (2005) gave suggestions on the revised implication of integrativeness, or the desire to identify with and approximate to the ideal self with high proficiency in the L2, and then derived his two self-concept constructs of L2 motivation. The first, the language-specific facet of the ideal self, is the ideal L2 self. Pragmatic benefits associated with being able to speak the L2 in personal, social, or professional contexts have been internalized into one's ideal self. The promotion focus of the ideal L2 self aspires learners to inwardly regulate their motivation for L2 mastery as a long-range goal. In this sense, the ideal L2 self highlights a chance for a successful future for L2 learners. The second construct, the ought-to L2 self, contains the less internalized forms of instrumental motivation to avoid possible negative outcomes and to meet other people's expectations through L2 learning and use. The ought-to L2 self reflects the social pressure to accept other people's views about language learning and has a prevention focus to keep learners away from undesired consequences (e.g., failing exams, disappointing one's parents) through obeying social expectations to study the L2 hard. Learners believe it is their duty to do so, yet might cease engaging in these enforced learning tasks once external requirements are removed.

For those who start language learning without internally or externally generated self images, L2 motivation might be shaped by the immediate learning environment and ongoing learning experience, such as the quality of classroom learning, teachers, peers, curricula, and learning success or failure. This dimension of the L2 Motivational Self System was given much consideration during the cognitive period of L2 motivation research in the 1990s. This article will not discuss how a variety of motivational factors affect one's involvement in L2 learning during the learning process.

Possible selves cannot be solely shaped within the individual without reference to social / cultural forces. L2 identities need be understood within the particular learning context under investigation. As Taiwanese senior high schools are an exam-dominant learning context, to what extent may this external incentive influence students' internal construction of their possible language selves?

L2 Motivation Research in Taiwan

Before Dörnyei (2005) relabeled integrativeness as the ideal L2 self to interpret L2 motivation in diverse EFL contexts, a number of L2 researchers in Taiwan argued that integrativeness was unable to properly explain learners' motivation for studying English. Warden and Lin (2000) found that exam requirements (labeled as *required motivation*) appeared to motivate Taiwanese EFL learners more effectively than integrative or instrumental orientations. Chen, Warden, and Chang (2005) surveyed 567 Taiwanese learners' motivational orientations, expectancy, and self-evaluated language proficiency. Required motivation was found to have the strongest relationship with learners' past / future expectancy and self-evaluation, whereas integrative motivation failed to play a significant role. The three researchers (2005) coined the term *Chinese Imperative*: a historically- and culturally-specific motivation for future family glory through studying for exam success.

This type of motivation also implies that exam requirements have been internalized by language learners in Chinese cultural settings where everyone is supposed to pass exams to

meet societal, educational, and familial expectations. Either required motivation or the Chinese Imperative reflects the exam-bound characteristics of L2 motivation in Taiwan, where students have quite limited contact with English speakers and immerse themselves in everyday quizzes, monthly tests, sample tests, mock placement exams, and entrance exams.

In addition, after 2002, the Taiwan Ministry of Education initiated a multi-channel university admission system in lieu of the annual Joint College Entrance Exam. Secondary-level students now are given increased opportunities to enter university through the General Scholastic Ability Test [GSAT] and the Department Required Test [DRT]. Students take the GSAT in the middle of their third year in senior high school. If their grades meet the universities' requirements, they can apply to university departments matching their interests. Alternatively, they can take the DRT later and apply for university admission based on their grades in three to six designated subjects (Department of Higher Education, 2008). Whilst the number of higher education institutions has vastly increased from 78 in 1997 to 147 in 2006 (Department of Higher Education, 2008), the gross enrolment rate has evidently soared from 44.31% in 1995 ("Evaluating the Problems," 2006) to 90.44% in 2011 ("University Enrolment Rate," 2011).

As mentioned, possible selves are constructed through one making sense of everyday life within a particular sociocultural and historical context. When exploring possible L2-related selves reported by Taiwanese EFL learners, the impact of the exam culture may need to be considered.

More detailed explorations of the ideal / ought-to L2 self are called for to corroborate the explanatory power of the new theoretical framework in understanding EFL learners' motivation in the globalized world. The need to examine personal meaning-making in language learning urges researchers to employ approaches to explore the local / individual uniqueness of EFL learners as well as context-specific features of their self-concepts. As qualitative research into possible L2-related selves is relatively scarce, a clear need exists for contextually grounded research to illuminate the understanding of the ideal / ought-to L2 self conceptualized by language learners. Thus, this interview study is intended to qualitatively investigate the possible selves dimension of the L2 Motivational Self System in the Taiwanese EFL context.

Methodology

This interview study focuses on the participants' possible L2-related selves to examine the extent to which the notion of the ideal / ought-to L2 selves can help in informing the analysis of Taiwanese secondary-level learners' L2 motivation. An interview study with qualitative data is appropriate for the nature of the key constructs to be defined through the perception of research participants. In October 2008, the author conducted the study in one local senior high school in southern Taiwan.

The interview questions were based on the main research concerns: students' reasons for studying English, reflection on the university admission system, and future plans. A semi-structured interview guide was formulated and modified over two stages before the author individually interviewed 26 senior high school students in Mandarin Chinese for 30 to 40 minutes. Informed consent was obtained in advance from administrators, teachers, and students. All student interviewees realized their participation was completely voluntary.

The interview transcripts were coded through content analysis by ignoring tones and normal pauses. The author specifically focused on themes that could respond to the research concerns and evidence for students' possible L2-related selves. Through an iterative and recursive process of initial coding, further coding, and theme elicitation, students' learning orientations

and motivational classifications of possible language identities emerged. Conceptual categories were developed and related to relevant literature. The outcomes of the interview analysis were then translated into English.

Findings and Discussion

Analysis of the data revealed two L2 motivational constructions within the domain of possible selves. The first speaks to students' elaborated ideal life in the future, in which they can foresee themselves speaking English fluently in imagined international settings. According to Dörnyei (2009b), the ideal L2 self can motivate learners to advance their language proficiency to integrate L2 competence into their future ideal self. To explore indirectly this motivational self-concept among senior high school students, questions concerning future plans were asked. Seven out of 26 interviewees clarified their future plans in terms of academic development and / or preferred occupation, whereas other students either expressed uncertainty or sketched out many possible versions of their future self-images.

For Lucy, her ideal future plan is to become a professional interpreter who can live and work internationally and speak English with native-like fluency.

> Interviewer: What would you like to do in the future?
> Lucy: I want to be an interpreter. I prefer interacting with other people. If I can speak multiple languages, oh, that's awesome, I can help people understand each other by using the language they are familiar with. . . Interpreting is not easy. I need to be very responsive all the time. I must translate what I just heard from one language into another language immediately and correctly. . . Feelings are important to me. I want to do what I am very into.

She also reported that she learned lines from her favorite English movies after repeatedly watching them with English subtitles. Fully engaging in this self-initiated learning activity, she said, "makes me feel like I'm in a foreign country." Through memorizing and practicing the lines, Lucy appears to imagine English-speaking settings in which she can articulate herself in English and interpret for her imagined interlocutors. Lucy sees her ideal self as competent in speaking English in the professional context of L2 use, which might make her feel closer to her idealized future life and preferred international job. As Dörnyei (2009b) suggested, the ideal L2 self encompasses both instrumentality associated with the L2 and the identification process underpinning integrativeness. Having a world citizen identity in the foreseeable future becomes a motivator for students to realize this ideal self through keeping up with English studies.

Based on the interview data, not all of these seven students have a completely genuine idea of the ideal L2 self. Possible selves are the product of personal conceptualization and social influences; therefore, the ideal L2 self may be the entirely internalized ought-to self that the surrounding people think one should be. For example, Nicole completely internalizes her mother's expectations for her to avoid a bad future by getting a higher degree in law at a reputable university overseas and finding a respectable job with good pay. Nicole said,

> My mom told me if I want to go overseas, my English must be good. . . I want to be like my mother. She is a Harvard [graduate]; she is my goal. . . I must study harder in order to be exactly like her. She is my super idol, everything about her, her life style, her degree, her steady job and salary, etc. I really want to follow her steps and study in a well-known university abroad. . . I cannot slack off in learning English.

Although this possible self does not originate from Nicole, she seems to have integrated into this self the utilitarian benefits deriving from being able to speak English professionally. By imagining being exactly like her mother, Nicole diligently studies English to reduce the discrepancy between her actual self and her mother, the perfect role model. The ought-to self constructed by her mother seems to have shifted to Nicole's own wishes, and mastery of English is closely linked to her personal need to become this ideal self.

Thus, while pursuing their idealized identity, students may come to bridge their actual and hoped-for English-speaking self through improving their English proficiency. Their individualized plan provides them with a personally meaningful rationale for studying English. This ideal-like L2 identity may render students well motivated to exert effort in learning for the future to acquire L2 competence and accomplish personal identity pursuits.

In contrast, when asked about university entrance exams, 18 students mentioned their fears of negative outcomes if they could not perform well in learning English. The finding and its implications could be related to the concept of the ought-to L2 self. As many popular departments in Taiwan universities have English test score requirements, senior high school students are well aware that abandoning English studies might affect their future. Double-weighted English test scores in university entrance exams can substantially raise students' overall exam grades and facilitate their admission to a higher-ranking university.

Without a diploma from a key university or a recognized English proficiency test certificate, students might face unemployment and family disappointment and feel that the money and time spent on learning English were wasted. Laura emphasised,

> I cannot study in a low-ranking university. Otherwise, I am wasting my parents' money. . . I should study hard to get higher grades for a better university. Also, my parents will be pleased and won't get disappointed at my performance.

Seven of these 18 interviewees repeatedly mentioned what their parents said, thought, or expected them to do when explaining L2 motivation. They seem to study English because other people stress its importance and appear to abide by a life prearranged by their parents. Nancy admitted, "I don't know. I might just follow my parents' wishes" when she was asked about her own idea of the future. As Dörnyei (2009b, p. 29) stated, the ought-to L2 self refers to "the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes." This dimension of L2 motivation is helpful in understanding students who obey expectations to avoid vexing possibilities through studying English.

However, closer analysis of the qualitative interview data suggests that the ought-to L2 self in the study seems to diverge from the theoretical definition of the concept, as it contains a dual focus both of promotion and prevention-focused instrumentality in studying English. While the students obey and study English for exam success, they are anticipated to enter a brand-name university to obtain a good job, be a responsible breadwinner, and have an enviable future. Some students mentioned that they would like to persevere in getting high scores in English

exams to enter a good university and major in the specialist subjects recommended by their parents to improve their own and their family's prospects. Andy explained,

> . . . studying hard to enter a good university is the only way to get my family out of living in poverty. . . So I force myself to study English as hard as possible to get into a good university and find a good job later. . . Then I will be able to make more money in the future.

In this regard, their ought-to L2 self may be considered upwardly mobile and tied to the promotion-focused instrumental value of studying English for a potential bright future. Passing English exams is vitally important to satisfy other people's wishes and attain future goals.

To explore why the results partially mismatch the concept, a need exists to take the local social context into account and consider the role of exams in Taiwan, since exams play an important part in how students perceive their possible L2-related selves.

Historically, rigorous civil service examinations for selecting officials were implemented to execute Confucian meritocracy and social mobility in China (Woodside & Elman, 1994; see Chen et al., 2005, p. 613). Families would use all their resources to prepare children for these exams in the hope of glorifying the family and clan through individual exam success. No one would question the necessity of studying for exams in terms of obtaining the desired social and material returns. Although exams are the pressure of social forces external to learners, Chen et al. (2005) argued that this unique learning orientation has been internalized into Chinese learners through generations and is characteristic of motivated Taiwanese EFL learners. This likely internalized sociocultural awareness of exam success as the means to achieve social and personal change probably has socialized Taiwanese learners into the belief of lifting exam results for social mobility and the fulfillment of various expectations / requirements.

This localized perspective may help interpret the Taiwanese ought-to L2 self with a twofold instrumentality in studying English, and in understanding its inconsistency with the theoretical definition of the ought-to L2 self associated with the prevention-driven and non-internalized extrinsic motives that make up instrumentality. As long as an exam culture governs Taiwan formal education, studying might equal exam preparation for many. The speculation might be that exam pressure has been internalized into senior high school students to some extent. Hence, based on the interview data, their ought-to L2 self seems to present the dual-focused nature of learning English. Considering the social context, researchers cannot entirely deny the possibility of internalized exam requirements in Taiwan or in the research context. The interview findings reveal the impact of the broader context on one's L2 motivation and the role of contextual / cultural factors in shaping one's possible L2-related selves.

Pedagogical Implications

The exam-oriented climate exists in many Asian countries and exerts its multidimensional impact on the construction of L2 motivation among secondary-level learners. If the influence of exams can assist students in developing English proficiency, teachers could shift their foci to developing students' identified regulatory type of extrinsic motivation for studying English, that is, to help externally regulated students develop personally endorsed understandings of the importance of studying English. As Noels (2009) argues, identified regulation is often a stronger predictor of continuous behavior associated with farsighted goal attainment than intrinsic motivation. Since individual motivation is socially-mediated and co-constructed with meaningful others, teachers could explicitly guide students to invest meaning in their learning

mission and visualize a contingent path between current study and the future instrumentality of using English for intercultural communication. A possible auxiliary medium would be teachers as role models by sharing personal reasons for learning English, demonstrating real-life examples of using English outside of the class, showing a professional profile with English competence, etc. Teachers can encourage students to imagine their future selves as competent English speakers in international settings. The construction of one's future self-images undergoes considerable change during adolescence (Kormos & Csizér, 2008); teachers have a good chance to positively affect students' ideal L2 selves. As Henry (2009) notes, devoting time and resources to enhance students' L2 self-concepts is of particular importance in the classroom to sustain learner enthusiasm over a demanding period of time. Through clarifying the personal significance of studying English from within, students are likely to feel self-motivated to enhance their commitment to learning English and, more importantly, to persevere with their EFL studies.

Conclusion

This interview study has qualitatively examined the constructs of the ideal and ought-to L2 self in the Taiwanese EFL context. The data generated from 26 senior high school students showed the two self-concept types of L2 motivation were helpful in explaining learner motivation for studying English in the research context. However, the Taiwanese ought-to L2 self found in the study might be inconsistent with the theoretical concept, since it reflects both promotion- and prevention-focused instrumentality in studying English. This article does not imply that the concept of the ought-to L2 self is problematic. Rather, it sees the results as a contextualised response to the theoretical definition through viewing the ought-to L2 self from the participants' point of view. As MacIntyre, Mackinnon, and Clément (2009) argued, the various culture-bound definitions of self might affect the motivational properties of possible selves. The Taiwanese ought-to L2 self found in this study lends some support to their argument, and may turn researchers' attention to "cross-cultural variation" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009b, p. 352) in possible selves. The findings not only exhibit the culturally-valued characteristics of self, but also suggest that the self is unlikely to be a context-free concept.

The results also underline the need to adopt a qualitative research approach to the possible L2 self, which may explore in greater depth the nature and extent of sociocultural influences on the construction of the self and allow a richer understanding of the context of possible L2-related selves. Hopefully this interview study can provide possible directions for future research into interesting dimensions of possible L2 identities in this culturally diverse world. More qualitative studies should be dedicated to the multiplicity of possible selves and the examination of the relationship between the possible L2 self and language learning to unveil more dynamic changes of L2 motivation / identities during the learning process.

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Teaching Practice

Improving Student Writing with Paper-Based and Computer-Based Text Analysis

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Abstract

In this study, mixed proficiency level classes of science and engineering university students performed both paper-based and computer-based text analysis using corpora to improve specific language forms such as noun, verb, and prepositional phrases, statements of intent, and results reporting in the production of a 2000-word academic research paper. Pre- and post-language samples for noun phrases and student feedback were analyzed to determine the effectiveness of this approach. Results were grouped into advanced and intermediate level students. Despite 5% and 8% overall gains respectively, more individual gains were seen with the advanced level students. All student responses to questionnaires regarding the usefulness of corpora and the various corpus tasks were positive. While advanced level students seemed to benefit the most from the corpus tasks, 90% of students reported they would use corpus analysis in the future, and 83% felt their writing had improved; thus, intermediate level students also benefited.

Corpus-Based Exercises in the L2 Classroom

Corpus-based text analysis has been shown to benefit L2 students in many ways. The learner controls the learning process (Braun, 2005; Huang, 2008), inductive thinking is encouraged (Johns, 1991), and there is a virtually limitless supply of data (Conrad, 2000). Since corpus-based text analysis is text-oriented and uses lexical patterns, it naturally lends itself to reading and writing (Flowerdew, 2002). Because grammar and vocabulary are interrelated (Sinclair, 1991), it is possible to clearly see common patterns and frequency of language use (Biber & Conrad, 2001). Yoon and Hirvela (2004) report that corpus analysis is increasing for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses in particular, since authentic texts provide specialized word patterns. Learners are able to see technical words in context, commonly occurring phrases and language chunks, and, as Yoon and Hirvela (2004, citing Odlin, 2001) noted, "where to put words into sentences."

In addition, various studies using corpus analysis in the L2 classroom report on particular language objectives. A sampling includes academic English vocabulary (Thurston & Candlin,

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1998), the overuse of logical connectors (Milton & Tsang, 1993), basic grammatical structures such as noun and verb phrases (Chujo & Oghigian, 2008) and ESL university-level writing (Yoon & Hirvela, 2004). With the exception of Chujo and Oghigian, these studies have been conducted with intermediate or advanced level learners. In fact, there are very few studies at the beginner level (Boulton, 2008) or studies that incorporate data driven learning (DDL) in a class comprised of a range of levels. (For an excellent literature review focused on writing and student attitudes toward corpus use, see Yoon & Hirvela, 2004.)

The purpose of this study is to investigate the use of text analysis as an aid to EFL technical science and engineering research paper writing in a class of mixed proficiency level university students. The approach is task-based and employs paper-based and computer-based concordancing as well as text analyses of sample journal articles. To determine if the corpus activities had an impact on learning, an analysis of noun phrases was done on pre- and post-course writing samples. Feedback from students on end-of-term questionnaires was also collected and analyzed.

Case Study

Technical Writing

Technical Writing 1 (TW1) and Technical Writing 2 (TW2) are one-semester elective English classes in a science and engineering university faculty. The goal of TW1 is for students to produce a 2,000-word research paper on a topic related to their fields, which is IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) -cited and referenced. The goal of TW2 is to write a research paper based on primary-sourced data on a topic in their fields that is formatted to a relevant journal identified by each student. These are the first writing-focused courses offered in the English program, although students in the first year write lecture summaries, and second year students do a collaborative written research project. TW1 is not a prerequisite for TW2, but it is highly recommended.

Participants

Twenty-four students enrolled in TW2 in the fall of 2011 participated in this study. In addition to varied test scores (self-reported scores of 375-975 on the Test of English for International Communication [TOEIC]), students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities also greatly varied, based on teacher observation and homework assessments. All were third- or fourth-year undergraduate students. Student majors included applied mathematics, civil and environmental engineering, medical bioscience, electrical engineering, chemistry, and applied physics. Weekly classes met for 90 minutes for 15 weeks, which comprised one semester. Ten classes were held in a regular classroom and five classes were held in a computer classroom, as dictated by each weekly objective.

Corpora and Corpus Tools

In a computer room in Week 2, students were shown how to access and use three online corpora: the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/), Springer Exemplar (http://www.springerexemplar.com/), and the Professional English Research Consortium (PERC) corpus (http://scn.jkn21.com/~percinfo/). All three are both corpora and corpus tools. Although COCA is slightly more complex to use, sample concordances are easier to understand for lower proficiency level students. It is also possible to choose only academic sources for concordance lines. The user interfaces for Exemplar and PERC are very simple; however, the corpora used are taken from journals and professional books and are therefore at an advanced level.

In addition, students were shown how to download and use a corpus tool, Antconc (http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/software.html), and how to create their own corpora by converting sections from relevant journal articles into text files and uploading these into Antconc. They were also given a sample corpus in which the files were separated into title, abstract, introduction, method, results and discussion, conclusion, acknowledgements, and biography sections so that searches could be more specifically targeted. Creating their own corpora with a goal of 20 to 50 text files per section was encouraged and students were given class time and guidance to do so. More advanced students were able to create their own corpora so that searches would be more relevant to their fields; less advanced students had the option of using the provided corpus or the online corpora described earlier. By giving students a hands-on introduction to four different tools and opportunities for guided, supervised trial tasks, they had the option to employ the tool they were most comfortable using. This first computer class was supplemented by additional "gradual and guided" (Kennedy & Miceli, 2001) lessons, so students received demonstrations and supervision throughout the course.

Tasks

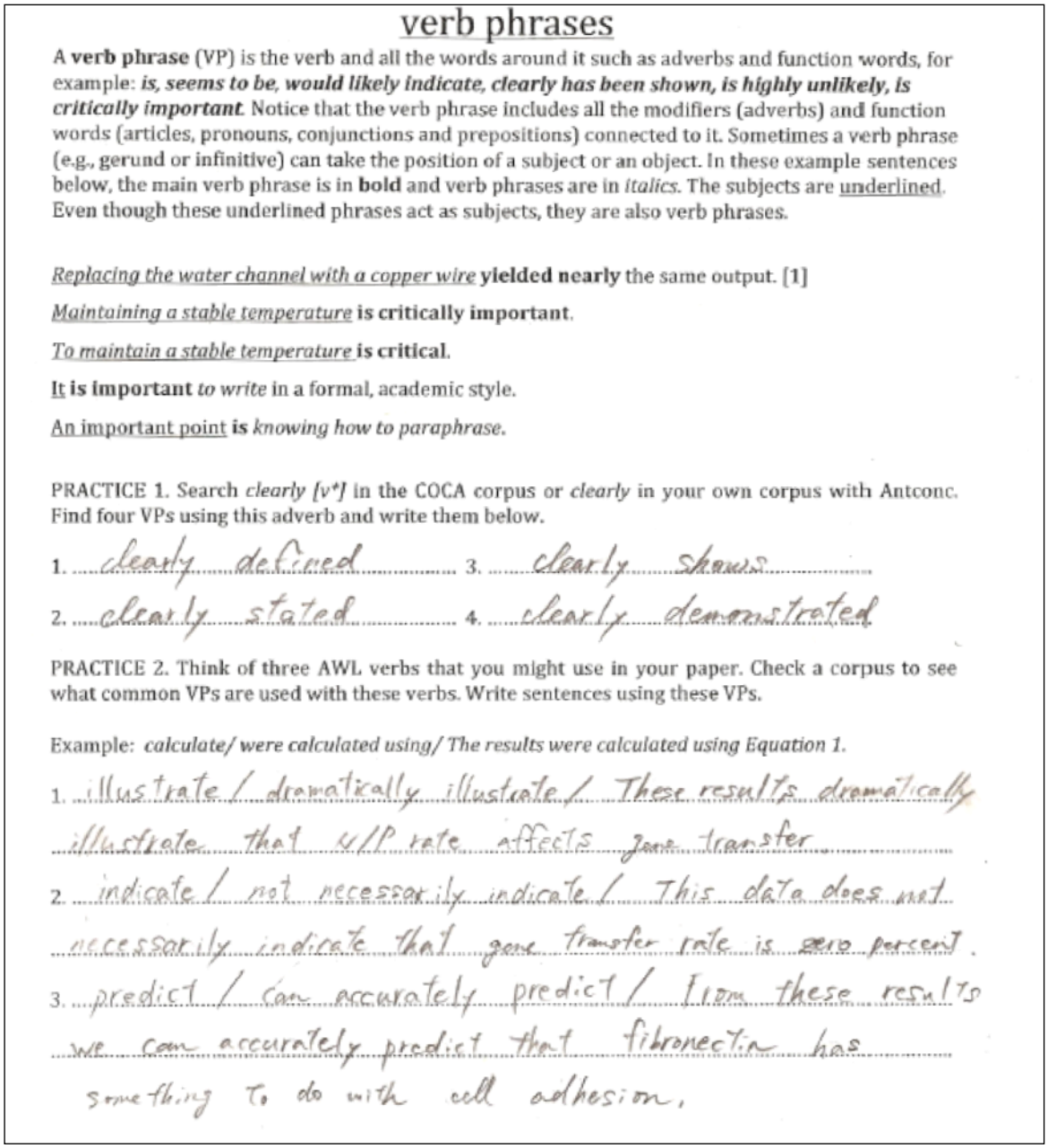
Corpus searches were done in class and as homework. As in-class group work in a computer classroom, students followed the teacher in doing specific types of searches on a large demonstration screen and the findings were discussed as a group. Subsequently, they did similar individual searches using the corpus of their choice. Corpus work included paper-based non-concordance type text analysis (an examination of texts printed on paper, with no direct computer interaction), computer-based concordancing (an examination of various concordance lines found by typing searches directly into a computer program), and a combination of paper- and computer-based concordancing (viewing paper-based concordance lines and typing additional searches directly into a computer program). In all cases, students did a text analysis, made assumptions about the lexical or grammatical target feature, and then produced practice sentences using their own topic-related technical vocabulary. They were encouraged to search various language forms and produce sentences that would be directly applicable to their final research papers.

Text Analysis of Journal Articles

Non-concordance type text analysis was done with a sample journal article from a journal in their fields provided by each student, and a sample article provided by the teacher. The former was used to understand formatting and organization. The provided article ("the Tesla paper") was examined in detail to analyze various writing aspects such as purpose and style, and specific aspects such as sentence structure (noun phrases [NPs], verb phrases [VPs], prepositional phrases [PPs] and clauses), logical connectors, referents, and hedging.

Computer-Based Concordancing

In one assignment, students were given a paper-based example of how to find common NPs for technical words using COCA and the "clusters" function in Antconc, and were then asked to search ten keywords related to their topics and write down common NPs. In a related task, they were asked to write practice sentences using these NPs with particular attention to correct articles. In another task, students were asked to search a corpus for *clearly [v*]* and note common verb phrases; they then wrote practice sentences using verbs from the Academic Word List (Coxhead, 2011). See Figure 1.



verb phrases

A **verb phrase** (VP) is the verb and all the words around it such as adverbs and function words, for example: ***is, seems to be, would likely indicate, clearly has been shown, is highly unlikely, is critically important***. Notice that the verb phrase includes all the modifiers (adverbs) and function words (articles, pronouns, conjunctions and prepositions) connected to it. Sometimes a verb phrase (e.g., gerund or infinitive) can take the position of a subject or an object. In these example sentences below, the main verb phrase is in **bold** and verb phrases are in *italics*. The subjects are underlined. Even though these underlined phrases act as subjects, they are also verb phrases.

Replacing the water channel with a copper wire **yielded nearly** the same output. [1]

Maintaining a stable temperature **is critically important**.

To maintain a stable temperature **is critical**.

It is important *to write* in a formal, academic style.

An important point **is** *knowing how to paraphrase.*

PRACTICE 1. Search *clearly [v*]* in the COCA corpus or *clearly* in your own corpus with Antconc. Find four VPs using this adverb and write them below.

1. clearly defined 3. clearly shows
2. clearly stated 4. clearly demonstrated

PRACTICE 2. Think of three AWL verbs that you might use in your paper. Check a corpus to see what common VPs are used with these verbs. Write sentences using these VPs.

Example: *calculate/ were calculated using/ The results were calculated using Equation 1.*

1. illustrate / dramatically illustrate / These results dramatically illustrate that U/P rate affects gene transfer.
2. indicate / not necessarily indicate / This data does not necessarily indicate that gene transfer rate is zero percent.
3. predict / can accurately predict / From these results we can accurately predict that fibronectin has something to do with cell adhesion.

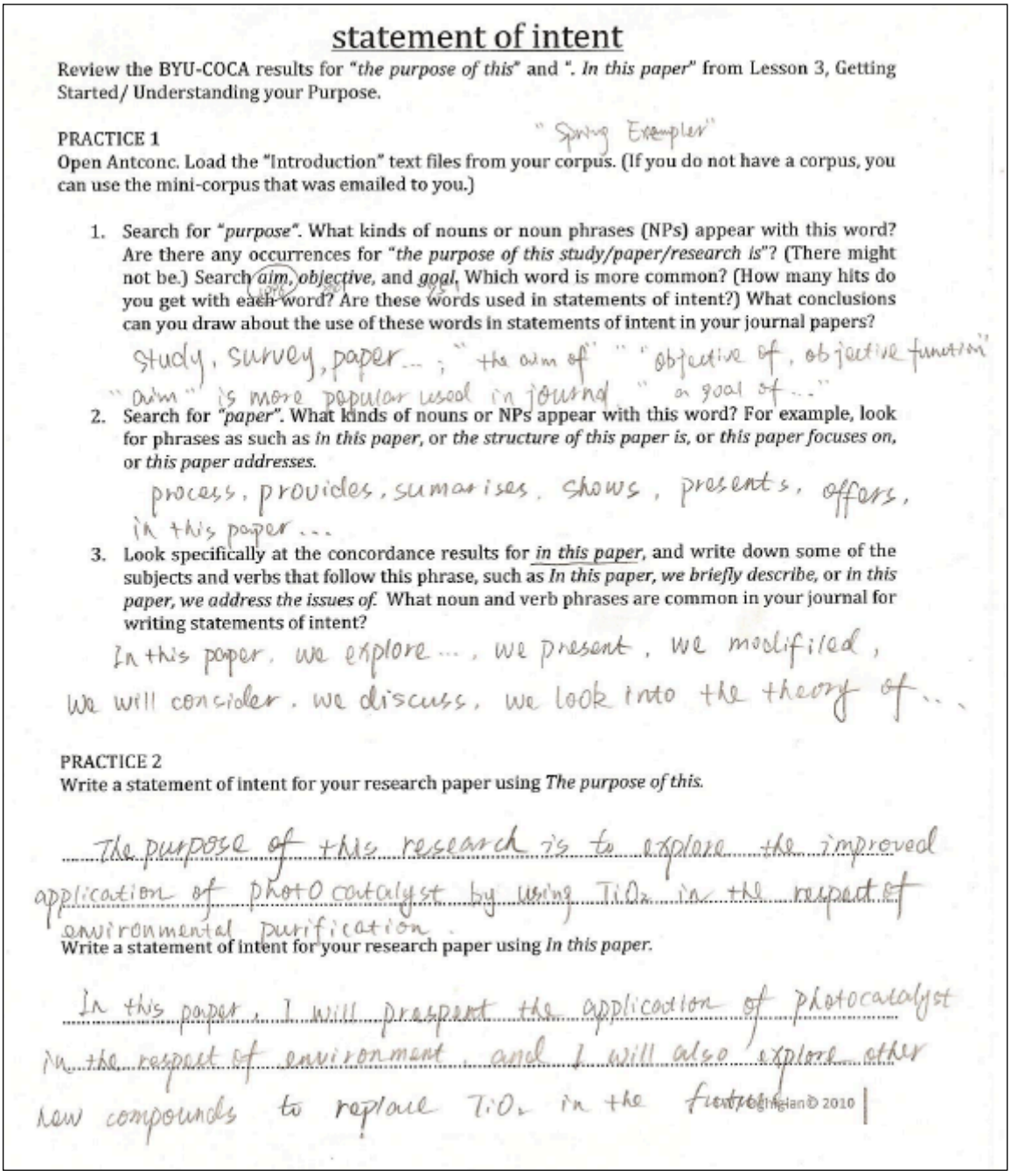
Figure 1. A student example of sentences produced from searching verb phrases in a corpus.

Several computer-based searches were also done in class. Some searches were demonstrated on a large screen and discussed as a group; other searches were done individually, with students choosing the corpus. Examples (not shown) for discussing how to write the method section included prepositional phrases such as *at, by, during, from, into, on, through, to, under,* and *via,* and the terms *figure, Fig.,* and *Table*.

Combined Paper- and Computer-Based Concordancing

Two tasks used combined paper- and computer-based concordancing: statements of intent and titles. For the statement of intent, students were shown paper-based concordance lines on a large classroom screen and on a handout for *the purpose of this* and *In this paper,* which were taken as a screen shot from COCA academic sources. As a group, these were examined to understand how the purpose of a paper could be expressed. For homework, students were

asked to use Antconc and the introduction files from their own corpora or any corpora of their choosing to search *purpose, aim, objective, goal,* and *paper*. Next, they were asked to look specifically at results for *in this paper* and write down subjects or verbs commonly following this phrase such as *in this paper, we briefly describe*, or *in this paper, we address*. Finally, they were asked to write statements of intent for their papers using both *the purpose of this paper* and *in this paper*. A student example is shown in Figure 2.



statement of intent

Review the BYU-COCA results for "*the purpose of this*" and ". *In this paper*" from Lesson 3, Getting Started/ Understanding your Purpose.

PRACTICE 1 "Spring Exemplar"

Open Antconc. Load the "Introduction" text files from your corpus. (If you do not have a corpus, you can use the mini-corpus that was emailed to you.)

1. Search for "*purpose*". What kinds of nouns or noun phrases (NPs) appear with this word? Are there any occurrences for "*the purpose of this study/paper/research is*"? (There might not be.) Search *aim, objective,* and *goal*. Which word is more common? (How many hits do you get with each word? Are these words used in statements of intent?) What conclusions can you draw about the use of these words in statements of intent in your journal papers?

   study, survey, paper... ; "the aim of" "objective of, objective function" "aim" is more popular used in journal "a goal of..."

2. Search for "*paper*". What kinds of nouns or NPs appear with this word? For example, look for phrases as such as *in this paper*, or *the structure of this paper is*, or *this paper focuses on*, or *this paper addresses*.

   process, provides, sumarises, shows, presents, offers, in this paper...

3. Look specifically at the concordance results for *in this paper*, and write down some of the subjects and verbs that follow this phrase, such as *In this paper, we briefly describe*, or *in this paper, we address the issues of*. What noun and verb phrases are common in your journal for writing statements of intent?

   In this paper, we explore..., we present, we modified, we will concider, we discuss, we look into the theory of...

PRACTICE 2

Write a statement of intent for your research paper using *The purpose of this.*

The purpose of this research is to explore the improved application of photo catalyst by using TiO_2 in the respect of environmental purification.

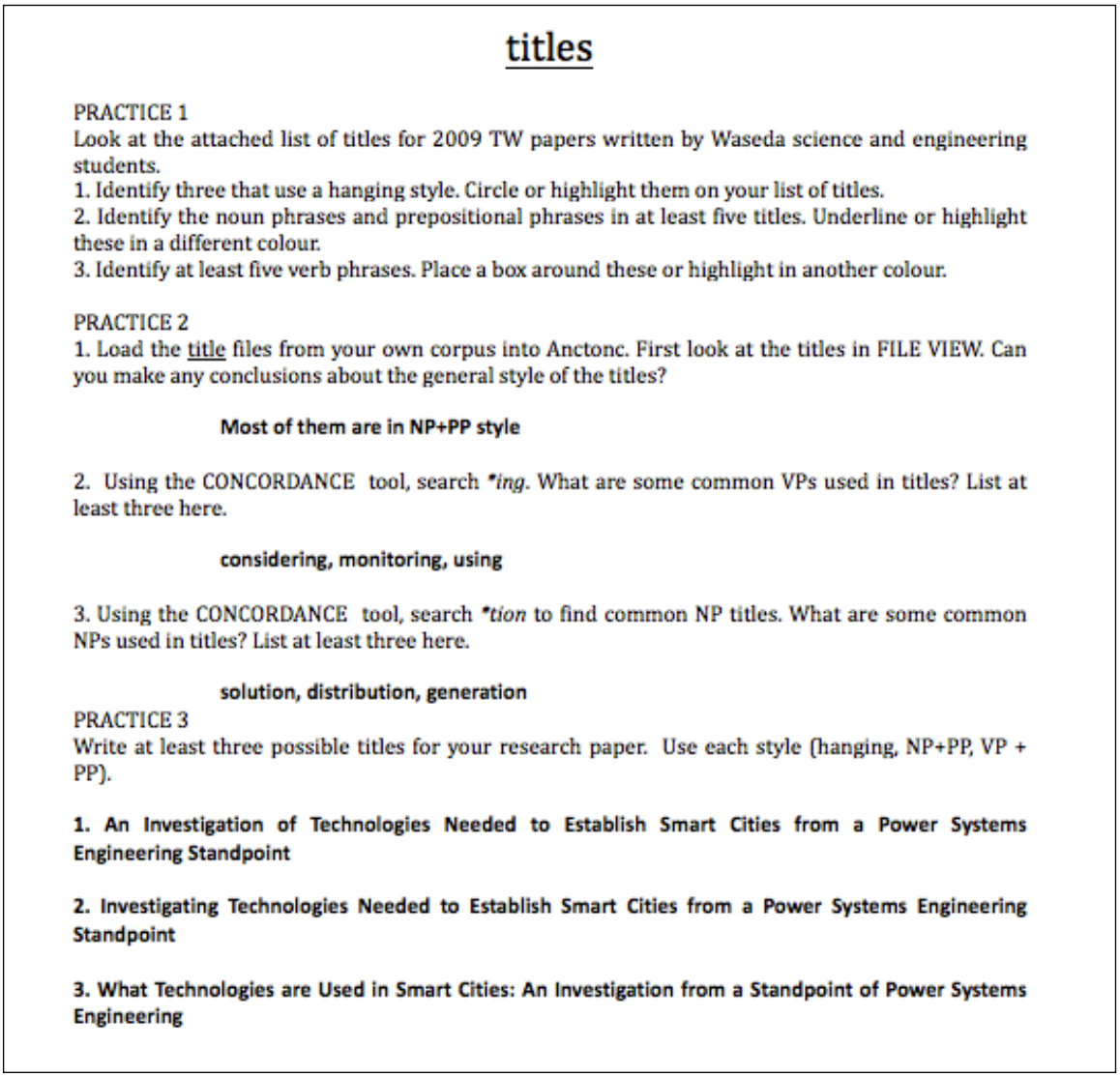
Write a statement of intent for your research paper using *In this paper.*

In this paper, I will prospect the application of photocatalyst in the respect of environment, and I will also explore other new compounds to replace TiO_2 in the fu...

Figure 2. An example of student work for defining a statement of intent.

For addressing titles, students were given a list of previous student research paper titles. In class, they were asked to identify hanging, NP + PP and VP styles and to find and highlight at least five NPs + PPs, and at least five VPs. As homework, using either their own corpora or the mini-corpora in Antconc, they were next asked to look at the titles in the "file view" function

and note any conclusions about the general style of the titles. In the next exercise, they were asked to search **tion* and **ing* with the "concordancing" function and note any common NPs or VPs. Finally, they were asked to write three titles for their papers, one using each style. A student example is shown in Figure 3.



titles

PRACTICE 1
Look at the attached list of titles for 2009 TW papers written by Waseda science and engineering students.
1. Identify three that use a hanging style. Circle or highlight them on your list of titles.
2. Identify the noun phrases and prepositional phrases in at least five titles. Underline or highlight these in a different colour.
3. Identify at least five verb phrases. Place a box around these or highlight in another colour.

PRACTICE 2
1. Load the title files from your own corpus into Anctonc. First look at the titles in FILE VIEW. Can you make any conclusions about the general style of the titles?

Most of them are in NP+PP style

2. Using the CONCORDANCE tool, search **ing*. What are some common VPs used in titles? List at least three here.

considering, monitoring, using

3. Using the CONCORDANCE tool, search **tion* to find common NP titles. What are some common NPs used in titles? List at least three here.

solution, distribution, generation

PRACTICE 3
Write at least three possible titles for your research paper. Use each style (hanging, NP+PP, VP + PP).

1. An Investigation of Technologies Needed to Establish Smart Cities from a Power Systems Engineering Standpoint

2. Investigating Technologies Needed to Establish Smart Cities from a Power Systems Engineering Standpoint

3. What Technologies are Used in Smart Cities: An Investigation from a Standpoint of Power Systems Engineering

Figure 3. A student example of producing titles based on data from a corpus search.

Data Collection

Of 24 participants, 15 were identified as having previously taken TW1. Because most TW1 students would have been given instruction on NPs, to have more comparable data, the NPs in pre- and post-samples were limited to these 15 students. The first 250 words from the results section from their previous TW1 papers and their final TW2 papers were analyzed for the percentage of correct NPs from the total NPs. The results section was chosen because students generally received a great deal of teacher feedback for the abstract, introduction, and method sections. An NP was incorrect if there was any error and was counted as incorrect only once even if it contained multiple errors. Examples of correct and incorrect NPs are shown in Table 1. Feedback on the use of corpus analysis was also collected from all 24 students, using an anonymous Likert-scale questionnaire given on the final day of the term.

Table 1

Examples of Correct and Incorrect Noun Phrases

	NP Pattern	Incorrect Example	Correct Example
1	[art + adj + n]	[a central ideas]	[the central idea]
2	[prep + art + n]	[in the slope]	[on the slope]
3	[prep + n] [prep + n]	[*in* the end] [of the year]	[at the end] [of the year]
4	[n] [conj + n]	[Table 1][and table 2]	[Table 1] [and Table 2]
5	wrong word (ww)	[these problems] . . . [it]	[these problems] . . . [they]
6	word form (wf)	[the necessarily]	[the necessity]

Results and Discussion

Analysis of Noun Phrases

Because the range of TOEIC scores was so broad (375-975), the 15 students were divided into two groups: A (700-975) and B (375-699). The results in Table 2 show that the more advanced students in Group A had a very high number of correct NPs (an average of 93%). All students except one made gains, with one student having a 23% gain. Student 6 (S6) had a net loss of 12%. His TW2 paper used very advanced level language compared to his TW1 paper, and was based on an actual lab experiment. Although he had fewer correct NPs, he submitted a highly technical paper with complex journal formatting (Vancouver style). Overall, the average gain for Group A was 5%.

Table 2

Results for NP Analyses of Pre- and Post-Writing Samples from Group A

	Pre-Writing Sample			Post-Writing Sample			Gains
	Correct NPs	Total NPs	% Correct	Correct NPs	Total NPs	% Correct	
S1	53	79	67%	53	59	**90%**	**+23%**
S2	53	60	88%	68	71	**96%**	**+8%**
S3	58	65	89%	61	65	**94%**	**+5%**
S4	64	73	87%	70	76	**92%**	**+5%**
S5	72	73	99%	61	61	**100%**	**+1%**
S6	67	68	99%	69	79	87%	-12%
Average	61.2	69.7	88%	63.7	68.5	93%	+5%

Table 3 shows that the results are mixed for the intermediate level group (Group B). Although the overall average is +8%, five of nine students had losses or a 0% gain. Two students (S14 and S15) had 17% gains, and another (S13) had an 8% gain. The students who showed losses also had poor listening skills and may not have been able to follow all instructions. For example, one student did not understand that she was looking for articles and NPs; she noted only nouns and her sentences omitted articles. The fact that many of these lower level proficiency students were not as successful in improving NP usage suggests that the corpus work may not necessarily have been as useful or appropriate for them; this supposition is supported by the fact that there are many more studies at the advanced level than at lower levels (Boulton, 2008).

Table 3

Results for NP Analyses of Pre- and Post-Writing Samples from Group B

	Pre-Writing Sample			Post-Writing Sample			Gains
	Correct NPs	Total NPs	% Correct	Correct NPs	Total NPs	% Correct	
S7	59	87	68%	44	75	59%	-9%
S8	54	80	68%	48	82	59%	-9%
S9	60	73	82%	52	70	74%	-8%
S10	63	78	81%	55	73	75%	-6%
S11	59	76	78%	70	90	78%	0%
S12	73	112	65%	49	73	**67%**	**+2%**
S13	63	82	77%	70	82	**85%**	**+8%**
S14	52	72	72%	58	65	**89%**	**+17%**
S15	55	85	65%	59	72	**82%**	**+17%**
Average	59.8	82.8	73%	61.6	75.8	81%	**+8%**

Analysis of Questionnaires

Previous studies looking at student attitudes toward the use of corpus linguistics in the L2 classroom show overall positive responses (Chujo & Oghigian, 2008; Thurston & Candlin, 1998; Tribble, 2002); this study is no exception. Of 24 questionnaire responses, an overwhelming majority was positive (*yes* and *mostly* responses and *not really* and *no* responses were combined to calculate percentages). Students reported that they had improved their writing skills (83%) and that the following tasks were useful: learning to use corpora and corpus tools (80%), text analysis of the Tesla paper (75%), looking at paper-based concordance lines (83%), looking at computer-based concordance lines (88%), looking at paper-based statements of intent (75%), searching a corpus for technical words (80%), searching for NPs (80%) and VPs (83%) in a corpus, and searching a corpus for aspects of titles (80%). Encouragingly, 90% of students indicated they would use a corpus in the future to improve their writing. Only 67% reported that they had explored a corpus beyond the assigned tasks and 63% felt that creating their own corpora was useful. A little more than half of the students (58%) expressed a preference for doing the corpus searches in class rather than at home. For the open-ended questions, six students reported that using corpora was the "best aspect of the course" and two reported this was the "most difficult aspect." There were no significant differences in questionnaire responses between the advanced level (Group A) and the intermediate level (Group B), nor between the students who had and who had not taken TW1.

Table 4

Questionnaire Results

	Yes	Mostly	So-so	Not really	No
1. I improved my writing skills.	12	8	4	0	0
2. Learning how to use corpora and corpus tools was useful.	11	8	5	0	0
3. Doing text analysis on the Tesla paper (such as examining logical connectors and verb phrases) was useful.	10	8	3	3	0
4. Looking a paper-based concordance lines (such as a list of titles or list of statements of intent) was useful.	6	14	3	1	0
5. Looking at computer-based concordance lines (such as searching for "Figure" and "Fig." or for articles for NPs) was useful.	9	12	2	1	0
6. Looking at a corpus of statements of intent helped me to write my statement of intent.	10	8	5	1	0
7. Searching a corpus for technical words in my field was useful.	8	11	5	0	0
8. Searching a corpus for NPs using technical words in my field and writing practice sentences was useful.	10	9	5	0	0
9. Searching a corpus for VPs using technical words in my field and writing practice sentences was useful.	13	7	3	1	0
10. Looking at a list of titles and searching a corpus for aspects of titles helped me to write my title.	8	11	4	1	0
11. Creating my own corpus was useful.	8	7	6	3	0
12. I prefer to do corpus searches in class and not at home.	5	9	5	4	1
13. I used a corpus to look for additional writing aspects I was curious about.	6	10	6	1	1
14. I might use a corpus in the future to improve my writing.	11	9	3	1	0

Conclusion

This study is a follow-up to a similar study conducted the previous year (Oghigian & Chujo, 2012), which found that the use of corpora overall was generally successful based on NP gains and questionnaire responses. However, the data was taken from a smaller sample and students indicated a preference for paper-based tasks rather than computer-based tasks. In that study, students were taught to use corpora at the beginning of the term, but had no additional instruction or in-class supervision; it is not surprising that they preferred paper-based concordance lines. In response, a far greater number of in-class computer-based demonstrations were done in this current study. Numerous paper-based examples were provided as well. Kennedy & Miceli (2001) refer to these guided hands-on tasks as an "apprenticeship approach" and in their study noted a positive overall response from students. They also noted this approach is time consuming; however, teaching students this important skill is well worth the effort. Just as there is value in teaching students how to use a dictionary or thesaurus, or even tools such as word processors and computers, so is there value in teaching corpus analysis. Although the sample for this study is also small, it is believed this approach could be adopted for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or ESP courses, since students can build their own specific corpora for use with Antconc.

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Motivating Activities in Test Preparation Writing Classes: A Case Study in Vietnam

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Abstract

TOEFL iBT and IELTS preparation courses have become increasingly popular in Vietnam over the past few years due to the increasing demand for overseas study. However, little research has been conducted into how to teach these courses effectively and interestingly. This paper describes action research that aims to discover activities that motivate students in TOEFL iBT and IELTS writing classes at a private foreign language center in Vietnam. The paper shares findings from a qualitative study involving the researcher's observations, questionnaires for writing teachers and students, and course evaluations carried out by the center. Class diaries, teacher expertise, and activities organized in a communicative way tended to motivate these students. The findings suggest a new model for effectively teaching English in a culturally-based context of learning that exists in Vietnam (Ellis, 1994; Le Ha, 2004; Lewis & McCook, 2002) and in other Asian countries with similar cultural values.

Recently, Vietnamese learners have had a tendency to earn degrees from foreign countries. This has led to a demand for English courses for learners to prepare for studying abroad, which the public school curriculum cannot meet. To meet learners' objectives, many private English language centers provide academic English courses focusing on test preparation (e.g., TOEFL iBT and IELTS).

To attract more students and encourage teachers to provide interesting lessons for students, classrooms in English as a foreign language (EFL) centers have been equipped with networked computers, speakers, and projectors. Some centers have even prepared e-materials (original academic English textbooks are scanned and audio files are added) for teachers to use to improve effectiveness and encourage teachers to be innovative. Some teachers now employ the communicative language teaching approach (CLT) or design and modify textbook material with software to move away from traditional ways of teaching students with just a textbook.

Despite these improvements, in a survey by the researcher (see Appendix A) of teachers of writing, three-quarters of these teachers reported that the general atmosphere in their writing courses was "quiet" (see Appendix B). (Vietnamese teachers teach writing and reading skills

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while native English-speaking teachers teach listening and speaking at this center.) Issues influencing the situation were identified:

First, students at EFL centers come to evening language classes with different levels of extrinsic motivation. Some take TOEFL iBT or IELTS classes to improve their employment prospects or to prepare for admission to higher education institutions in foreign countries. Some come to class simply because their parents force them to do so. Some students attending TOEFL iBT or IELTS evening writing classes may be motivated, but are exhausted after spending the day working or studying.

Second, written English is not the main focus in most Vietnamese high schools. Writing is used as a convenient mode for testing grammar or vocabulary. This is because of the belief that students should have mastered the language at the sentence level before attempting to write paragraphs.

Finally, students' writing suffers from interference from the Vietnamese language and Vietnamese writing discourse habits**.** As opposed to British and American discourse patterns, which tend to be linear, Vietnamese discourse patterns tend to be circular. In addition, some students are inclined to think in their own language when writing and translate their ideas word for word from Vietnamese. Both of these tendencies create difficulties in producing formal written English.

With respect to the issues identified above, the aim of this project was to investigate whether or not activities developed by the researcher to motivate students in her TOEFL iBT and IELTS writing classes were effective. Results of this qualitative research may assist test preparation writing teachers at EFL centers to organize their writing classes according to their students' expectations.

Literature Review

Brown (2000) defines motivation from three different perspectives. In behavioristic terms, motivation is driven by external and individual forces. Previous experiences of reward drive a person to act to achieve further positive reinforcement. In cognitive terms, motivation refers to the need to explore the unknown, to move, and exercise mentally and physically. In a constructivist perspective, motivation is viewed in a social context where each person is motivated differently and acts in ways that are unique within his or her cultural and social milieu. Brown (2000) emphasizes that learning a foreign language requires learners to have some of all three aspects of motivation, which together are typically known as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Dörnyei (2001) suggested various strategies for establishing, generating, and maintaining motivation in a foreign language classroom. To establish motivational conditions in class, he suggested that teachers take students' learning seriously by showing that they care about their progress and have sufficiently high expectations for what they can do. In addition to this, teachers should also regularly use small group tasks or activities that employ features of CLT, aiming to promote the development of group cohesiveness.

Dörnyei (2001) also stated that teachers need to know students' goals, interests, and expectations to motivate the students and organize appropriate class activities. Besides this knowledge, to maintain students' level of motivation, teachers should vary learning tasks to make them enjoyable and challenging enough for students to complete. Furthermore, teachers

need to provide prompt and positive feedback about progress and areas on which students should particularly concentrate to engage their intrinsic motivation (Dörnyei, 2001).

Similarly, Nett, Goetz, and Hall (2011) placed strong emphasis on teachers' role in maintaining students' attention and taking into account their different needs, interests, abilities, and beliefs about learning English. In addition, research by Urdan and Schoenfelder (2006) on the effects of classrooms on student motivation indicates that relationships between teachers and students positively influence students' intrinsic motivation. They explain that unmotivated students can become engaged in activities if they believe that their teachers care for and support them by tailoring these activities to their needs and interests. With regard to the impact of classroom environments on language learners' intrinsic motivation, Yunus, Osman, and Ishak (2011) determined that by creating a supportive learning environment, teachers can stimulate learners' intrinsic motivation.

Ellis (1994) argues that besides teachers' efforts to motivate their students, teachers of English in Vietnam need to take into consideration students' culture-based learning styles to be successful. In relation to the interactive relationship between language and culture, the idea that suitable teaching methods involve teachers' ability to adapt materials to make them culturally appropriate (Ellis, 1994) seems to fit into the Vietnamese EFL teaching and learning context. Ellis (1996) also highlights the need to integrate local cultural norms into CLT employed in the classroom to be effective. Similarly, Le Ha (2004) confirms that to be successful teachers in Vietnam, teachers should locate themselves across two identity roles. As a teacher of English, the teacher should organize and get students involved in many language activities to learn English naturally, and as a "Vietnamese" teacher, the teacher needs to take into account socially-expected roles such as "behavior educator," "moral guide," or "students' confidant": someone who understands their needs and expectations.

In addition to culture-based learning styles, successful teachers in Vietnam need to know how learning autonomy is developed to facilitate their students' engagement in class. From his discussion on Vietnamese learner autonomy in learning English as a foreign language, Dang (2010, p. 4) states that in Vietnam, learning autonomy is "a socially-bound capacity," not an ability to work alone. He also emphasizes that Vietnamese students can become motivated and willing to take part in a learning process if enough encouragement is provided. He explains this by arguing that young learners in Vietnam consider knowledge from their teachers as "the only one correct source" (p. 6). This is because young Vietnamese learners are generally regarded as not ready to deal with many choices. Therefore, asking them to look for many knowledge resources on their own is likely to discourage them from class participation because they are familiar with "learning from their teachers" (p. 6).

Research to date has tended to focus on the integration of the learning cultures of Vietnamese students into CLT in the EFL teaching context in Vietnam as a way of raising students' interest in learning English. However, this does not place any emphasis on teaching a specific language skill. In addition, Pham (2005), a lecturer and teacher educator in Vietnam, has shared his ideas about the need for teachers to "reexamine some of their traditional beliefs and assumptions about language teaching and learning" (para. 32) when integrating Western features of CLT into the Vietnamese educational, social, and cultural contexts. He also suggests that studies should be conducted on how Vietnamese teachers incorporate the key concepts of a Western version of CLT into their own classes. With this in mind, this paper seeks to investigate whether or not a certain number of communicative activities based on the

above theoretical elements would be well-received and effective in TOEFL iBT and IELTS writing classes at an EFL center in the south of Vietnam.

Methodology

An action research approach was chosen within an interpretative paradigm to understand and interpret the current situation, the feelings of both teachers of writing classes and their students about the effectiveness of the activities. In accordance with the cycles of action research described by Coghlan and Brannick (2010), the research contained four stages: constructing, planning action, taking action, and evaluating action.

The constructing stage began when the researcher observed that some teachers were not pleased when assigned to teach writing courses. In the planning action stage, the researcher developed six questions (see Appendix A) to ask the ten writing teachers at the center about their writing classes and how they reacted to their own classroom situation to verify the researcher's observations and to learn more about how the teachers felt (see Appendix B).

The taking action stage involved the development of a range of activities with the aim of creating a positive atmosphere in TOEFL iBT and IELTS writing classes (see Appendices C and D). The criteria for organizing writing activities were:

- provide learners with achievable tasks (Harmer, 1991),
- design and organize writing tasks that help students master the language and skills needed to complete the tasks before asking them to write a coherent and well organized answer or essay, and
- select tasks of interest to students if possible (Dörnyei, 2001).

These activities were developed and taught by the researcher and were then evaluated by 92 students in seven pre-intermediate to advanced level TOEFL iBT and IELTS evening writing classes over a period of approximately eight months. Ten open-ended questions were then used to collect students' opinions on the effectiveness of the activities (see Appendix E).

The evaluating action phase involved the researcher performing a thorough interpretation of the data collected from the first three stages. In this final stage, the researcher also asked for the center's permission to examine feedback on the researcher's performance in these courses to help confirm the effectiveness of the activities.

Results and Discussion

Teacher Evaluation

The results of the survey administered by the center with these students gave support to the researcher's belief in the effectiveness of the activities used in the classroom. Approximately two-thirds of students agreed that their teacher's performance was "good" (62%) and almost a third said their teacher was "excellent." Only five out of ninety-two students reported that their teacher was either "satisfactory" (5%) or "average" (1%). None reported being unhappy with their teacher.

Table 4

Results of Class Surveys on the Teacher's Performance by the Language Center

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Average	Unsatisfactory
Number of students	30	57	4	1	0
Percentage (%)	32	62	5	1	0

Note. $N = 92$

Student Questionnaire

A questionnaire (see Appendix E) designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the activities was administered at the end of the course. The findings of the questionnaire are ordered below according to the level of importance given to the activities by the students.

Regular Feedback (Question 6). The results showed that 92% of students were happy to regularly receive teacher feedback on their writing. This demonstrates that the use of a teaching diary has very motivating outcomes. This activity also demonstrates the importance of the socially-expected role of teachers in Vietnam, who should act as the "students' confidant" (Le Ha, 2004) in class. In fact, teachers in these courses are expected to know their students' strengths and weaknesses and to instruct them appropriately on how to improve. By doing this on a regular basis, the teachers' role in class is similar to that of parents at home in Vietnam, who are always beside their children with advice and instructions. Socially-expected roles aside, regular feedback also reflects the teachers' care for the students' writing, thus meeting one of Dörnyei's suggestions for creating the basic motivational classroom (Dörnyei, 2001). Additionally, reporting on students' mistakes based on the teacher's notes is supported by Urdan and Schoenfelder's findings (2006) about teachers' roles in motivating their students in the classroom. Finally, showing students that their teachers accept them as they are and take their learning very seriously by checking and returning their writing quickly and with positive and encouraging feedback is highly appreciated. This strategy is proposed by Dörnyei (2001) and works well with this group of students in Vietnam.

Table 5

Results of Class Survey on Activities

Activities	Pair work, group work & class discussion	Visuals	Language for writing	Good samples	Bad samples	Teaching diary	Websites	Others
Number of students	76	76	74	72	69	85	71	80
Percentage (%)	82.6	82.6	80.4	78	75	92	77.2	87

Note. $N = 92$

Teacher Expertise (Question 10). As can be seen in Table 5, 87% of students were motivated by such activities as in which the teacher demonstrated expertise when completing "strange" tasks, such as explaining unusual charts that students brought to the class. This technique was designed to create trust in the teacher's expertise as this shows that the teacher is able to do not

only prepared exercises in the course book, but also completely new ones. Students may also feel proud of themselves because of the new, useful, and interesting tasks they discover. This conforms to the constructivist view of motivation (Brown, 2000) in Vietnamese contexts, because in Vietnamese culture, students value their teachers as masters (Dang, 2010) and they mostly respond in a positive and respectful way to those whose teaching is interesting. This cultural value in English language teaching is also accepted by almost all of the writing teachers in the survey (see Appendix B), where nine out of ten agreed that students' confidence in their teachers' ability was important in creating a positive atmosphere in class.

Interactive Activities (Questions 3 & 4). Pair work, group work, and class discussion were reported to be useful in building students' confidence in their writing (82.6%). Additionally, these interactive activities exhibit the feature of integrating culturally-based learning styles into consideration in organizing tasks (Ellis, 1994, 1996). In these activities, students' needs for sufficient correct information to organize answers to given tasks were taken into account. In particular, students need to know exactly what they will write in each answer. By directing them toward the skills and language they need, teachers guarantee their students that they will be successful in performing the tasks (Dörnyei, 2001). Students' extrinsic motivation aside, these interactive activities also reflect Dang's discussion on how encouragement is provided to get students' involvement and gradually develop their learning autonomy (Dang, 2010). In addition, this way of organizing activities in these writing classes partly responds to the suggestions by Pham (2005) on how Vietnamese teachers incorporate the key concepts of a Western version of CLT into their own classes in the Vietnamese educational, social, and cultural contexts.

Useful Language for Writing (Question 5). In the same perspective, providing students with language for writing, e.g., useful expressions, sentence structures, and vocabulary related to each writing task, was reported to be helpful (80.4%). This can be done by first inviting students to share with their friends the vocabulary related to the given topic they already know and then the teacher adding more to the students' vocabulary list. Helping students with language for writing before they write on their own also reflects students' high expectations of their teachers. Teachers are expected to be better than their students and they are supposed to offer the help (the language) the students need for each writing task. By doing this, teachers act out the expected role of teacher of English (Le Ha, 2004) and build their learners' trust in their teaching ability, which positively affects students' intrinsic motivation (Harmer, 1991).

Despite the difference in learner autonomy in Vietnam (Dang, 2010), the researcher in this study also helped her students find their own learning path by providing them with choices and negotiations in respect to learning something new and on their own with the available resources (e.g., the Internet).

Limitations and Suggestions

The researcher acknowledges that involving more teachers and carrying out interviews with students would have provided more data about the current teaching situation and presented more information about students' expectations. However, the aim of the study was not to generalize, but to gain some insights into what Vietnamese students at an EFL center expected their writing teachers to do in their TOEFL iBT and IELTS test preparation courses. Additionally, this study aimed to satisfy the researcher's curiosity about what makes the practice of teaching these courses effective and interesting. Although this research identified some ways to motivate students in TOEFL iBT and IELTS writing classes at a specific center, more studies of this kind at other EFL centers in Vietnam as well as in countries with similar

educational conditions should be conducted to provide a more complete picture of how teachers conduct their writing classes in the various cultural contexts of EFL learning and teaching.

Conclusion

The present study sought to suggest what writing teachers of TOEFL iBT and IELTS writing classes might do to get their students involved in their classes. Based on the researcher's observations, questionnaires for both writing teachers and students, and a course evaluation administered, the results of this study support previous findings suggesting that a culturally-based style of learning (Ellis, 1994) needs to be integrated into class activities.

Besides teachers' expertise and interactive activities based on CLT, Vietnamese students seem to expect their teachers to care about their studies and to show that they are always available with academic support. The cultural expectations of students identified in this action research project also provide insight for foreign teachers who wish to be successful in Vietnam.

Although each EFL center is unique, integrating cultural norms into the communicative approach seems essential for effective teaching in Vietnam and in other Asian countries with similar cultural values.

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Appendix A
Questionnaire on Teachers' Writing Practice

Dear colleagues,

Would you please help me answer 6 questions in the survey below by writing your answer directly under each question?

It is an informal survey about your writing practice. The results of this study will be treated confidentially and will be made available to you if requested.

I shall be very grateful if you can finish them at your earliest convenience. Please return the completed questionnaires by January 10, 2010.

Thank you so much for your assistance.

Please provide some of your biographical information

Gender: M …. F…. Age: ….. Degree held: B.A …. M.A…. PhD….

1. Are you pleased when you are assigned to a TOEFL iBT / IELTS writing class?

2. Do you follow the course book without any deviation or modify it with your own materials? Why?

3. If you supplement students with your own materials, do you have any criteria for selecting them? If yes, what are they?

4. Do you think that students' confidence in their teachers' ability to teach the skill is important in creating a positive atmosphere in the class?

5. What is the general atmosphere in your writing class? (boring, exciting, quiet...)

6. What do you do if your students are not happy in your writing class?

Thank you

Appendix B

Teachers' Ideas on Their Writing Practice

Teacher	Age	Gender	Degree	Feelings about teaching TOEFL / IELTS writing	Modify course book	Criteria for material selection	Belief on students' trust in teachers' ability	General class atmosphere	Reactions to quiet classes
1	52	F	BA	Pleased	Yes	Something different, additional	Yes, very important	Quiet	Give them something challenging
2	60	M	BA	Pleased	Yes	Clear, systematic and appropriate to students' level	Yes	Exciting	Find out why and adjust the class activity to their suggestions
3	34	F	MA	Pleased	Yes	Yes	Yes	Sometimes quiet, sometimes exciting	Change the teaching method and look for the cause
4	40	F	MA	Pleased	Yes	Structure practice; Vocabulary building; Skill practice for TOEFL iBT or IELTS tasks; Interesting topics	Yes, one of the few reasons to get them join classwork and homework	Exciting	Vary activities Provide games Create class writing blog Give them scores
5	50	M	MA	So so	Yes	A lot	Yes	Quiet	Make them work (write or discuss)
6	40	F	MA	So so	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not very exciting and not very quiet	Use pair work and group work
7	45	M	MA	No	Yes	Appropriate to course book objectives	Yes	Ok	Look for something interesting to entertain them
8	57	M	MA	No	Yes	Provide useful language, samples from low to high levels	Yes	Motivating	Think about how to motivate them
9	56	M	BA	No	Yes	Students' level & age	Partly	Exciting most of the time, but sometimes boring	Change the teaching method, talk to them to find out the cause
10	51	F	BA	No	Yes	Something new	Yes	So so	Keep them busy Supplement with interesting materials

Appendix C

A Summary of Activities and Techniques Used by the Researcher

Class Activities and Techniques	Application
Pair work	Integrated writing (TOEFL iBT Task 1): - exchanging notes made from reading and listening materials with other students - paraphrasing and synthesizing the information from the materials IELTS Writing Task 1: - analyzing visual data (discussing overall trends & key data) - orally describing the charts (instead of individual writing) - writing the answer (after orally describing the charts with their partner) Peer correction: - checking first draft writing - giving each other feedback on content, language and organization (see Ur, 1996, p. 171, for its usefulness)
Group work	Integrated writing (TOEFL iBT Task 1): - note taking on the content of the reading and listening - paraphrasing, summarizing, and synthesizing the content of the reading and listening: these activities give each student exposure to various paraphrased sentences, and this helps enrich their sentence structures - making an outline for the answer, ensuring that students know how the answer to each task should be organized IELTS Writing Task 1: - interpreting visual data (discussing overall trends and key data) IELTS and TOEFL iBT Task 2: - brainstorming ideas before students write the answer (getting more ideas, vocabulary and structures from their group) - outlining (helping students logically arrange their ideas) Peer correction: - offering students a chance to exchange their ideas about mistakes as well as the good points they picked up from their friends
Class discussion	Integrated writing (Task 1, TOEFL iBT): - checking students' work on summarizing, paraphrasing, and synthesizing the reading and listening materials or providing them with necessary vocabulary, expressions and structures - orally constructing the answer (all students taking turns to orally add and join sentences to construct a complete answer instead of writing it out quietly and individually)

Class discussion (continued)	Brainstorming: - checking students' ideas from pair or group discussions (sharing the ideas that each group developed in their discussion before writing a complete answer on their own) All tasks (Tasks 1 & 2, TOEFL iBT & IELTS): - analyzing samples of good or bad writing pieces written by other students (student writing pieces which were intentionally chosen by teachers to enhance students' awareness about what was right or wrong in their writing)
Visuals	Using PowerPoint and Hot Potatoes (to change the class atmosphere; useful for Task 1 IELTS & TOEFL iBT) to teach, show, or practise: note-taking paraphrasing and summarizing using transitional words reorganizing mixed sample answers the theory of how to write an academic essay samples of good introductory or concluding paragraphs (See some examples of PowerPoint lessons from this website: http://www.virtual.yosemite.cc.ca.us/lumanr2/English_25/index.htm)
Teaching diary	Keeping a notebook with students' names to note each student's strengths, weaknesses, common mistakes, scores obtained for each writing piece, and individual reports on the progress of selected students in need of private help in their writing
Other	Moving around the class while students are writing to observe and note students' interesting ideas or common mistakes on the board or on the computer screen Checking and quickly returning writing assignments with positive and encouraging feedback Using symbols on a list of correction keys (e.g. "N" for mistakes with noun usage, "V" for verbs, "sp" for spelling and "vt" for verb tenses) Encouraging students to ask questions to clarify their mistakes Encouraging students to bring "strange or new" materials, such as unusual charts, to class (Task 1, IELTS) Suggesting some useful writing websites for students to study on their own at home (Appendix D) Providing students with some kind of entertainment in writing (video clips of topics relevant to the integrated writing tasks in the course book)

Appendix D
Some Useful IELTS / TOEFL iBT / Academic Related Sites

Essay Writing:

http://www.virtual.yosemite.cc.ca.us/lumanr2/English_25/index.htm

IELTS Writing:

http://www.ieltstips.com/ielts_test/about_ielts/online_ielts_resources.html
http://www.ielts-test-practice.com/ielts-resource.html
http://www.examenglish.com/IELTS/IELTS_writing.htm
http://www.aippg.com/ielts/ielts-downloads.htm
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-zHcoGdUg8

TOEFL iBT Writing:

http://i-courses.org/?p=writing_tips

Academic English Wordlists:

http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/~alzsh3/acvocab/
http://www.academicvocabularyexercises.com/

BBC Podcasts:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts/

Appendix E
Student Survey on Writing Classes

To help your teacher improve the effectiveness in teaching writing, please answer the following questions in English or Vietnamese. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

1. Are you interested in the PowerPoint lessons your teacher used in class? Do these lessons better help you focus on the lessons? Why? Why not?

2. Do you think the lessons created by Hot Potatoes are useful in your writing classes? Why? Why not?

3. Do you think the pair work and group work your writing teacher organizes in your current writing class is effective or not? Why or Why not?

4. Do you think it is necessary for you and your friends to discuss the given topic before you write a complete essay about it? Why? Why not? Are you interested in working with your friends to write the answer in class?

5. Do you think the useful expressions and sentence structures for each kind of writing given by your teacher are helpful to you in your writing the answer or not? Why or why not?

6. Are you interested in being informed about your strengths and weaknesses in your writing by your teachers? Why?

7. Do you think reading good writing samples given by your teacher is useful? How does that help you?

8. Do you think reading and analyzing mistakes in the writing by another student is helpful? How does it help you?

9. Do you find the websites suggested by your teacher useful? How? Why and why not?

10. What do you think of some other activities organized by your writing teacher, such as moving around the class and showing you your mistakes or good ideas for writing, providing you some kinds of entertainment, asking you to bring strange tasks to the class, and the way she provides you feedback on your writing?

Other comments:

Thank you

Post-Text and In-Text Corrective Feedback

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Abstract

A number of studies have shown that feedback on writing has a positive effect on improvements in drafts. Studies have focused on indirect and direct forms of feedback, as well as comparing different treatments of indirect feedback. In particular, studies have compared correction keys (in-text feedback) with highlighting or underlining errors. This paper describes an alternative system, *post-text* feedback, in which comments are made on language errors at the end of the text rather than through a correction key. The rationale for this system is described with reference to relevant research. To evaluate its potential effectiveness, two small groups of learners were given feedback based on two systems: in-text and post-text feedback. Written drafts from the participants were then compared to determine if post-text feedback led to an equal amount of correct revisions.

Types of Feedback in L2 Writing

Studies have researched feedback in terms of *direct* and *indirect*. In direct feedback, the teacher provides the form necessary to correct an error. In indirect feedback, the error is marked, but the correct form is not provided. Several types of indirect feedback are described below.

In-Text Coded Feedback. One example of indirect feedback is the usage of a correction key (see Appendix A) to mark errors within the text of the learner's writing. This type of feedback is usually referred to as *coded* feedback. A key consists of symbols or abbreviations corresponding to common errors. Table 1 shows an example of teacher feedback and the desired learner correction.

Table 1

Correction Key Examples in Practice

Teacher Feedback	Learner Revision
wf I was very happiness.	I was very happy.
I asked∧brother.	I asked my brother.

Note. See Appendix A for the correction key.

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Research by Ferris (2006) demonstrated "a strong case for the superiority of indirect feedback over direct feedback for facilitating student writing improvement over time" with her particular population of students (p. 98). While there was no significant difference between direct and indirect feedback in the short term, longitudinally, students who had been given indirect coded feedback did improve more.

An important benefit of indirect coded feedback is that students may spend more time thinking about their mistakes, which may lead to more long-term improvement; this could be the reason for the long-term improvement shown by Ferris (2006). There is a possible drawback, however. If the teacher indicates every instance of a missing article, for instance, the student may not pay attention to the error. It is easy to simply add a missing definite or indefinite article without asking questions such as "Why should I use *a* here?" or "Why does this word take *the*?"

In-Text Uncoded Feedback. A second type of indirect feedback consists of highlighting errors in the text without a key, often called *uncoded* feedback. Learners are not given guidance on what particular type of error each error is. Research by Ferris and Roberts (2001) compared marking errors with codes, underlining errors alone, and no error feedback at all. The study compared drafts of learner writing which were commented on by teachers, and analyzed the drafts to determine if learners had corrected the errors. The findings showed that learners who had been given some form of error feedback performed better than those who had been given none. However, there was no significant difference between the two feedback treatments. Ferris and Roberts' (2001) findings correlated with earlier studies, such as that by Robb, Ross and Shortreed (1986, cited in Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005), whose study suggested that while feedback is beneficial, the type of feedback does not make a significant difference. In view of the teacher's workload, the conclusion that can be drawn from this is that it is better to use the simplest and quickest form of indirect feedback: uncoded highlighting with no correction key. However, all forms of feedback mentioned have potential drawbacks as well as benefits (see Table 2).

Post-Text Feedback. Post-text feedback is an alternative method of indirect feedback. As with uncoded feedback, the teacher highlights or underlines grammar and vocabulary errors in-text. The teacher then notes significant or repeated error forms and comments on them at the end of the text, maintaining the key advantages of in-text, coded feedback. The only in-text feedback consists of highlighting or underlining. Crucially, not every type of error needs to be mentioned. For instance, a minor mistake with subject-verb agreement, such as "He work in a bank," could simply be highlighted if it is not a recurring problem throughout the piece. In contrast, a problem with grammatical voice that potentially affects meaning, such as "The man was bite the snake," would be both highlighted and then commented upon post-text. There are several potential advantages to post-text feedback (see Table 2); one is that both learners and the teacher have an overview of common problems and do not have to look through the text to find repeated errors.

Table 2

A Comparison of Types of Feedback

		Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Direct		Errors are corrected by writing the correct word or sentence	Leads to correct revisions (S)	Takes a great deal of time (T) Does not require cognitive effort (S) Potentially less long-term improvement (S)
Indirect	In-text (coded)	Errors are marked using a correction key	Leads to correct revisions (S) Requires cognitive effort (S) Potentially more long-term improvement (S)	Takes time (T) More difficult for learners to acquire an overview of common problems (S) More difficult to use for review (S / T)
	In-text (uncoded)	Errors are highlighted or underlined only	Quick (T) Leads to correct revisions (S) Requires cognitive effort (S) Potentially more long-term improvement (S)	Potentially demotivating (S / T) More difficult for beginner learners (S) Difficult to use for content feedback (T)
	Post-text	Errors are highlighted and a summary is given at end of the text	Leads to correct revisions (S) Requires cognitive effort (S) Potentially more long-term improvement (S) Easy to use for review (S)	

Note. (T) refers to the perspective of teachers, (S) to that of students.

A Note on Content and Language Feedback

The studies mentioned above focused on errors in language, including grammar, vocabulary usage (and spelling), as well as other linguistic features such as transition signals. Other studies have focused on content feedback. Content is the meaning or message of the text, rather than the language. Content comments may focus on the accuracy of statements or on support for propositions. As Ferris (2003) notes, assessing improvements in content is problematic. Studies have analyzed content scores after content feedback, but this is a subjective measure. Kepner (1991, cited in Ferris, 2003, p. 37) suggested that "message-related" feedback had a positive impact on students' thinking and writing skills, but again this is difficult to assess in an objective way. It was felt that content feedback was less relevant to the post- and in-text distinction; therefore, in this study, only comments on language were analyzed.

To evaluate the post- and in-text systems of feedback, action research was conducted on a small group of students. Focusing on errors in language (including in discourse), students' essay drafts were analyzed to determine if post-text feedback led to fewer correct revisions than in-text feedback.

Action Research Question

Does post-text feedback lead to fewer correct revisions than in-text feedback for language errors?

Methodology

Participants and Instructional Context

The participants were four first-year university students in Japan. They were enrolled in an intensive English language program. The study took place during the fall semester, the second semester of the program. All entrants to the program had a minimum GPA of 3.7 on a four-point scale and a TOEFL ITP score ranging from 450 to 487. Thus, in the view of the author, they were motivated to pay attention to the feedback given by the teacher.

Four students were selected at random for the study at the end of the course. It was felt that an in-depth analysis of the students' work would be sufficient; however, a larger sample would have been beneficial (see the discussion of limitations in the Conclusion). Each of the two pairs of students took part in different sections of the same course. Each class comprised 15 students, all of whom received the same essay assignments. Both classes were taught by the author and followed an identical syllabus and curriculum. The only difference was in the method of feedback used.

Design

The four participants completed three essay assignments, each with four drafts. The assignments were typically around 650 words. The topics were chosen by the students, based on a framework given by the teacher. For instance, students were assigned a comparison and contrast essay in which they compared two countries of their choice.

The drafting procedure followed the POWER-S System, summarized in Table 3 below. The POWER System has been used by a number of practitioners, including Anderson, Raphael, Englert, and Stevens (1992), and Kluge and Taylor (2007). It was further refined by Aloiau (2009), who added the final "Share" stage in which writing is shared with peers.

Table 3

The POWER-S System

Stages	Description
Pre-write	Learners generate ideas through discussion or free-writing
Organize	The ideas are organized into a coherent plan
Write	The first draft
Evaluate	The draft is evaluated
Rewrite	A second draft is produced
Share	This draft is shared with others (peers or the teacher)
	The process then returns to edit, rewrite and share until a final draft is produced

Based on POWER-S, the drafting process consisted of four drafts for each assignment. The first draft was a rough draft. It was edited by the student alone, with some general guidance from the teacher for the class as a whole in the form of an editing checklist and "mini lectures" on common problems. Learners then wrote a second draft. This was edited by their peers, the other students in the class. Again, general guidance was provided. Students then wrote a third draft, which they submitted to the teacher. It was this draft that received the written feedback. Based on the comments, the students revised and produced a final draft (FD). This draft then received further feedback; in terms of language, this consisted of a checkmark against errors that had been corrected, and direction correction of those that had not.

From an individual learner's perspective, it can be argued that it is most beneficial for students to receive comments from the teacher on all drafts. However, comments were reserved until

the third draft (D3) for three main reasons. Firstly, self-editing builds learner autonomy and encourages a cooperative relationship with the teacher (Cresswell, 2000; Ferris, 2002). Secondly, peer-editing allows students to learn from each other, as well as fostering a more positive affective environment (Hafernik, 1983). Finally, it is impractical in terms of time for most teachers to comment on four drafts of each assignment, and thus for this study would not reflect actual teaching practice.

Participants in one class, referred to henceforth as Student 1a and Student 1b, were given in-text coded feedback on their D3. A correction key was used (see Appendix A). Participants in the second class, referred to as Student 2a and Student 2b, were given post-text feedback on D3. Errors were highlighted in the body of the text. Important comments were given at the end of the text.

Both groups also received direct feedback on errors judged untreatable. These were errors beyond the learners' current level of language development. For instance, the error "In both countries, people eat rice main dish" was corrected to "In both countries, people eat rice as their staple dish." The phrase "staple dish" was necessary for the essay, but it was felt that the student could not correct this alone. These corrections were disregarded in the study.

The four participants' essays were analyzed, focusing on errors in language. Errors from D3 were compared with the revisions in the FD. If the problem commented on had been revised correctly, the error was judged to be corrected. Occasionally, other developmental issues arose as a result of learners acting on teacher feedback: correcting one error led to another error emerging. For instance, in the phrase "Recently, biomass energy use is increase . . ." *is increase* was marked as a verb error. The participant corrected the phrase to "Recently, biomass energy has increased to use." The verb error was corrected to the appropriate present perfect form. However, in the first phrase, *use* was employed correctly as a noun, while in the FD, *use* was incorrectly changed to the infinitive form. These developmental errors were disregarded in this study, as it was felt that these errors were unlikely to be connected to particular styles of feedback. In other words, the errors were caused by learners making the revisions, rather than the way that the teacher commented on them. Further research may be needed to determine whether or not this is the case.

Results

Across the two groups, 44 errors were commented on indirectly by either in-text or post-text feedback. A large number of errors, 110, were also commented on directly, the majority of which consisted of deleting or inserting particular words (see Appendix B for examples). Occasionally, the teacher corrected whole sentences. The students appropriately revised all direct corrections in the FD.

The in-text group corrected 74.1% of the errors commented on by the teacher in D3, a total of 20 out of 27. Of the remaining seven errors, one was not corrected at all and six were incorrectly revised in the FD.

The post-text group was able to correct 82.4% of the errors in the FD. Fourteen errors out of 17 were corrected, and three were not corrected at all.

There were some differences between the two feedback styles. One noticeable difference was that post-text feedback led to revisions that were either correct or were not revised. Contrastively, in-text feedback led to several incorrect revisions, but no errors were left

unchanged. This may be an effect of the level of language skills of the learners: five of the incorrect revisions were made by Student 1a and two by Student 1b. Student 2a revised all but one error correctly, while Student 2b left two errors uncorrected. Using a correction key may lead learners to try to correct errors, but highlighting text may be insufficient if the problem is unclear to the learner.

Certain types of errors appeared to lend themselves best to certain types of feedback. Examples from the learner texts are given in Appendix C.

In-Text Group

Articles. Correction of article errors from in-text correction was variable. Thirteen errors were commented on, of which three were not corrected. This suggests that, while students are aware that an article needs to be used, a correction key does not help them choose the correct one (*a, an,* or *the*). It is possible that post-test feedback may be more effective. The teacher can give advice on, for example, article usage, such as "Use *the* when there is only one. Example: The Japanese government."

Word Forms. Students made errors using word forms, such as using "environmental" rather than "environment." Student 1a's writing contained three errors in word forms that were commented on using a correction key; two were successfully corrected (see Appendix C). It is possible that the sentence structure affected how easy these forms were to correct. In the example below, the word following *on* in "are based on" is clearly a noun. In contrast, the sentence "…both countries are good <u>environmental</u> to raise rice" the presence of nouns and verbs (*raise, rice*) may have made the sentence less clear. Post-text comments, however, could have given an example of how to use this structure: "Harajuku is a good place to go shopping = X + be + article + adj. + noun + infinitive."

Post-Text Group

Transition Signals. "However," "In contrast," and "For example" are common transition signals. A number of errors were found in both Student 2a and Student 2b's texts. These errors were highlighted, and the learners were able to add an appropriate transition in all seven instances.

Word Forms. Both Student 2a and Student 2b made word form errors (three and two, respectively); these were commented on post-text. Student 2a was able to correct all errors. As shown in the example in Appendix C, giving the learner an example of a similar sentence can be enough. It is important to recall that the highlighted portions of the text were not numbered or linked to the post-text comments; this was to encourage students to spend more time evaluating their own errors.

Conclusions and Future Research

In this study, learners were able to make corrections to their writing based on both types of feedback. Although post-text comments led to a slightly higher percentage of correct revisions, the amount and types of errors compared were different, so it is impossible to draw any conclusions from the results.

However, the two types of feedback are not necessarily equally well suited to all errors. A combination of feedback types is likely to be the most beneficial to learners. Post-text comments may be effective for easily generalizable errors with such as rules as "Use *the* when there is only one" or "be + influenced + by + something." When a correction key is used,

some types of errors may lead learners to randomly select an article or verb form, for example. In contrast, post-text feedback may assist learners in noticing a general rule.

There were a number of important limitations regarding this study. Firstly, due to the small sample size, it was difficult to compare how learners actually corrected errors. With a larger sample size, it would be possible to compare particular errors, such as word forms, to determine which feedback form led to more correct revisions. Secondly, the small sample size also meant that the individual learner was a more important factor than the feedback type. Learners may have been able to correct their writing regardless of the style of feedback given. Finally, it was not clear if learners were paying attention to the post-text comments or not; it was not possible to determine if errors were corrected as a result of the type of feedback or simply because *some form* of feedback was given. Future research is thus required to determine which of the forms of the feedback is more effective in a wider sense.

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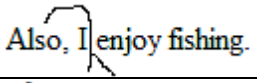
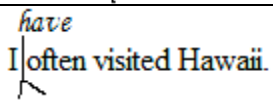
Appendix A
Example of a Correction Key

vt	*Verb tense* x I have been to France last year. ✓ I went to France last year.
ww	*Wrong word* x The company was born. ✓ The company was established.
wf	*Wrong form* x He introduction the plan. ✓ He introduced the plan.
p	*Punctuation* x I bought some ice cream but my dog ate it. ✓ I bought some ice cream, but my dog ate it.
sp	*Spelling* x She was very speicial. ✓ She was very special.
Japan and USA is both…	(Highlighted) *Easy mistake* Check your essay better! ✓ Japan and the USA are both…
? ? ? The plan was aspectation of many instance.	*I do not understand all of this.* Write it again using different words.
I agreed. So we went there.	*Link these sentences* ✓ I agreed, so we went there.
I asked∧brother.	*Missing word* ✓ I asked my brother.
	*Move this here* ✓ I also enjoy fishing.
	*Add this here* ✓ I have often visited Hawaii.

Adapted from Oshima & Hogue (2006). *Introduction to academic writing* (3rd ed.). New York: Pearson Longman.

Appendix B
Examples of Direct Feedback

Direct Correction		
Teacher comment	Reason	Learner revision
~~I think that~~ people should sometimes do things that they do not enjoy.	Unnecessary use of "I think"	People should sometimes do things that they do not enjoy.
Secondly, most societies function ~~with~~ *as a result of* people's effort.	"With" is unclear	Secondly, most societies function as a result of people's effort.

Appendix C
Examples of Successful and Unsuccessful Revisions

In-Text Feedback

Error type / Student	Teacher comment	Learner revision	Successful Y/N
Article / Student 1b	Today there are many companies … in ∧ financial industry	Today there are many companies … in a financial industry	N
Word form / Student 1a	*wf* . . . both countries are good environmental to raise rice	No revision	N
Word form / Student 1a	However, both political systems are based on *wf* democratic.	However, both political systems are based on democracy.	Y
Missing word / Student 1b	For example, ∧ of Mitsubushi UFJ bank's first grade workers who graduated from university are two millon yen.	For example, wages of Mitsubishi UFJ bank's first grade workers who graduated from university are two million yen.	Y*

Post-Text Feedback

Error type / Student	Teacher comment	Learner revision	Successful Y/N
Transition signal / Student 2a	It means that the person who has talent can skip the grade regardless of age. Young people may study with elder friends. Post-text comments: *Use more transitions.* *Result = Therefore, / As a result,* *More = Furthermore, / In addition,*	… Therefore, young people may study with elder friends.	Y
Transition signal / Student 2a	On the other hand, in Japan, we cannot do that. ~~Also~~ the two countries are different in terms of treating children. Post-text comments: *Use firstly, secondly, finally to separate points*	… Secondly, the two countries are different in terms of treating children.	Y
Word form / Student 2a	Japan was strong effect by America Post-text comments: *Use an adverb with verbs* *Be + adv. + influenced + by + something* *She was greatly influenced by her mother.*	Japan was affected by America strongly	Y**

* *Note*. The article is missing, but the main issue has been addressed.
***Note.* This example was different from that given by the teacher, yet the word form is correct.

Making News: A Successful Example of Project-Based Learning

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Abstract

Project-based learning (PBL) recently has been favored by teachers using various adaptations throughout the world. The purpose of this article is to share the experience of developing language skills via a project called "Faculty Voice." In this project, second-year students of English, worked in groups as news editors to produce news; the traditional classroom environment no longer existed. The teachers gave feedback and help when students faced problems with language and technology. All activities related to the learning process were required to cover all four macroskills. Proper criteria and rubrics were also set up for assessment. At the end of the term, changes were found not only language competence and attitude, but also in some important soft skills.

The Need to Change

Through the fast development of technology, the mass media has seen great progress in their effort to satisfy a large number of customers. From a linguistic and pedagogical view, the mass media have made a great contribution to both learning materials and learning methods. In addition to using news texts adjusted for student reading materials and listening extracts, the process of students "making news" by writing, producing, and presenting their own news broadcasts has been used as a technique for them to practice and acquire a foreign language. In the movement toward innovation in language teaching at the Foreign Languages Faculty at Thainguyen University in Vietnam, making news was undertaken as a project-based learning (PBL) technique for second-year English majors with the main aim of enhancing English competence among students and experimenting with a new way of learning and teaching.

Formerly, teachers were encouraged to design their lessons in such a way that there needed to be a more communicative context for learners themselves to produce the language item after it was presented and control-practiced. This P-P-P (Present, Practice, and Produce) approach was seen as the core of communicative methodology and proved to be more effective than previous approaches. However, teaching and learning is always demanding work, and the P-P-P approach sometimes seemed inadequate. More tasks and activities needed to be integrated into the approach to create more student interaction and meaningful communication. In this age of internationalization, learners are in a more accessible world of learning, not limited to a forty-five-minute class with teachers as the only source of knowledge. The question for teachers is how to create an authentic task for students to learn and how to

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integrate students' exposure to the language into the syllabus. Among sources of access to language after school, news programs or channels in the target language appear to be common. The application of PBL is not new at the faculty (Diem, 2009), but making news as a language task had not yet been done before at the university.

Features of PBL

According to Esch (1998), PBL starts with an idea of the final result. Students must investigate the topic, plan how to achieve the desired result, and manage problems that may arise, as they would in a real-world setting. While undertaking the project, students gain a specific set of content knowledge and skills. Thomas (2000), citing Bereiter & Scardamalia (1999), claimed that to be a PBL project, "the central activities of the project must involve the transformation and construction of knowledge. . ." and added that "if the central activities. . . represent no difficulty to the student or can be carried out with the application of already-learned information or skills, the project is an exercise, not a PBL project" (p. 4).

Advantages of PBL

PBL has become increasingly favored for its unique features in effectiveness and adaptability. The first outstanding advantage is its focus on content learning rather than on a specific language target. Another immediate benefit of PBL lies in its learner-centeredness. This student direction encourages students' autonomy and creativity throughout the course of the project. More critically, "PBL projects do not end up at a predetermined outcome or take predetermined paths" (Thomas, 2000, p. 4). When students can pursue their own interests and become engaged in their own learning, they discover hidden capacities that are restrained in the traditional learning context and use this area of strengths to achieve at higher levels. As a result, student autonomy and learning responsibility are developed.

Authentic integration of skills is also widely seen as a reason for PBL to be utilized. Learning in a real-life context, learners not only have authentic language input to develop their language competency, but also have opportunities to use other skills, such as those for IT, teamwork, critical thinking, and professional knowledge. The real-world connection gives students a "break from routine" (Gallacher, 2004, para. 2), as they can do something different beyond the classroom environment. This permits authentic assessment, involving the teacher and students, as well as real audiences to thoroughly assess students' end product. Another feature of PBL is that it "accommodates and promotes collaboration among students, between students and the teacher, and ideally between students and other community members as well" ("Project Based Learning," n.d., para. 6). Students learn to work in small groups that are more cooperative than competitive. Interpersonal relations are developed and gradually form the way students will work with others later in life. Finally, PBL enables students develop learning skills that will be useful beyond school.

The News-Making Project

After considering the abovementioned underpinnings and highlights, PBL was seen as a potential and practical approach and was chosen to be one of the major experiments for curriculum innovation.

Participants

The 35 intermediate-level participants were second-year full-time students at Thainguyen University. They were sampled by their own wish. These 35 students made up one class for this news project. The class met once a week for 3 periods (45 minutes per period) during the

15-week term. At the beginning of the school year, all available projects were briefly described to all students, and they decided which project they wanted to do.

Objectives

The objectives of the project were to:

- Help students practice language skills via the activity of broadcasting radio news.
- Extend students' vocabulary and general understanding on various aspects of everyday life such as education, sports, culture, and the economy.
- Develop other skills such as computer skills, organizing, information processing, critical thinking, and teamwork.
- Create a real-life context for learning, and hence enhance students' confidence, autonomy, and responsibility.

Procedure

There was no textbook. Students were free to choose what they wanted to work on. In the first week, students were provided with the objectives and requirements of the project. They also grouped themselves on their own and appointed a group leader. In addition to choosing a title for their "broadcasting station," they were also required to sketch a plan for the whole term. To help them fulfill this task, a handout was delivered as a guideline, as shown in Figure 1.

News Schedule

* Group members: 1. .....
2. .....
3. .....
4. .....
5. .....

* Station title: .....

Broadcast	News	Activities (Try to make use of real events and unpublished information to create the news. Don't translate or edit published information for every news item.)
1st Broadcast	News 1	
	News 2	
	News 3	
2nd Broadcast	News 1	
	News 2	
	News 3	
3rd Broadcast	…	

Figure 1. Project framework

This was the most important step in doing this project. As shown in Figure 1, students, working in groups, were responsible for selecting news to broadcast. They had to report real events or unpublished information. This framework was seen as the reference for students to follow throughout the term and for the instructor to use in supervising or checking the products.

After the framework (or schedule, as it is titled in the handout) was approved by the instructor, students started working as correspondents, hunting for news, editing, and producing broadcasts. All the proposed activities to make news items and broadcasts had to meet the requirements agreed upon at the beginning of the course as follows:

Project Requirements

- ✓ News reports are produced every three weeks (in 5-7 minutes) reporting events of the class / faculty / college, book reviews, film reviews, TV program reviews, tips for learning, sports, countries, tourism, health, etc. Students are free to choose the content of the news providing that it's impressive, truthful or worthwhile.
- ✓ News reports are recorded and submitted to the instructors.
- ✓ Recorded news is played to other students in the form of Faculty Voice during the breaks.
- ✓ Opinion polls or surveys can be done to get feedback / comments from the listeners (about the content of the news and their friends' speaking skills).
- ✓ All members are required to read the news of the week. The name of the newsreader and reporter(s) should be mentioned.
- ✓ The news should follow the schedule as planned in the schedule of a week. Exceptions are allowed for news to report seasonal holidays or local events happening around the year.
- ✓ It should be noted that activities related to producing news must cover all four basic skills. Listening to English TV channels and English radio programs is a MUST.
- ✓ It should be borne in mind that the target audience of the radio news is students of the Faculty.

Figure 2. Project requirements

Among the requirements mentioned above was a new idea proposed by the author. The project created a program that was called "Faculty Voice." Every three weeks, the complete products of all groups were broadcasted to all other students of the Faculty during break time.

Project Assessments

The products of the project were broadcasts produced throughout the term. Assessment rubrics were designed and introduced to all groups in the first week. The assessment criteria for the broadcast included a logical and cohesive schedule, delivery techniques such as sound effects and newsreader changing, pronunciation, and fluency.

Broadcast Rubrics Excellent 10-9 Good 8-7 Fair 6-5 Poor 4-0			
Criteria	Description	Comments	Grade
Schedule	All broadcasts are logically scheduled and cohesive. Newscast establishes a purpose at the beginning and maintains that focus throughout! Work is divided fairly among members.		
Delivery techniques	The news item runs smoothly and is clearly introduced. The transfer of newsreaders is professionally done. Symbolic music / transfer sound is used at the right time and in proper ways (e.g., volume, length, and rhythm).		
Pronunciation	Newsreader pronounces words, phrases, and sentences correctly. Few mistakes are found.		
Fluency	News is read naturally and fluently without hesitation, repair, or redundant fillers. Appropriate emotions are shown in corresponding news content.		
			Total: ___/40

Figure 3. Assessment rubrics for Faculty Voice broadcasts

Before broadcast, draft versions were submitted to the instructors, and students used the rubrics to self-assess their work. The broadcast rubrics were also employed when students peer-assessed their friends' news, the audience gave feedback on "Faculty Voice," and the instructor gave final marks. Apart from broadcast assessment, other rubrics were used to assess students' portfolios (written news items to evaluate students' use of language and attitude).

Teaching Approach – Instructors' Roles

There were two instructors for this course. In this project, teachers and students no longer worked together in 45-minute lessons with textbooks. Teachers acted as instructors, giving guidance in choosing events to report, activities, and broadcast themes. More importantly, teachers prepared lessons to familiarize students with news language and structures. One structure, creating headlines, was a difficult task (headlines should be impressive and follow specialized grammatical and lexical rules). Additionally, the language features of sports news were very different from those of weather or entertainment news. Therefore, it was necessary to provide students with basic background knowledge to produce news.

Instructors were also responsible for providing technical support. Producing a broadcast involved certain IT techniques such as editing audio files or cutting transfer music. This was not an easy task, as students worked in groups and individuals took turns reading the news items. Next, news items were edited and combined to make a complete broadcast. Not surprisingly, it took students much time to deal with technical problems. The instructors had to provide appropriate software and instructions to use the required software. It must be mentioned as well that in Vietnam, not all students could afford audio / video recorders, laptops, or even desktops; in addition, some students had limited computer skills. Therefore, before doing this project, students were required to take a compulsory course included in the curriculum, such as IT Applications in Language Learning and Teaching. The instructors were also ready to work in the computer laboratory if students needed computers for their projects.

Another important responsibility of the instructors was to give feedback and correction. Instructors and students met every week to edit news drafts, with teachers giving advice on news language, genre, news structure, and the right choice of words or expressions, along with correcting pronunciation and intonation. Using the appropriate emotions necessary for reading news was also a focus of attention and practiced by students.

The last function of the instructors was supervising. The instructors followed the news-producing schedules proposed by "stations," checked regularly whether students were following the schedule or not, and reminded them of deadlines. The date for editing and publishing news was fixed, so students needed to be on time in writing news reports and rehearsing for broadcasts. Without the instructors' input, students might have spontaneously changed direction every time they became aware of new ideas for news stories and would likely have fallen behind schedule. It was stated, however, at the beginning of the term, that students could change the order or content of newscasts to match the seasons or local events; however, they had to inform their instructor in advance to see if it was advisable to make the change.

Subject Evaluation

At the end of the term, a subject evaluation form (see appendix) was administered to obtain students' feedback of all subjects in the term, including "Faculty Voice." Additionally, the grades of all end-of-term tests were studied to examine students' progress.

Results and Discussion

With regard to project implementation, particularly this news project, the following results were found.

Firstly, the idea of "Faculty Voice" was much appreciated by the students and seen as a stimulus for them to complete the project. More than 90% of the students highly appreciated it. They eagerly waited to listen to their voices from the loudspeaker during break time. When students were asked to give comments on the activity, some remarks were given, as summarized below:

- Students preferred feedback and comments from their friends.
- This event successfully created an enjoyable and educational atmosphere for students.
- Students realized the activities were meaningful and that they were making progress.
- They saw their work as a real show with a real audience.

Therefore, students taking part in this project put much care and practice into producing news. They worked as real reporters.

Apart from the positive learning attitude, much progress was found in the language competence and soft skills of all students. Progress was particularly seen in the high grades they gained in the subjects of Oral Proficiency and Written Proficiency. This can be reasoned from the following points: (a) news items were products of language activities (e.g., interviewing, reviewing, conducting surveys, summarizing programs on English channels, discussing in groups, and being a newsreader) that involved the use of all four macroskills; (b) drafts were revised by peers and the instructor; and (c) proofreading was also required before broadcasting. Students also received feedback from listeners and hence accumulated experience in learning with each broadcast. Additionally, some soft skills, such as negotiation, teamwork, information processing, critical thinking, and IT were also exploited to the full and improved. In summary, the project proved to be a good chance for students to practice the use of the language.

Finally, from the observation of the author, attempting this new model helped to shape new learning methods and teaching approaches. In this textbook-free classroom, students were independent in deciding what to learn and how to learn. They worked both in groups and individually to reach the aim of the project. Their autonomy was initially established and enhanced. They no longer depended on the teacher as the only source of knowledge. Teachers, in turn, changed their traditional role to support students in the project. They worked as coordinators to moderate groups, as facilitators to provide technical support, and as instructors, supervisors, and examiners. This kind of project-based learning also required teachers to be flexible in choosing a suitable role in various situations. Teachers and students worked together, cooperated, and compromised to reach an end.

However, the author, when working as a teacher, did face some difficulties. Since students worked independently in groups both inside and outside the classroom, it was not easy to ensure the equal contribution of each group member. Some group members worked more and some less. To avoid this problem, apart from the teacher monitoring the students, the role of group leaders should be emphasized. The leaders were the ones who distributed the tasks among their group members and reported to the teacher about the performance of their friends. It also took the teacher much time to give technical support, and there was the possibility that some students' requests might go beyond the teacher's ability to solve. Therefore, it would be ideal if the institution could provide a laboratory with available equipment to help students with such projects.

The project was a part of curriculum innovation at the Foreign Languages Faculty of Thainguyen University in Vietnam, so it was an official subject in the curriculum. In other cases, where PBL is not approved to be a separate subject, there could still be many other ways to apply it. Teachers could integrate it into a certain class as practice in writing news, reading news, listening and summarizing news, or reading the news aloud, for example. From all these practicing activities, students could gather their products to make a mini broadcast. With teachers' creativity, PBL can be easily adapted to make language learning more effective and pleasurable.

Conclusion

In conclusion, PBL, although it was only experimentally integrated in the curriculum for a short period of two terms, created many changes in the faculty. Students changed their learning

methods. Teachers changed their way of teaching. Everyone no longer depended on the traditional classroom with a ringing bell, a textbook, chalk, and a board. The impact was not only seen in those who took part in the project, but also on other students and teachers who knew about it, enjoyed its results, and observed its progress. The atmosphere of the whole faculty also changed when it was time for each new broadcast, and the project's reputation was passed by word of mouth. It is the author's personal belief that this type of learning should be employed and implemented in other subjects or with other products to motivate students in acquiring a foreign language.

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Appendix
Subject Evaluation Form

Subject:_____ Group: _____
Teacher:_____ Semester/Academic year:_____

Read the following statements carefully and give your idea by ticking in the appropriate box.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	No idea
Teaching Methods				
(1) The teaching methods of this subject are suitable.	☐	☐	☐	☐
(2) I will apply some of the similar methods to my future teaching.	☐	☐	☐	☐
(3) The teacher made proper integration between introducing new subject matters and revising the old ones.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teaching Materials				
(4) Supplementary materials from the teacher were more interesting than the course book.	☐	☐	☐	☐
(5) All the materials used in class were challenging but suitable with the subject.	☐	☐	☐	☐
(6) All these materials will be useful for my future teaching.	☐	☐	☐	☐
General Comments				
(7) This subject is very important in language teaching and learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐
(8) The final assessment mark precisely reflected my knowledge of the subject.	☐	☐	☐	☐
(9) My knowledge was much improved at the end of the subject.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other comments: .....

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Task-Based Language Learning and Student Motivation in Vocabulary Acquisition

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Abstract

This article explores the impact of task-based language learning on motivating non-English majors to acquire vocabulary at a community college in Vietnam. An experimental study was used to investigate the effectiveness of the use of text-based tasks to enhance students' vocabulary. The quantitative analysis used data from a questionnaire and vocabulary tests to examine students' motivation in vocabulary learning over twelve weeks. The qualitative analysis from follow-up interviews with students examined their attitudes towards the use of text-based tasks in terms of task-based language learning. The findings indicated that the participants were motivated to learn vocabulary and their vocabulary achievement improved after the experiment. Suggestions for language teachers to make better use of this approach are also discussed.

Vocabulary is viewed as a major part of language proficiency as it allows learners to use four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Richards & Renandya, 2002). This importance is recognised whether the language in question is a first, second, or foreign language (DeCarrico, 2001). However, many students at the community college level in Vietnam lack the vocabulary needed in many real-life situations, for example, at job interviews. This may be due to poor motivation, insufficient practice, and ineffective ways of learning vocabulary. Forty-eight percent of second-year students and 51% of first-year students at the community college in this study scored below five points out of ten on a vocabulary test at the beginning of the second semester. It could therefore be argued that the traditional vocabulary teaching technique in use, to some extent, was not an effective way to help students to communicate in English. Hence, it was important for the teachers of English at this college to stimulate students to learn vocabulary to improve the students' vocabulary gain. A different approach in teaching vocabulary to arouse students' interest in learning vocabulary needed to be considered.

The effects of task-based learning (TBL) in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) classes have been addressed in the literature by a wide range of research. Studies have shown that

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tasks can be used in vocabulary classes to enhance learner motivation and vocabulary gain (de la Fuente, 2006; İlïn, İnözü, & Yumru, 2007; Joe, 1998; Kavaliauskienė, 2005; Prabhu, 1987; Ruso, 2007). However, there had not been any empirical research in this field at the community college level in Vietnam. In particular, at the community college in this study, the TBL approach had not been used in English classes or with vocabulary learning. Therefore, this research aimed to utilise the task-based approach to engage students in learning vocabulary.

Theoretical Framework

This section reviews the literature on three concepts that are critical to motivating students to learn vocabulary: task-based learning and task, motivation, and vocabulary acquisition.

Task-Based Learning and Task

Willis (1996) argues that TBL combines communicative language use with a focus on language form. Thus, this approach is likely to provide learners with opportunities to connect old knowledge to other learning tasks in a communicative way (Ellis, 2003).

A number of definitions of task have been suggested (Bygate, Skehan, & Swain, 2001; Nunan, 1989; Prabhu, 1987; Willis, 1996). However, this study draws on the definition of task by Willis (1996): a task is "[an activity] where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome" (p. 23). This definition suggests the idea that tasks can bring learners to the meaningful use of a foreign language because language use is more important than language practice (Nunan, 2004). Activities involve the learners in completing the tasks assigned. The end product or the learning outcome may be linguistic, for example, an answer to a question, or non-linguistic, for instance, asking for directions to get to a particular place.

In addition, Ellis (2003) indicates five task features. First, a task is an activity in teaching and learning a language. This type of activity requires learners to use the target language to achieve a particular purpose. Second, a task focuses on meaningful activities or on the language form. Third, a task involves language use in terms of communication, to allow learners opportunities to take part in meaningful interactions to complete a specific assignment. Fourth, a task uses one or more language skills. Fifth, a task involves learners in understanding the use of the target language.

In this paper, tasks are described as text-based tasks. According to Willis (1996), text-based tasks use texts as a starting point. Texts in this study specifically refer to the reading texts in the *English KnowHow Opener* course book, which is currently used at the community college in this study. Willis (1996) further mentions that texts allow learners to use the target language; thus, with text-based tasks, learners must interpret the meanings within the text. Based upon Willis' (1996) framework of TBL, the text-based lessons designed for the experiment include pre-task (before the reading), in-task (while reading), and post-task (after the reading) tasks. Willis' (1996) framework has three stages: pre-task, task cycle, and language focus, which are shown in Figure 1.

Pre-Task

Teacher explores the topic Students note down useful words and phrases, spend time preparing for the individual task

Task Cycle

Task	Planning	Report
Students do the tasks in pairs or small groups Teacher monitors and encourages communication	Students prepare to report to the class Teacher provides language advice	Students present reports Teacher acts as a chairperson and provides feedback

Language Focus

Analysis	Practice
Students examine and discuss features of the text enter new words or phrases Teacher reviews and analyses the activity	Teacher conducts practice of new words, phrases Students practice the task

Figure 1. Willis' (1996) TBI framework

Motivation

Ellis (2003) suggests that the task-based approach brings a variety of benefits to learners; one of the most important is motivation. Motivation is therefore likely to be seen as the key to all learning. Once students are motivated, they can complete the given tasks or desired goals (Brophy, 2005).

Gardner and Lambert (1972), who grounded motivation research in a social psychology framework, introduced instrumental motivation, which refers to the learner's desire to learn a language for utilitarian purposes (such as employment, travel, or exam purposes) in the context of language learning, and integrative motivation, which refers to the desire to learn a language to integrate successfully into the target language community. Deci and Ryan (1985) classified motivation into two different categories: intrinsic and extrinsic. This paper focuses on intrinsic motivation, which is concerned with the internal incentive to do things for one's satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Lepper & Malone, 1987).

According to Lepper and Malone (1987), seven factors promote intrinsic motivation: four individual factors (challenge, curiosity, control, and fantasy) and three interpersonal factors (competition, cooperation, and recognition). Individual factors are associated with what students are doing in their own efforts. Interpersonal factors play a role only when students are interacting with others. Thus, intrinsic motivation allows students to experience a sense of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and responsibility for their learning.

Vocabulary Acquisition

Vocabulary acquisition is viewed as an integral part of language teaching and learning, especially in learning a foreign language (Huckin & Coady, 1999). There are two main approaches to vocabulary acquisition: explicit learning and incidental learning (Schmitt, 2000). Explicit learning focuses on word study (Schmitt, 2000) and incidental learning involves more use of language than the learning itself (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). Both types of learning are important and interrelated (Schmitt, 2000). This study particularly focuses upon incidental vocabulary learning, because it is seen as a by-product of reading and listening in and outside the classroom context (Huckin & Coady, 1999). Thus, this type of learning includes both receptive and productive vocabulary (Ahmad, 2011; Nation, 2001). Nation (2001) also suggests three processes of mastering vocabulary: noticing (formal instruction), retrieving, and generating (learner-based). These processes highlight the cognate relationships between the target language and mother tongue and provide exposure to the language and background knowledge of vocabulary (Gass, 1999), all of which influence vocabulary learning. Other factors that may promote vocabulary gain include topic familiarity, time spent on learning, level of intake, and lexical retention (Pulido, 2004). From these perspectives, vocabulary learning in this study is focused on a process of integrating text-based tasks with language skills.

This review has considered the literature of task-based learning, motivation, and vocabulary acquisition. The review also highlighted the importance of the use of tasks relevant to this study. Thus, the research aimed to investigate the impacts of text-based tasks on motivating students to learn vocabulary. The research principally helped English language teachers gain insights into text-based tasks that effectively encourage students to develop their vocabulary knowledge. The research attempted to answer two questions:

1. To what extent do text-based tasks motivate non-English majors to acquire vocabulary and enhance their vocabulary acquisition?
2. What are students' attitudes towards the use of text-based tasks in vocabulary class sessions?

Methodology

The study used a two-group pre-test and post-test design, considering TBL as the independent variable, whereas students' motivation in vocabulary learning and students' vocabulary acquisition were two dependent variables. Text-based tasks based on Willis' (1996) framework were implemented. A questionnaire on intrinsic motivation was administered to investigate students' motivation in vocabulary learning before and after the experiment. The vocabulary pre-test and post-test specifically aimed to measure students' vocabulary acquisition. Individual interviews on students' attitudes towards TBL were conducted after the experiment. Four analytical tests (scale tests, descriptive statistic tests, independent samples t-tests and paired samples t-tests) were computed to analyse and interpret the data.

Participants

Seventy-six freshmen (48 females, 28 males) in non-English majors at Vinh Long Community College in Vietnam participated in this study. Their age range is from 18 to 20. Most students had learned English as a required subject for six years in high school. The participants were randomly placed in one of two classes: a control group class and an experimental group class. The classes met once a week for forty-five minutes. The data for only 70 participants was included in the data analysis because six students failed to attend all test sessions. One hundred and fifty students of a similar level of English proficiency to the study participants

(intermediate level) were involved in the pilot of the questionnaire and vocabulary tests. To validate the study, two teachers were invited to administer the tests and mark students' papers.

Procedure

To reach the research goals in this study, questionnaires, tests, and interviews were used. The questionnaires were used to investigate the participants' motivation in vocabulary learning (see Appendix A). The 18 items on the questionnaire, rated with a five-point Likert Scale (McDonough & McDonough, 1997), were adapted from the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The vocabulary test was developed from vocabulary and structures in the *English KnowHow Opener* course book. The construction of the test followed Hughes' (1989) test specifications, which included recognition and production. This five-part test (see the test sample in Appendix B) was administered to the participants both as a pre-test to examine their vocabulary competence and as a post-test to measure their vocabulary gain. Interviews with nine students from the experimental group were conducted to explore participants' attitudes towards the use of TBL.

The materials used in the current study were seven reading texts from the students' course book *English KnowHow Opener* (Naber & Blackwell, 2003). Seven text-based task lessons (see Appendix C) including the three stages of pre-task, task cycle and language focus were generated based on Willis' (1996) framework for TBL.

This experiment was conducted within the twelve-week regular class term. The pre-questionnaire was administered to both groups on the first day of class. The participants took the vocabulary pre-test once they completed the pre-questionnaire. The reading lesson was taught to both groups. The difference between the two groups was that the researcher teaching the two classes used a traditional method of teaching vocabulary in the control group while she applied text-based tasks to the experimental group every two weeks. After the experiment was completed (Week 12), the post-questionnaire and the post-test were delivered to both groups at the same time. At Week 12, after the post-test and questionnaire were administered, individual interviews with students from the experimental group were conducted.

Findings

Student Motivation

Before the Experiment. The results revealed that the mean difference (*MD* = -.00) in student motivation to learn vocabulary between the control group (*M* = 3.58, *SD* = .26) and the experimental group (*M* = 3.59, *SD* = .29) was extremely small, which indicated that the initial levels of motivation to learn vocabulary between two conditions were similar (*t* = -.14, *df* = 68, *p* = .88). In other words, the two groups were homogeneous in terms of motivation to learn vocabulary at the beginning of the experiment, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Independent Samples T-Test (Pre-Questionnaire)

Questionnaire	Condition	*N*	*t*	*df*	Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)	*MD*	*SD*
Pre	Control	35	-.14	68	3.58	.88	-.00	.26
	Experimental	35			3.59			.29

After the Experiment. Table 2 below shows that the mean score of student motivation of the experimental group (*M* = 3.93, *SD* = .21) was much higher than that of the control group (*M* = 3.60, *SD* = .21). In addition, the mean difference (*MD* = -.32) in student motivation to learn

vocabulary between the two groups after the study was a statistically significant difference (t = -6.24, df = 68, p = .00). These results indicated that the level of student motivation between the two groups after the experiment was significantly different. It was concluded that the experimental group outperformed the control group in terms of motivation to learn vocabulary after the experiment.

Table 2

Independent Samples T-Test (Post-Questionnaire)

Questionnaire	Condition	*N*	*t*	*df*	Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)	*MD*	*SD*
Post	Control	35	-6.24	68	3.60	.000	-.32	.21
	Experimental	35			3.93			.21

In general, student motivation to learn vocabulary in the control condition before and after the experiment was almost unchanged, whereas the motivation of the experimental condition increased dramatically. Moreover, the mean score for student motivation on the post-questionnaire in the experimental group was statistically higher than that of the control group. Consequently, the experimental group outweighed the control group in terms of student motivation to learn vocabulary at the end of the experiment. Figure 2 illustrates the increase of participant motivation for vocabulary learning.

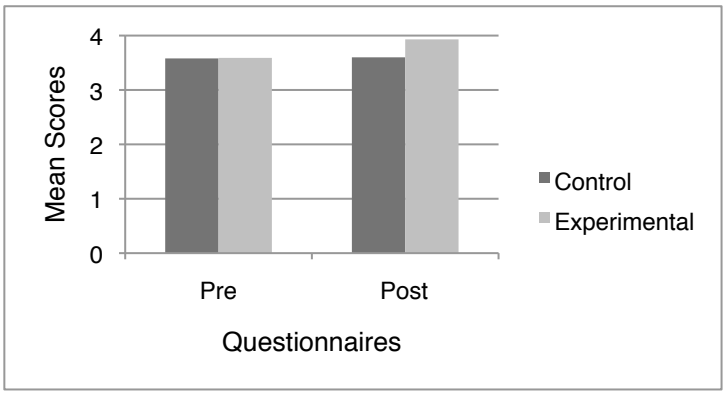

Figure 2. Participants' motivation between and within the control and experimental classes, pre- and post treatment

Students' Vocabulary Achievement

Before the Experiment. Before the experiment, the mean difference (*MD* = .00) in learners' vocabulary pre-test scores between the two groups of students was very small, which showed that the initial levels of students' vocabulary competence between the control group (M = .31, SD = .11) and the experimental group (M = .30, SD = .12) were very similar. These results indicated that both groups did not differ significantly (t = .15, df = 68, p = .88) in their vocabulary competence. Hence, the homogeneity of the two groups in terms of vocabulary competence was established at the beginning of the experiment, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Independent Samples T-Test of Two-Group Vocabulary Performance (Pre-Test)

Test	Condition	*N*	*t*	*df*	Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)	*MD*	*SD*
Pre	Control	35	.15	68	.31	.88	.00	.11
	Experimental	35			.30			.12

After the Experiment. The results shown in Table 4 reveal that the mean difference (*MD* = -.14) in students' vocabulary post-test scores between the two groups is significantly different (*t* = -.54, *df* = 68, *p* = .00). Performance was much better on the vocabulary post-test in the experiment condition (*M* = 1.73, *SD* = .11) than in the control condition (*M* = 1.59, *SD* = .10), which seemed to indicate that the level of vocabulary achievement in the experimental group was much higher than that in the control group after the experiment.

Table 4

Independent Samples T-Test of Two-Group Vocabulary Performance (Post-Test)

Test	Condition	*N*	*t*	*df*	Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)	*MD*	*SD*
Post	Control	35	-.54	68	1.59	.00	-.14	.10
	Experimental	35			1.73			.11

Generally, vocabulary achievement in both conditions increased significantly after the experiment, but the vocabulary gain of the experimental group (*M* = 1.73) outweighed that of the control group (*M* = 1.59). Figure 3 displays the vocabulary achievement of both groups.

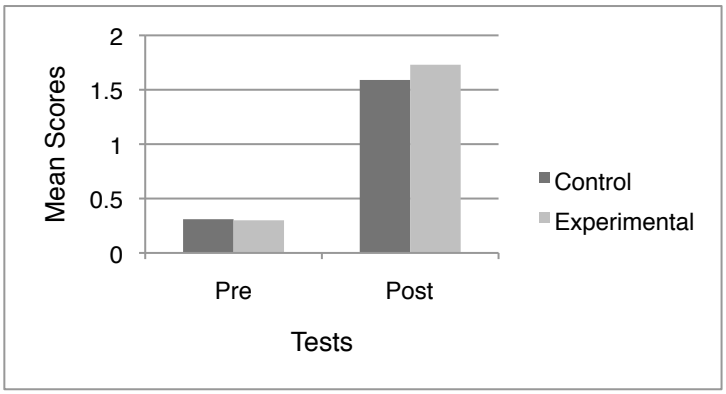

Figure 3. Participants' vocabulary achievement

Participants' Attitudes Towards the Use of Text-Based Tasks

In Week 12, nine students from the experimental group were interviewed in Vietnamese to investigate their attitudes towards the use of TBL for incidental vocabulary acquisition. Most of the students reported that they preferred TBL to traditional methods of teaching vocabulary and they expected to have such text-based tasks repeated in subsequent semesters. Student 1, for example, stated, "This is the first time I've experienced this method and done those activities. I find it exciting to learn with this way." (All quotes from students have been translated.) In this quote, the student indicated the value or benefits of text-based tasks being involved in the experiment. Another student stressed the role of small group work through learning vocabulary in context, saying "I like working in groups because each knows one word so the whole group can work out the answers." When asked about the choice between traditional vocabulary learning techniques and task-based learning (text-based tasks), other students mentioned that each student has his or her own idea, enabling the student to contribute to the group. These students not only understood the importance of the text-based tasks, but also highlighted the opportunities to express their own ideas. In general, it could be asserted that students had positive attitudes towards the use of TBL in vocabulary acquisition (see Appendix D).

Discussion

The findings indicate that participant motivation to learn vocabulary in the experimental group increased substantially after the experiment. The study suggests that employing TBL with the experimental group considerably promoted student motivation in learning vocabulary. The results support Kavaliauskienė's (2005) finding that students were receptive to task-based learning in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes. Specifically, this study reinforces the role of TBL in enhancing student learning suggested by Ruso (2007).

At the end of the experiment, participant motivation to learn vocabulary in the control group was almost the same as at the beginning, whereas student motivation in the experimental group increased sharply (see Figure 2). This finding could be due to the appropriate use of TBL in the classroom. Willis (1996) claimed that TBL provides learners with a wide range of advantages, for example, a comfortable learning environment that allows shy students to overcome stress or fear and speak or have discussions with others. Consequently, students in the experimental group were motivated to do the tasks.

Another factor to explain the increased level of student motivation in the experimental group to learn vocabulary could be the tasks themselves. These text-based tasks were designed to be real, meaningful, and learner-centred (Skehan, 1998), giving students an active role in participation; hence, their motivation increased. One more reason for increased motivation could be that the tasks used with the experimental group were designed to match the factors that promoted intrinsic motivation (Malone & Lepper, 1987); the text-based tasks usually included some of the seven factors. Learners were highly motivated when working towards personally meaningful goals whose attainment required activity at an intermediate level of difficulty; challenging, but achievable tasks enhanced the motivation of the participants in the experimental group.

Students in both groups improved their vocabulary achievement. However, the mean difference in post-test scores between the two groups is statistically different. The level of vocabulary achievement in the experimental group was much higher than that in the control group. The results imply that TBL significantly improved students' vocabulary achievement. The finding is consistent with that of Joe (1998), who found that tasks related to reading promote incidental vocabulary acquisition and expand vocabulary in EFL classroom contexts. The findings also support de la Fuente's (2006) study that task-based vocabulary lessons have an impact on word retention in second / foreign language learning.

The students' vocabulary achievement in the experimental group improved substantially (see Figure 3) as a result of three reasons. First, it is likely related to the utilisation of the TBL strategy. It was evident that students who did not even use the words, but simply observed the negotiation (Newton, 1995), could remember meaning-negotiated lexical items better than non-negotiated items. Second, the nature of the text-based tasks explained students' vocabulary improvement. According to Jacobs & Navas (2000), these types of tasks are likely to motivate students to learn a language in a practical way. Third, the text-based tasks were tailored to support the vocabulary acquisition processes, the real steps that were carried out within the classroom, based on Willis' (1996) framework. Figure 4 illustrates these processes.

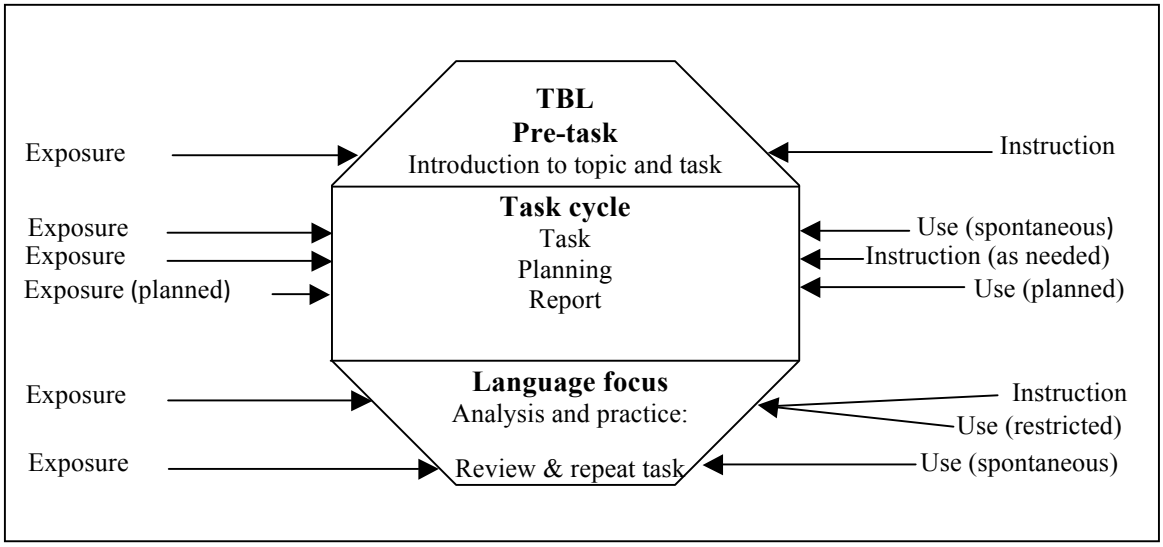

Figure 4. A typical TBL lesson based on Willis' (1996) framework

Conclusion

The findings have shed new light on the effectiveness of TBL in promoting students' vocabulary. The study may raise teachers' awareness of learners' attitudes towards TBL and, in particular, may offer teachers encouragement to utilise TBL in their practice. The results also provide both teachers and students with insightful perspectives into how TBL plays an important role in the process of teaching and learning vocabulary. These impacts will usher in positive attitudes towards the use of TBL within the context of vocabulary teaching. Significantly, TBL learning may become a promising vehicle for teachers to do further research, optimise the use of teaching resources, and ultimately maximise student learning in vocabulary.

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Appendix A
Intrinsic Motivation Questionnaire (Sample)

Adapted from Deci & Ryan (1985)

Class: Student Code: Gender: □ Male □ Female

Check (✓) the box that best describes your viewpoint toward each statement.

No.	Statements	Scale				
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	I enjoy doing vocabulary tasks very much.					
2.	It is fun to do vocabulary tasks.					
3.	I am relaxed while I am doing vocabulary tasks.					

Appendix B
Vocabulary Pre- and Post-Test (Sample)

Student Code: Gender: □ Male □ Female
Class: Score:

I. Choose the most appropriate synonym for the underlined word

1. Write down the *answer* for this question.
   a. principle b. response c. slave d. beach

10. Please *switch off* the television. It's too noisy.
    a. turn off b. make up c. expect d. design

II. Circle the letter that is the best answer.

11. Many people can't stop smoking cigarette. It's very …….
    a. extreme b. spices c. addictive d. varying

30. There are a lot of…….on radio and TV. Many people don't like them
    a. avocado b. spices c. variety d. advertisings

III. Write the correct word to complete its definition. The first letter has been given as a cue

31. U……..…….…… is the best.

40. T……..……. is a kind of musical instrument

IV. Give the opposites of the following words. The first letter of the opposite has been given as a cue.

41. present # p

50. reach # f

V. Fill in the blank with a suitable word or phrase that you have learned. The first letter of the word has been given as a cue.

51. Our professor is good at many things. He is a man with many **t**……..……..…..

60. The USA is a **p**……..country in the world.

Appendix C
A Task-Based Lesson

TOPIC 1: Cooking in different parts of the U.S.A.
Level: Elementary Duration: 45 minutes
Objectives: By the end of the lesson, the students will be able to understand new words in context and then compare American dishes and Vietnamese ones
Preparation: Pictures of ham and a hot dog; handouts

Stage	Aims	Procedure	Interaction
Pre-task	Students (Ss) are introduced to the topic with Activity 1.	Ss discuss 3 questions (Activity 1) then share ideas. Teacher (T) shows pictures of ham and a hot dog.	pairs
	Ss identify topic language with Activity 2.	Ss work out word meanings in contexts (Activity 2).	whole class
		T models the pronunciation of new words. Students repeat.	whole class groups
Task cycle 1 *Task 1*	Ss are exposed to English. Ss scan the text and complete Activity 3.	Ss scan the text and fill in the map (Activity 3).	groups
Planning 1	Ss write down answers.	Ss summarise answers in writing and role play the report. T may facilitate their answers.	groups
Report 1	Ss report answers to class.	Some pairs report to class. Others listen and check the answers. Ss ask questions and T provides feedback.	whole class
Task cycle 2 *Task 2*	Ss use English. Ss read the text and do Activity 4.	Ss reread the text and complete the chart (Activity 4).	groups
Report 2	Ss tell the class their answers.	Some pairs report to class. Others listen and check the answers. Ss ask questions and T gives feedback.	whole class
Language focus	Ss analyse and practice English by doing Activity 5.	Ss categorise new words in Task 2 according to their parts of speech and read them (Activity 5). T may correct their pronunciation.	groups
Analysis1	Ss define parts of speech of new words.	Ss select new words and give Vietnamese meanings. T may give feedback.	pairs whole class
Analysis 2	Ss analyse word meaning and identify synonyms by completing Activity 6.	Ss choose the synonyms of the words on the left (Activity 6). T may give feedback.	groups whole class
Practice 1	Ss compare Vietnamese and American dishes using Activity 7.	Ss compare Vietnamese and American dishes using given categories, then tell the class (Activity 7).	groups

Appendix D

Extracts from Student Interview Transcripts (English Translation)

Questions	Interviewees' Opinions
How do you feel about the use of task-based learning in class?	"This is the first time I experience this method and do those activities. I find it exciting to learn with this way." (S1, S4) "Some tasks are fun and challenging." (S2) "I like doing those activities, especially working in groups to find out the answers." (S3, S8) "It is interesting to compare my group's answer to those of others." (S4, S9) "I like this learning atmosphere very much because I feel the time passes quickly. I am not tired and bored and I don't think the time is over." (S5, S6, S7) "I am not used to this way of learning. I feel embarrassed."(S8)
If you were given the choice between the traditional vocabulary learning techniques and task-based learning, which would you prefer? Why?	"I know a lot of new words with this method." (S1, S5) "I think those tasks are very useful. I would like to learn with this method next semester." (S3, S6, S7) "Those tasks include both old and new vocabulary, so I can guess the meanings of new words based on the old ones." (S1, S4) "I choose the new method because I can remember new words immediately. It takes me a shorter time to remember the lesson and I remember it longer." (S2, S4) "I like working in groups because each knows one word so the whole group can work out the answers." (S2, S3) "Each student has his/her own idea so they can contribute to the group."(S7, S9) "This method is interesting. Such activities help us to work out word meaning and we remember them longer." (S2, S5) "Thanks to those activities, we know about some American styles of cooking. They are interesting because they are not what we expected." (S9) "I like this method because it helps us become more dynamic. We speak more when doing the tasks and we feel less nervous in front of the class." (S1, S3) "I like the traditional vocabulary learning because I have a lot of difficulties with this new method. It is clearer if the teacher gives the answers. Guessed meanings of words are ambiguous. I get frustrated because of many new words. I do not catch up with my friends. I am slow to work out the answers. I like working with the next person because I do not like to move." (S8)

Note. S = Student

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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 the 2011 Volume, accepted papers are published on a biannual basis. Submissions are welcome and will be considered in an ongoing process throughout the year. The first issue of each volume will highlight exceptional papers presented at the annual CamTESOL Conference Series during that publication year.

The current publication includes papers presented at the 8th CamTESOL Conference held on 25-26 February 2012. Each volume is initially online for public viewing on the CamTESOL website: http://www.camtesol.org/

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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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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:

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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.

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