



**CamTESOL Conference on
English Language Teaching:
Selected Papers
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Foreword

The Globalization of ELT: Emerging Directions was the theme for the 5th annual CamTESOL Conference on English Language Teaching held at the National Institute of Education, Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 21 and 22 February 2009. This year's conference saw a growing number of delegates, both international and Cambodian, and these selected papers of the conference reflect the globalization of the conference itself. Papers from professionals working in 10 countries on a wide variety of topics are included. The selected papers have been chosen from a total of 218 papers delivered at the conference from professionals in 20 countries. This sharing of research outcomes, knowledge, experience, and, indeed, professional friendship over the last five years has brought Cambodia from relative ELT obscurity onto the international conference circuit.

CamTESOL was privileged to have HE Im Sethy, Minister of Education, Youth and Sport, open the 2009 Conference. In his opening address, the Minister mentioned how important foreign languages have become to allow people to communicate internationally and how his ministry has put tremendous efforts into teacher training programs, academic curriculum development, and more productive teaching in Cambodia. He spoke of the necessity of establishing links between the local ELT and the international ELT communities to build up quality ELT institutions. The CamTESOL Conference provides a substantial forum for this in Cambodia.

The 5th CamTESOL Conference featured two plenary speakers. Professor Jun Liu gave the plenary speech titled "Complexities and Challenges in Training Nonnative English Speaking Teachers: State of the Art." Liu made the point that the majority of ELT teachers worldwide are in fact non-native English speakers. He discussed the state-of-the-art research in the area, the particular challenges and difficulties non-native English speaking teachers face, and the framework of training that can be developed to cater for these teachers. The teaching of grammar, a popular area for ELT discussion, was the focus of the plenary speaker Professor Anne Burns' paper "Grammar and Communicative Language Teaching: Why, When and How to Teach It?" Professor Burns gave an overview of various theories of grammar which have influenced ELT and discussed their key characteristics. She examined the recent international research into the approaches teachers take when integrating grammar into their teaching practice, and the effectiveness they believe these approaches have.

The featured speaker, Alan Maley, returned to the theme of Globalization in his discussion of the varieties of English: English as an International Language (EIL) and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in his paper “Global English? Implications for the Teacher.” Maley demonstrated his belief that the ELF model was untenable and offered some alternative suggestions for teaching English in international settings.

Globalization formed a thread in a further three of the selected papers from Cambodia, Thailand, and the UK. Keuk Chan Narith’s paper, “How Intelligible is Cambodian English Variety? A Look from Foreigners’ Perspectives” discusses how pronunciation, word choice, grammar, and cultural differences in English spoken by Cambodians can lead to unintelligibility. Keuk’s study revealed that when faced with communication difficulties, both Cambodians and foreigners successfully use strategies to help resolve communication problems. The actual and potential impacts of globalization on the use of foreign English-speaking volunteers as English helpers in rural Cambodian schools is the focus of Marie-Madeleine Kenning’s paper “Globalization and the Use of Volunteers in ELT: Enhancing Volunteer Impact.” Kenning looks at the effects of globalization before, during, and after a volunteer’s term of service. In the paper “English for Future Careers: Globalization for Mechanical Technology Students,” Steven Graham explains how, in a form of globalization gone wrong, the course English for Future Careers is taught in some Thai government universities to students who will not use English for their job interviews or indeed in their future careers. The course has been creatively developed to comply with government requirements, while still meeting the needs of the students.

The area of research into intercultural issues is explored in two selected papers. Yoko Shimura from the University of New England and Barnaby Ralph from Aoyama Gakuin University wrote the paper “Breaking the Silence Barrier: Language Education and Cultural Appropriacy.” Shimura and Ralph explore the culture of silence in the context of language education through interviews with Japanese and non-Japanese teachers and question

whether ESL teaching which deliberately targets and attempts to overturn existing social mores is the best way to proceed. Intercultural communication is taken up by Zhang Bei in the paper “Speaking in Different Communication Styles.” Zhang’s research on international English speakers and local Chinese English speakers indicates that it is significant for bicultural and bilingual English speakers to learn cultural differences in communication styles so that they can develop their speaking skills to meet the needs of cross-cultural communication.

Issues in teaching and teacher training are a major area of focus for these selected papers, with six papers dealing with this topic. Joyce Maeda and Akemi Kawamura, working in Japan, wrote their paper “Developing Pragmatic Competence: Study Abroad and Classroom Instruction” on the effects of studying abroad compared with explicit classroom instruction on the development of the pragmatic competence of Japanese EFL learners on the speech act of requesting. Maeda and Kawamura concluded that learners in a variety of EFL cultural environments in traditional classroom settings can develop pragmatic competence similar that of students who have completed study abroad programs. A further paper from Japan, “Professional Development Needs of Cambodian Teachers of English: International Comparison with Japanese and Korean EFL Teachers,” written by Koji Igawa and Naoko Tsujioka, shows how the stated preferred areas for professional development from a small-scale survey of Cambodian teachers widely differ from similar surveys of Japanese and Korean teachers.

Huong Thi Bao Dinh, in the paper “Factors Influencing EFL Novice Teachers’ Adoption of Technologies in Classroom Practice,” shows through research in Vietnam that professional development and technical support are required before teachers will implement technological changes in ELT. Richmond Stroupe, Alex Chirnside, Danny Sasaki, Greg Lindeman, Lary MacDonald, and Helen Smith examined Japanese students’ and English teachers’ expectations in their

paper “Students’ Expectations and the Language Learning Context.” The research investigated expectations of both groups and whether student expectations were reflected in classroom practice.

Student motivation to learn grammar through implicit grammar instruction was found to be high among intermediate level students at Can Tho University in Vietnam. Ngo Thi Trang Thao’s paper, “Promoting Discovery Learning through Implicit Grammar Instruction: A Measure to Increase Learner Acquisition of English Tenses” documents the extent to which discovery-learning enhanced students’ acquisition of verb tenses and their motivation to learn grammar. A genre-based approach to ‘language across the curriculum’ (LAC) was found to be useful to English and content teachers when mapping out LAC teaching in a secondary school curriculum in Hong Kong as shown by Elza Tsang and Barbara Choy in the paper “Integrating English, Science and Liberal Studies Across the Curriculum.”

Papers on the teaching of reading, writing, and speaking skills were well represented in the selected papers this year. Miki Tsukamoto, Brian Nuspliger, and Yusuke Senzaki show how technology has provided Japanese students with the opportunity to speak English using web conferences with high school students in the U.S. in their paper “Using Skype to Connect a Classroom to the World: Providing Students an Authentic Language Experience Within the Classroom.” As a result of these conferences, the students were more motivated to speak English. They increased the amount of time spent speaking English and found added enjoyment in their classes. A second paper on speaking skills by Grace H. Y. Wong titled “Teaching Seminar Skills in the Asian Context” outlines how the challenges of teaching seminar skills in a Hong Kong university were overcome through the application of ongoing research. The paper offers guidelines for teachers of seminar skills to Asian students.

Four papers focus on the skill of reading. Shaun O’Dwyer’s paper “Objectivity, Subjectivity, and Getting the Meaning in Intensive English Reading”

upholds, through his insights into the processes of gaining meaning in intensive reading with foreign/second language learners, that meaning is an objective, rather than a subjective construct, as assumed by radical constructivist theory. Research by Huynh Cong Minh Hung in the paper “Applying Cognitive Load Theory in Reading Comprehension” introduces and analyses the split-attention effect in reading comprehension tasks. Huynh’s research showed that the integrated format was more beneficial to student reading comprehension in EFL/ESL. Reading comprehension was the focus of a second selected paper by Rajenthuran Subbiah and Noriah Binti Ismail, whose research findings offer practical value to educators faced with students who lack appropriate reading skills for reading comprehension in “The Use of Effective Reading Strategies to Improve Reading Comprehension.” Subbiah and Ismail offer ways to overcome the problems by teaching a variety of reading strategies. A second paper on reading from Vietnam by Nguyen Thi Thu Ha and To Thi Thu Huong titled “A Study of EFL Instruction in an Educational Context with Limited Resources” reports on Content-Based Instruction (CBI) in reading classes at a university English department. It was found that there was a mismatch between the beliefs of teachers and students and a lack of professional-subject-related topics in the reading programs, as well as faulty design and implementation of the intended curriculum. Suggestions for using CBI to improve the teaching of ESP and curriculum/materials development are offered.

Elizabeth Walter-Echols’ paper “Teaching Writing by Modeling Genres Through the Teaching-Learning Cycle” provides a brief recent history of writing pedagogy and some background to the genre approach, before demonstrating the use of the Teaching-Learning Cycle to teach students the ‘Instruction’ genre through recipes.

Three papers are included on Independent Learning, all from the Asian region. Liangrong Xiao and Ming Luo examine a number of English co-curricular activities and explore the functions and impact of these on learner independence and

interdependence in learning English at a large university in Southeast China. Xiao and Luo's paper is titled "English Co-Curricular Activities: A Gateway to Developing Autonomous Learners." Tanya McCarthy, working in Japan, reports on the process of designing song worksheets for independent study which can help foster autonomous learner development in her paper "Music and Song Beyond the Classroom: Strategies to Aid the Language Learning Process." The influence of gender on Vietnamese language learners' choice of language learning strategies was the topic for Cao Thuy Hong's paper "Gender Differences in Language Learning Strategy Use." The students in this study were found to be medium strategy users, with the overall strategy use by male and female students was not significantly different. However, females were found to be more frequent users of affective and social strategies.

The final two papers in this volume address issues of testing. The first examines how the backwash effect distorted the teaching practice at a lower secondary school in Central Vietnam. Tran Dang Khanh Linh, in her paper "Can CLT Be Successful Without a Match Between Teaching and Testing Practices?" makes suggestions for reform in language testing practices for stakeholders of provincial Vietnamese education. The final paper, "Task-based Language Assessment: Developing An Integrative Task (IT) Model with Iranian EFL

Learners," is from Iran. Natasha Ghal-eh shows how task-based assessment models are not good predictors of language learners' performance on real-world tasks. The validity of predictions of Iranian EFL learners' performance in relation to current measures of construct validity is discussed.

The 2009 CamTESOL Conference brought together ELT professionals, both local and international, to discuss and debate areas of their practice and relevant theoretical issues at presentations, workshops, and poster sessions, not to mention in the informal discussions that took place in and around the conference itself. As host of the conference, I would like to thank the many organizers and volunteers who made the conference a success, and the presenters for generously contributing their professional research, ideas, and experience to their colleagues. It has not been a simple or speedy task to write or to select the papers and produce this volume, and so I would like to thank all those who submitted papers for selection and the Editorial Board for its work. Particular gratitude is due to Dr. Richmond Stroupe for his guidance in the production of this volume and his untiring work as Assistant Editor-in-Chief.

Dr. Im Koch
National Institute of Education
Editor-in-Chief

Opening Address

Her Excellency Margaret Adamson, Australian Ambassador
Mr. John Johnson, Public Affairs Officer of the US Embassy
Honorable Speakers
Distinguished Participants
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Today I have the great honor and pleasure to be present at the gathering of scholars and academics at the Opening Ceremony of the 5th CamTESOL Conference on English Language Teaching, “The Globalization of ELT: Emerging Directions.” On behalf of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Kingdom of Cambodia and myself, I would like to deeply and sincerely thank Her Excellency Margaret Adamson, Australian Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia, and Mr. John Johnson, Representative of the US Embassy, who always provide support and make their kind contribution to Cambodia through their many projects in education, health, governance, agriculture, and environment sectors.

I would also like to express my profound gratitude to the representatives from a wide variety of institutions and partners, particularly Mr. Paul Mahony, Country Director of the International Development Program Education Australia (IDP) in Cambodia, for providing technical and financial assistance to organize the Conference. Along with this, I would like to warmly welcome you all, in particular, our honorable overseas speakers and distinguished participants from 25 countries, to Phnom Penh and wish you a pleasant stay in our country.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Australian Government and AusAID for their support of the Cambodian English Language Training Program (CELT) since 1985. The CELT Program was designed primarily to provide English language training to government officials and to improve secondary school teachers’ language abilities. It was then extended to the University of Phnom Penh English and Education Project (UPPEEP). As a result, the Institute of Foreign Languages’ (IFL) Department of English at the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) is now regarded as one of Cambodia’s leading ELT institutions, offering two full-time undergraduate degree programs and one full-time Master’s-level course.

In addition, we have also managed and accomplished the Cambodia-Australia National Examinations Project (CANEP), which has a high profile in the education sector. It is recognized as a success in examination reforms. It includes the management of the Grade 9 exam and work on standards measurement and monitoring, especially subject competencies, as well as the criteria for the pass grade structure for Grade 12 of Upper Secondary Education. This joint effort, accomplished with a high spirit of tolerance and strong commitment, has actively contributed in promoting intellectual training for our country.

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen, as many of you know, Cambodia is a post-conflict country and much of the human resources of my country have been lost over the past years due to conflict and instability. After almost 30 years of devastating war in Cambodia, we are trying hard to develop the country. It is necessary to achieve capacity building and human resource development that will stay as a top priority for the Royal Government of Cambodia. We cannot afford just to say nice words, but must work on it without pause.

Looking back over the past decade, we have achieved remarkable progress in a number of areas important to human development. Peace and stability have been restored and maintained. Economic growth has risen to double-digit rates. Access to education and health has improved. These are major achievements in light of some of the challenges that had to be overcome.

The outcomes achieved by the educational institutions from all levels so far have been timely and appropriate responses to the Royal Government's "Rectangular Strategy" for human resource development, especially the quality improvement at all levels of education in high technical and scientific skills, and the development of intellectual capital to meet the labor market demand of both local and international companies as well as to increase economic efficiency for sustainable development of the country.

In the globalized world, learning foreign languages is becoming an important element and tool in establishing effective relations and interaction with people of other countries. In the context of teaching and learning foreign languages, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has put tremendous efforts into teacher training programs, both pre-service and in-service, and academic curriculum development according to international standards, as well as more productive teaching in order to build human resources and promote the higher education sector in Cambodia. Aside from this, it is important to stress that the government and international community are working together to achieve the Education for All (EFA) goals by 2015; therefore, we need to have commitment to good teaching and learning so we can gather together here to share the findings on key issues that have arisen in our schools as a whole.

In the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), I would like to emphasize that simply expanding training opportunities will not be enough. As various studies have highlighted, reaching high ELT standards will require establishing links between the ELT in an individual country and the international ELT community to build up quality ELT institutions. This would be therefore pivotal to the future competitiveness of the countries in our region. The timing is now right to have this kind of conference, as we need to accelerate the commitment to good teaching and learning. I therefore hope that over the next two days all of you will actively participate and share lessons and best practice in English Language Teaching by focusing on a number of areas in developing supplementary materials and curriculum, increasing learner autonomy, teacher professional development, effective management skills, innovative approaches to the unique educational contexts of the region, and applicability of approaches, methodology, and content to countries across the region.

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen, once again, on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and myself, I would like to express my appreciation to the conference organizers for their dedication and efforts in making the 5th CamTESOL 2009 Conference possible. I

wish to thank all participants and speakers for taking time to participate in this event, particularly those coming from a distance. I am confident that this conference will provide at least two beneficial contributions. Firstly, the participants will benefit from exchanging and sharing knowledge and experiences of teaching and learning the English language, as well as leading and managing quality ELT institutions. Secondly, friendships, academic linkages, and networking will be further strengthened and broadened locally, regionally, and internationally.

On this note, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I take great pleasure in declaring open the 5th CamTESOL Conference on English Language Teaching, “The Globalization of ELT: Emerging Directions” and wish all of you every success in your deliberations.

Thank you.

H.E. Im Sethy

Minister of Education, Youth and Sport

The Kingdom of Cambodia

Complexities and challenges in training nonnative English-speaking teachers: State of the art

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Abstract

Nonnative English-speaking teachers constitute the majority of the language teaching population in EFL settings. Methods and strategies that are usually considered efficient and effective for training native English-speaking teachers could have different effects on nonnative English-speaking teachers. By drawing from the earlier work of Medgyes (1994), Braine (1999), and Liu (1999, 2001, and 2007), the purpose of this paper is to review the state-of-the-art discussion in this area of research, discuss the challenges and difficulties nonnative English-speaking teachers face, and suggest how an overall framework of training can be developed to cater to nonnative English-speaking teachers in EFL contexts.

Introduction

About twenty years ago, when I left China for the US to pursue my doctorate in foreign and second language education at the Ohio State University, there was no doubt in my mind that I was a nonnative speaker of English, as I spoke quite differently from the American people around me. I knew that I needed to brush up my English at full-speed in order to be accepted as an in-group member in the mainstream society.

About ten years ago, when I returned to China for the first time after a decade in the US, my former colleagues complimented me on my fluency in English, though they still considered me an advanced nonnative English speaker with an obvious Chinese accent. When I was invited to lead an English program in a university in China six years ago, I was asked to hire many foreign teachers in order to create an English-speaking environment on campus, which I did. But I hired English teachers from Romania, Malaysia, Russia, and Austria, in addition to those from America.

Observations were made that some of these teachers I hired were not native English speakers, but their presence as foreign teachers with their diverse cultural backgrounds and varieties of English contributed immensely to the richness of the campus culture, and motivated many Chinese students to enhance their English skills.

About three years ago, I expanded my research interests to the area of teaching Chinese as a second/foreign language, which allowed me opportunities to observe and reflect on the learning and teaching experiences from the perspective of a native speaker. Many Chinese teachers I observed were vulnerable and insecure when they taught Chinese to foreigners as they did not have the meta-language to explain to their students whenever “why” questions were asked. They were exhausted by using excuses such as “That’s the way we say it,” or “This is an idiomatic expression.” Deep in my mind I was aware that being a native speaker of Chinese does not give the person any guarantee of being a competent Chinese teacher. As with

nonnative speakers of the language, a language teacher's credibility needs to be earned, not merely given if the person is a native speaker.

Everyone is a native speaker of some language/s, but not everyone is a nonnative speaker of a language other than their mother tongue. Those who speak more than one language clearly have advantages over monolinguals in teaching a second or foreign language because of the very experience of learning an additional language. But the common perception of native speaker superiority is still prevailing.

This paper, based on my plenary speech given at the 2009 CamTESOL Conference, will introduce the native/nonnative divide, explore what it means to be a nonnative English-speaking teacher, and discuss some challenges and complexities in training nonnative English-speaking teachers in TESOL.

The native/nonnative question

For years, native speakers were considered the only reliable source of linguistic data (Chomsky, 1965). The first challenge to this notion was in Paikeday's book, *The Native Speaker is Dead* (1985). He argued that the native speaker "exists only as a fragment of linguist's imagination" (p.12). Paikeday proposed the term "proficient user" of a language to refer to all speakers who can successfully communicate in that language. Paikeday's notion was later endorsed by Rampton (1990), who used a slightly different term, "expert speaker," to include all successful users of that language (Moussu & Llurda, 2008).

Can a second language learner become a native speaker of the target language? This question, proposed by Davies (2003), has drawn a lot of interest in the area of social identities. Anecdotes tell us that those who were born and raised in non-English speaking environments and who went to English-speaking countries before puberty are likely to be acculturated like native speakers without any differentiation in speaking. Even adult language learners can, apart from pronunciation, become like native speakers with regard to intuition, grammar, spontaneity, creativity, pragmatic control, and interpreting quality (Davies, 2003).

But even if second language learners can become native speakers of the target language, why should they pursue nativeness? Kramsch (1997) asserts what while students can become competent in a new language, they can never become native speakers of it. She simply questioned why they should disregard their unique multilingual perspective on the foreign language and its literature and culture to emulate the idealized monolingual speaker.

Needless to say, labeling someone as a native or nonnative speaker is more complicated than we imagine. Making that distinction pertains to one's language proficiency, cultural affiliation, social identity, self-perception, among other factors. Sometimes these factors are intertwined and contextualized.

The divide between native/nonnative English-speaking teachers

The divide between native and nonnative speakers has direct relevance and implications in the field of English language teaching. Some researchers paid attention to the notion of native and nonnative English-speaking teachers in the early '90s (Brutt-Griffler, J. & Samimy, K.K., 1999; Davies, 1991; Medgyes, 1994; Phillipson, 1992). To challenge the view of identifying a native speaker (NS) as the ideal language teacher, a tenet proposed at the 1961 Commonwealth Conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language, Phillipson (1992) uses the term "native speaker fallacy" (p. 195) and questions its validity. He claims that non-native speakers (NNSs) can be trained to gain abilities that are, according to the tenet, associated with NSs (i.e., fluency, correct usage of idiomatic expressions, and knowledge about the cultural connotation of English). Moreover, Phillipson evaluates the learning process of NNS teachers and posits that it is a valuable quality that NSs cannot emulate.

According to Widdowson (1994), when the emphasis is moved from the contexts of use to contexts of learning, the advantage that NS teachers have will disappear. Medgyes (1992) challenges the idea that NSs are better teachers than NNSs, and claims that both NS and NNS teachers have their own strengths. Subsequently, his book addressing

the NS-NNS dichotomy (Medgyes, 1994), along with the study he conducted with his colleague (Reves and Medgyes, 1994) investigating English teachers' perceptions in ten countries, caught scholars' attention. In their study, Reves and Medgyes used a questionnaire to collect data from 216 NS and NNS teachers in ten countries. Analysis of the data revealed that two-thirds (68%) of the respondents believe that there are differences between NS and NNS teachers, and that the majority (75%) considers NNS teachers' linguistic difficulties to have an adverse effect in teaching. Reves and Medgyes suggest that exposure to an English-speaking environment and pre-service training with a focus on proficiency might be helpful for NNS teachers. In addition to this suggestion, they claim that NNS teachers should be made aware of their strengths.

It was not until a colloquium organized by George Braine at the annual TESOL convention in 1996 that NNS educators began to express their concerns and experiences to an open audience. This groundbreaking colloquium, which inspired a number of individuals in the audience, mainly NNSs, through the sharing of poignant autobiographical narratives, has led not only to more sessions and publications in subsequent years, but also to the establishment of the Nonnative English Speaking Teachers (NNEST) Caucus in TESOL. Although there are numerous locally born teachers all over the world where English is taught as a foreign language, the issue of NNESTs had always been under-represented and under-researched because "the topic was an unusually sensitive one, long silently acknowledged but too risky to be discussed openly" (Braine 2004, p. 16). Research in this area began with the establishment of the NNEST Caucus in TESOL in 1998, thanks to Braine, Liu, and Kamhi-Stein. In subsequent years, proposals and presentations on NNESTs at TESOL Conventions appeared to grow from a dozen to a few dozen, and now many doctoral students choose NNESTs as their dissertation topic. TIRF (The International Research Foundation for English Language Education) made the subject of NNESTs their priority research topic one year, and *TESOL Quarterly* has published a number of high-quality

articles in this area that have had an impact on our field.

Challenges and complexities in training nonnative English-speaking teachers

It is widely acknowledged that the majority of the English teachers worldwide are NNESTs (Liu, 1999, 2001). It is also a fact that in EFL settings such as Cambodia, China, Japan, Korea, and Thailand, studying English from instructors whose mother tongue is the same as their students is not only realistic, but also very successful. NNESTs have unique characteristics described by Medgyes (1994), who acknowledges that NNESTs can:

1. Provide a good learner model for imitation;
2. Teach language learning strategies more effectively;
3. Supply learners with more information about the English language;
4. Anticipate and prevent language difficulties better;
5. Be more empathetic to the needs and problems of learners; and
6. Make use of the learners' mother tongue.

In addition, Tang (1997) posits that NNESTs can be in a favorable position by being able to predict potential difficulties for the students, and to know how to help them learn based on their own language learning experiences. However, because of the limited access to Native English-Speaking cultural experiences, and lack of authentic input, the hiring of Native English-Speaking Teachers (NESTs) to join the teaching faculty in EFL settings has continued to be very popular. This is not necessarily successful for several reasons, such as the compromise of hiring criteria, limited supervision and mentoring, and a lack of encouragement of collaborative efforts in curriculum development, syllabus design, lesson preparation, and professional development.

Nevertheless, NNESTs have long suffered what is called an *inferiority complex*. The NNESTs will never be able to measure up to the linguistic standards that are so valued in their profession, such as a native accent from the US or UK. They will be led to believe that their interlanguage, or the

knowledge of the L2 they possess, is always inadequate (Cook, 1999). It is assumed that in order to meet the high expectations of their students, NNESTs have to work harder than NESTs in order to prove themselves worthy of being in the profession (Thomas, 1999).

The scope of research on nonnative English-speaking teachers

Although efforts have been made to study NNESTs for more than a decade, the scope of research in this area is limited. According to Kamhi-Stein (2004a), the research field of NNEST consists of three phases with respect to its trend of topics and foci that gradually shifted as the field developed. In the first phase, Self-Perception, the primary focus was on NNESTs' self-perceptions. Besides Reves and Medgyes' (1994) study cited above, Samimy and Brutt-Griffler (1999) investigated self-perceptions of 17 NNS graduate students enrolled in a course in the MATESOL program at an American university. By triangulating data employing both qualitative and quantitative techniques via questionnaires, interviews, and written reflections, the researchers found that the participants' self-perceptions had become more positive over a period of ten weeks.

The second phase was characterized through studies that focused on the credibility of NNESTs. These qualitative studies often made use of autobiographical narratives (e.g., Amin, 1997; Braine, 1999; Thomas, 1999). Thomas (1999) shares her disappointing experience as a teacher being evaluated by her students on the basis of her race, not her teaching performance. Her credibility as a teacher was explicitly challenged by her students, especially by one comment, which said that the class would have been better had it been taught by a NS instructor. She also notes that not only the students, but also the NS colleagues threatened her confidence. Based on her experience, she argues that NNESTs' lack of confidence is the outcome of these overt challenges to credibility. Braine (1999) reflects on the days when he was in graduate school in the United States and explains how the disadvantage followed him because of his non-nativeness. For instance, an unfortunate treatment he experienced when he

applied for a teaching position at an intensive English program led him to wonder why NNS teachers are not appreciated for their diversity and multiculturalism, whereas ESL students are usually praised for what they can bring into language classrooms. Thus, NNS professionals' own experiences as graduate students, teachers, and job applicants in an English-speaking environment not only struck others in the field who could identify themselves with these professionals, but also helped raise more important issues known to scholars in teaching English. Consequently, what NNS teachers can contribute to the language classroom started to gain prominence.

The third phase of research in this area focuses on how NNESTs are perceived by others, such as administrators and students (e.g., Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002; Mahboob, Uhrig, Newman & Hartford, 2004). Mahboob, et al. (2004) conducted a survey study to shed light on the hiring issue, looking at the NS-NNS population ratio in ESL programs in the United States. Data was collected by 122 administrators of intensive English programs (IEPs) in the United States (with a response rate of 25.5%). Analysis of the data showed only three criteria to be significant: whether one was a native English speaker or not, recommendation, and teaching experience. Mahboob, et al. (2004) suggested that IEPs in the United States reexamine their hiring practices if they seek to offer their students exemplary role models of NNESTs and reflect "a realistic and inclusive picture of the diversity represented by world Englishes" (p. 116). Likewise, Lasagabaster and Sierra's (2002) research investigated students' perceptions of their English teachers using a questionnaire to test four hypotheses based on past NNEST research. They found that students at all levels (primary, secondary, and university) showed a higher preference for NS teachers. The students indicated a preference for NS teachers in the areas of pronunciation, speaking, vocabulary, and culture and civilization, whereas NNS teachers were preferred for areas such as learning strategies and grammar.

Nevertheless, each of the above-mentioned lines of research has its own drawbacks in research

methodology (e.g., surveys and interviews) without much cross-sectional triangulation or prolonged engagement, and also in their narrow scope by hearing only one side of the story. For instance, too much attention was focused on perceptions, rather than empirical studies to see the effects on teaching and learning outcomes. Much research is done in ESL contexts while the major contexts of EFL are mostly neglected. No research to date has focused on NNESTs who do not share the L1 with the students while teaching in that country - for instance, Cambodian teachers teaching English in China, Chinese teachers teaching English in Russia, or Thai English teachers teaching English in Korea.

Also questionable is the way in which NS and NNS teachers were treated, as if they were at the opposite ends of a scale with absolute characteristics (Kamhi-Stein, 2004b; Matsuda, 2003). Such a view is no longer supported, as it does not “capture the complexities involved in being a NNEST professional” (Kamhi-Stein, 2004b, p. 3). Rather, both NS and NNS professionals are now considered to have skills and competencies that complement each other. Currently, the point of discussion is the possible effect that can be brought about when NSs and NNESTs collaborate for the same purpose of teaching English, provided that they each have qualities that the other does not possess.

Limitations in training nonnative English-speaking teachers

Admittedly, many nonnative English-speaking teachers have a sense of inferiority in front of their native English-speaking colleagues. Many of these teachers learned English the hard way and many did not have any opportunities to study abroad. They carry heavy teaching loads in their schools, and they are often evaluated based on the scores of their students. Even though they want to help students improve their communicative competence, they endure the pressure to equip their students with strategies to do well on all kinds of examinations.

The experiences are not always positive for those who have had opportunities to visit English-speaking countries for one year or half a year as visiting scholars or exchange visitors. Upon return,

these teachers often regretted that the time abroad was not well spent. These teachers usually design their own programs by sitting in some classes without participation or spending much time in the library without supervision. The lack of clear objectives and engaged agenda facilitated by the home institution often translate the limited opportunities into disappointing experiences. Apart from the fact that only a few colleagues have this opportunity and it takes so long to get such a chance, we have to ask whether visiting English-speaking countries is a worthy investment.

Back in EFL contexts, nonnative English-speaking teachers are encouraged to collaborate with their native English-speaking colleagues. But the collaboration is full of challenges. Collaboration, despite the growing popularity of the concept, sometimes can be difficult to foster. There are so many factors working against it in the real world: time and energy constraints, turf wars, feelings of inadequacy or superiority with language and pragmatics, and general inexperience with the idea of collaboration. Working with others, especially those with differences in background and cognitive style, requires willingness, understanding, tolerance, and respect. While nonnative English-speaking teachers may feel inferior working with their native counterparts, the latter might also feel constrained not to impose native superiority on their nonnative English-speaking colleagues.

A framework for training nonnative English-speaking teachers

While nonnative English-speaking teachers have many advantages of being English teachers in EFL contexts (Medgyes, 1994), they also admittedly have a number of drawbacks (Liu, 2009):

1. Lack of native intuition to the language
2. Lack of authentic input
3. Lack of the target cultural backgrounds and contextual clues
4. Lack of strength in colloquial and idiomatic expressions
5. Lack of professional development opportunities
6. Lack of language environment

For years, we have judged our nonnative English-speaking colleagues by criteria based on how much they know about English and how well they speak or write in English. To a large extent, this judgment holds truth in that the lack of the target language environment has made us more realistic in not imposing high qualifications on nonnative English-speaking teachers. Also supported is the fact that we are judged by additional criteria based on how well our students perform on tests and examinations, which are more knowledge-based than skills-driven through multiple choices and translation. Rather than being rebellious to this reality, our training for nonnative English-speaking teachers should start with these criteria in mind, but immediately move beyond this by adding other ingredients in the domain, such as language processes and strategies, intercultural competence, broadly-defined language teaching methodology, and professional development, to form a sustainable training framework.

Needless to say, nonnative English-speaking teachers should possess knowledge in linguistics and be able to demonstrate knowledge of the nature of human language and the phonological, morphological, lexical/semantic, and syntactic systems of English. They should be able to describe the similarities and differences between English and their first language in these areas. Related to linguistic knowledge are the skills of the language; nonnative English-speaking teachers must also demonstrate adequate oral and written proficiency in social and academic English. Both knowledge and skills in English are considered the basis for successful English language teaching. Many of our nonnative English-speaking teachers need constant improvement in these areas. Therefore, efforts should be made and on-going professional development opportunities should be provided for these teachers to polish their communication skills and expand their linguistic knowledge.

The next domain of training is on language processes and learning strategies. Nonnative English-speaking teachers should understand the nature of human language and the psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic processes, as well as factors involved in native and non-native language

acquisition and use. Just because nonnative English-speaking teachers have learned English as a foreign language, this does not mean that they are aware of the specifics of the process. They may be just as unaware of the specifics of the process of second language acquisition as they were when achieving their first language acquisition. Fundamental theories in second language acquisition should be part of the teacher training. Learning styles and learner strategies should also be discussed and understood in order to help them understand the causes and/or sources of problems in their students' learning and have good strategies in dealing with them as they occur.

Perhaps the most vulnerable area that needs more training is intercultural communication and the pragmatic skills of language use. Teachers should understand the nature of language and culture and communicative styles and skills in various intercultural communication contexts. This is not easy for those who have never experienced the native culture of the target language. So proper training in this area, focusing on cultural comparisons and intercultural competence building, is of vital importance as experience and mastery in this area will bear direct relevance to teaching.

The broadly defined domain of teaching methodology is usually familiar to most nonnative English-speaking teachers. Although teachers are introduced to and familiar with various methods for and approaches to teaching English as a foreign language, the methods era is gone (Liu, 2007). They should understand that there is no best method in language teaching. Instead of searching for the best method, they should seek alternatives to methods and come up with what will work in a particular context, depending on various factors such as learning objectives, learner variables, and classroom constraints. Nonnative English-speaking teachers should be highly encouraged to focus on basic principles of teaching and learning English, because the principles will allow flexibility and creativity to occur under sound rationale and pedagogical perspectives. Training on testing and assessment is also important. Teachers need to know how to assess their students' learning outcomes in a variety of ways. It is important to

study the best practices through case studies and to develop skills in critical thinking. The broadly defined methodology includes curriculum development, syllabus design, and lesson planning. It is important that nonnative English-speaking teachers demonstrate adequate skills in designing and implementing effective materials, learning tasks, and activities in the classroom. Furthermore, we must train our teachers in knowledge of and skills in technology. They should demonstrate familiarity with and application of technology in teaching.

Also important in training is the on-going professional development that bears crucial consequence to the overall effectiveness of teaching in the long run. Nonnative English-speaking teachers should stay current on research, trends, policies, and legal mandates regarding TESOL, TEFL, or ELT programs. They should also demonstrate their knowledge of both qualitative and quantitative research methods and know they can use these methods to reflect on their teaching and improve their classroom practice.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of training nonnative English-speaking teachers in teaching English as a foreign language depends on a number of factors. We should set up clear and attainable objectives for teacher training, design small-scale, theme-based, and level-specific training programs, implement localized teacher certificate programs at provincial and national levels, utilize online resources and the expertise of core teacher trainers, and strengthen nonnative English-speaking teacher pre-service training programs while providing an objective evaluative supervision mechanism. Above all, we should provide sustainable mentoring programs, encourage collaboration at all levels, and educate our administrators to give more steady support to our nonnative English-speaking teachers, who are contributing to the education of world-citizens with English as the lingua franca.

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Grammar and communicative language teaching: Why, when and how to teach it?

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Abstract

This paper is based on a plenary presentation given at the 5th CamTESOL Conference, held in Phnom Penh in February, 2009. It looks at various theories of grammar that have had an influence on English language teaching and discusses their key characteristics. It also considers some of the main features of communicative language teaching (CLT) and touches briefly on different positions that have been taken about where grammar is considered to fit in this approach. The main purpose of the paper, however, is to discuss recent international research which surveyed 231 teachers in 18 different countries about what approaches they took to integrating grammar into their practices and what they believed about the effectiveness of these practices.

Introduction

The questions of why, when, and how to teach grammar are ones that confront second and foreign language teachers all over the world – particularly since the advent of communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches. Teacher training courses provide various forms of advice about teaching grammar, such as the PPP (presentation, practice, production) sequence that is often recommended for communicative approaches. Despite such advice, teachers inevitably develop their own beliefs and ideas about the place of grammar in their language programs and how they should go about teaching it. In this paper, I will provide a very brief overview of various approaches that the language teaching field has taken to the teaching of grammar and will then look at the key features of communicative language teaching and the position and role of grammar in this approach. However it is the second half of the paper that is my main focus. I report on an international study that looked at how teachers view grammar, what they believe about it, and how they say they go about integrating grammar into their language teaching.

What is grammar?

A few years ago I asked this question to students enrolled in a master's course I was teaching at my university. The students came from many different countries, particularly countries in Asia, and all of them had experienced at least two years of teaching. Here are responses from two of the students:

I think of grammar as “necessary evil” for language contexts. Or something poisonous (poison). If we abuse or misuse it, it will be fatally harm[ful]. (Korean teacher)

On the way to the lecture, there was a funny picture [that] appeared in my mind. [Next to this quote, there is a picture of a person fishing from a boat with fish labeled with grammar terms swimming into his net.] (Chinese teacher)

These comments (Burns, 2003) present two very different views about grammar teaching. The first comment suggests that the teacher sees grammar as something that must be taught even when you don't want to teach it, but could be dangerous if it is

overused – a bit like having to take medicine if you are sick but not overdoing it in case it kills you! We get the sense here of an unpleasant situation, of grammar having to be taught in a rather boring and teacher-centred way, maybe through exercises and drills that students must be prepared to do for their own good. The second comment is very different. This teacher seems to see grammar as something that can be fun – like going fishing and not quite knowing what you are going to catch. Different kinds of “fish” (grammar terms) might swim into the net and will be very useful at the time when they are caught. So, here grammar is seen more like food, a nourishing resource that will strengthen students’ learning of the language. We get the sense of something that students (and their teacher) will enjoy as part of pleasant and relaxing learning activities.

Defining grammar is certainly not straightforward, and teaching grammar will depend on what theories of grammar a teacher is aware of, the teacher’s own experiences of learning a language and then teaching it, and whether the teacher feels these experiences have been effective. However, I’d like to look briefly at some different concepts of grammar that have had an impact on language teaching and have shaped the way grammar has been viewed and taught in language programs. Here I will briefly overview just three of the major theoretical approaches that have influenced practice in the English language teaching field.

Traditional grammar

Typically, traditional grammar sees language as a set of rules which were originally taken from the written classical languages, Greek and Latin. Latin was thought to be a logical and organised language and so it was used as a basis to categorise or ‘codify’ parts of speech (article, noun, verb, pronoun, conjunction and so on). The unit of analysis in traditional grammar is the sentence, and the grammar student’s role is to be able to recognise and classify the words in a sentence into the part of speech to which they belong. This teaching approach is usually referred to as the grammar-translation method. Teachers and students using this approach would typically rely on exercises and drills, especially written ones, translation,

vocabulary lists, and the reading aloud of written passages.

This approach can be described as a prescriptive one as it relies on acquiring “standards” of usage that do not necessarily reflect the reality of how people use language. For example, the famous phrase from the Star Trek movie

... to boldly go where no man has gone before...

would be considered ‘incorrect’ in a traditional approach because the infinitive ‘to go’ is split by an adverb (the ‘split infinitive’ from which good users of grammar are discouraged).

Formal grammar

This grammar, associated with the theories of Chomsky, responds to the question of why humans are able to learn language at all. Language is seen as a cognitive, or psychological, process that goes on in the brain and for which humans are predisposed at birth. Chomsky believed all humans possess a deep ‘universal’ grammar from which they develop the specifics of their mother tongues. The deep structures of universal grammar are used to generate the language a person learns and to enable him or her to use transformations to create particular sentence structures in that language – hence the term transformational-generative grammar, which is sometimes used to describe this model.

Chomsky referred to people’s innate ability to produce language as their ‘competence.’ He was less interested in the learner’s ‘performance’ or the language the learner actually used, as this aspect was seen as too untidy and disorganised. Using the idea of the ideal and competent language user, formal grammar works at the level of the sentence. It analyses the syntax, or the components of the sentence, and looks at how complex sentences are formed (e.g. passives, negatives, questions). It has also provided a way of looking at learner acquisition at different stages of learning and learner errors. Chomsky’s theories were very influential in second language learning, although they were not seen as having direct application to language teaching. Nevertheless, approaches such

as audiolingualism, with its emphasis on drilling, repetition, memorisation, and accurate production, can trace their sources to the ideas of formal grammar.

Again, formal grammar takes a prescriptive (or rule-governed) approach. To give an example - once when a famous Australian boxer was being interviewed on the television about his retirement from boxing, he ended the interview by saying:

I love youse all! [youse = you, plural]

He was using a colloquial, slang form of Australian English which would easily be understood by Australian English speakers. However, his 'performance' would not be seen as correct in this view of grammar because of the syntax of the sentence.

Functional grammar

More recently, grammar teaching has looked to grammars that show how meaning is created in different cultural and social contexts. This approach is descriptive, rather than prescriptive, as it is interested in how people actually use a language to communicate meaningfully with each other in daily life. Functional grammar looks at language used beyond the level of the sentence; a central idea here is text. A text, spoken or written, can be as short as one word, "Stop!" or as long as a whole book. The point is that the text should make sense and be able to be interpreted in relation to its cultural and social context. In the functional approach, the key questions that would be asked about a text are: *What is this text about? Who is involved in producing this text and what are their relationships? How does this text hang together so that it makes sense?* Functional grammarians would also look at how the grammar patterns in the text respond to these questions. If we look again at the expression

I love youse all!

we could say that it is the closing-off phase of a longer text, an interview. It is performing the function of a fond farewell to the well-known boxer's followers, who are members of the public who love boxing. Over time, the boxer knows that

he has been appreciated by this public and so he is expressing his relationship to them in a warm way that is likely to be well received by his audience. He speaks in a familiar and vernacular way. What he says is not 'incorrect,' but it is an expression that his audience is used to hearing and use themselves; it gives him an inclusive relationship with that audience. The text links with the rest of the interview and makes perfect sense as the ending to this interview, where the boxer is saying farewell to his public.

Where does grammar fit in communicative language teaching?

Communicative language teaching arose in the 1970s from dissatisfaction with grammar-translation and audiolingual approaches, which began to be seen as too limited in enabling learners to learn how to actually use the language. CLT put the focus on natural and meaningful communication related to real life and to 'authentic' use of language in various contexts. Teachers were encouraged to expose learners to written 'realia' such as magazines, newspapers, forms, or instructions, or to spoken interactions that were used in problem-solving, decision-making, or personal conversation in general. Communicative tasks in which learners perform realistic exchanges to complete the task came to be seen as the foundation for meaningful language teaching. The focus was placed on the student and his or her needs for learning the language, and teachers were encouraged to develop their learners' self-awareness about learning and encourage them to become independent learners.

CLT has introduced a more holistic view of language and language learning into the second language teaching field. Among its advantages is that it gives learners an opportunity to see the relevance of the language to different situations in which they might find themselves and to practise using it. It is also capable of providing genuine information-gap and problem-solving situations where learners can potentially use the language they are learning critically and creatively. It places emphasis on learning as an active process of collaboration between the teacher and learner where

each must play a role rather than see learning as a transmission of knowledge from teacher to learner.

Some of the dangers of communicative language teaching, however, are that it can sometimes result in an unbalanced curriculum where too much emphasis is placed on one language skill (e.g. communication = speaking) at the expense of others. Taken to extremes, being learner-centred could place all responsibility for learning on the learner, which raises the question of what role should be played by the teacher's expertise. Finally, communicative tasks that generate the actual skills and interactions that learners need at a certain points are not easy to design. With its emphasis on interaction, CLT may also downplay the role of grammar ("communication must be authentic" or "teaching grammar could be dangerous and interfere with communication"). So what is the role of grammar in an effective CLT curriculum?

Various positions on the place of grammar and the type of grammar that should be taught have been taken within CLT approaches. Some authors have advocated a totally 'natural' (hands-off?) approach and have argued that this allows acquisition to develop gradually. Krashen (1981, p. 6), for example, famously stressed: "Language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules, and does not require tedious drills." Krashen argued that acquisition would be bound to occur if learners were exposed to meaningful interactions where their focus was not on the form of the interaction but on the messages they were exchanging. More recent research (e.g. Doughty & Williams, 1998) has questioned this rather extreme position. For example, Norris and Ortega (2000), who conducted an extensive review of the literature on second language instruction, concluded that a focus on meaning alone is not sufficient for learning. Instruction that leads to effective language learning includes a focus on grammar.

To integrate or not to integrate grammar?

A key question that arises from the argument that teaching grammar is necessary for effective

language learning is whether teachers should teach grammar separately or integrate it into classroom tasks and texts. In a recent study (Borg & Burns, 2008), I undertook joint research with Simon Borg from the University of Leeds to explore this issue. We had four key research questions:

1. How do teachers define effective grammar integration?
2. What practices do teachers adopt in order to integrate grammar effectively?
3. What beliefs about language teaching and learning underpin these practices?
4. What evidence do teachers cite to support their beliefs that their approach to integration is effective?

Procedures

We surveyed 231 teachers of adult learners (i.e. learners over 18 years old) in eighteen countries using both qualitative and quantitative questions to generate their responses. Our respondents were working in both the adult ESL and adult EFL fields. We distributed the questionnaires through personal contacts in these countries and the surveys were completed both online and on hard-copy, depending on which version was the more convenient for our contacts and the teachers in those countries. Because of the way the respondents were selected (convenience and non-probability sampling), the results cannot be considered to be statistically significant. The key findings which I explore in the next section do, however, provide a picture of some general trends suggesting the way the teachers who responded view the integration of grammar into their teaching.

Key findings

Teachers were asked to respond on a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree) to the following statement that aimed to explore their basic belief about integration:

Grammar should be taught separately, not integrated with other skills such as reading and writing.

Teachers were overwhelmingly opposed to the concept of separating grammar teaching from the

teaching of other skills, with 84% indicating they disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. The idea of contextualized grammar, which links with the skills they are aiming to develop, seems to have strongly influenced teaching practice. To explore this aspect of teaching further, we asked teachers:

In your teaching, to what extent is grammar teaching integrated with the teaching of other skills?

Table 1 below shows that while the percentage of teachers who claimed complete integration was fairly small (11%), a majority of teachers (56%)

indicated that they favoured substantial integration, with 31% indicating some integration. Very few teachers (2%) claimed that they used no integration in their teaching. Overall, these results support the teachers' disagreement with the separation of grammar instruction.

We were also interested in how effective the teachers believed the approaches they used to be. Teachers were asked to select from one of the following options to identify their beliefs about grammar and how effective they thought their approach was for their students' learning (Table 2).

Table 1. Extent to which teachers claim they integrate grammar with other skills

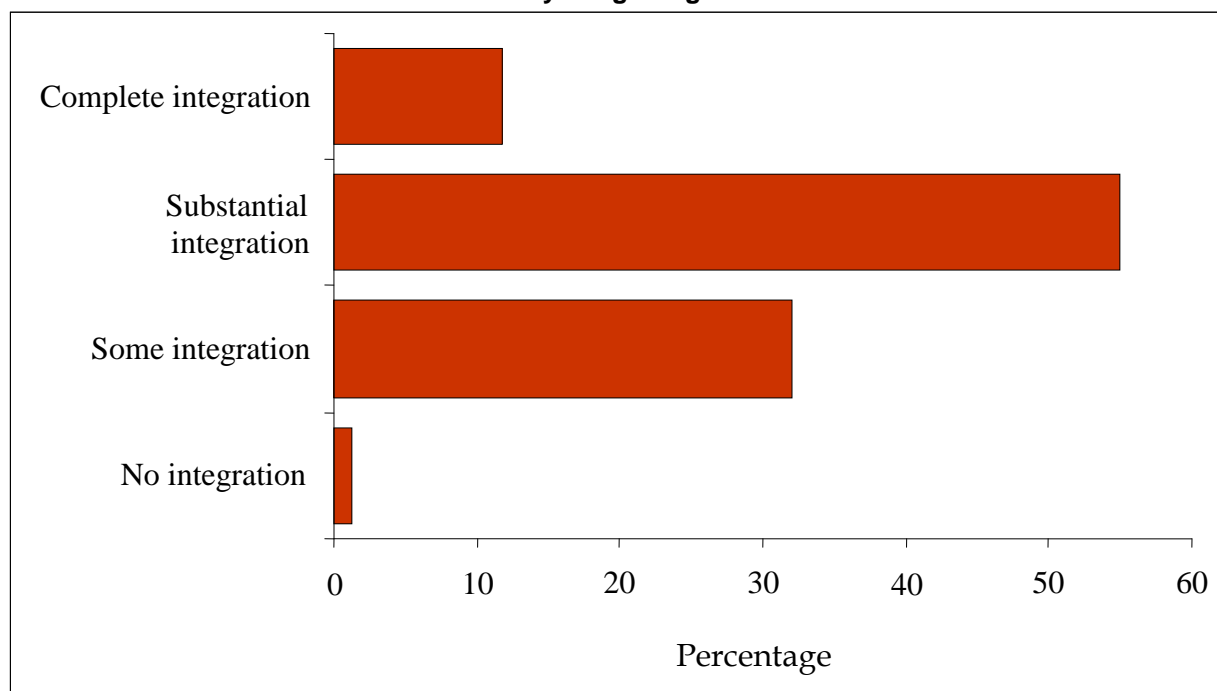


Table 2. Survey options to question on effectiveness of approach to teaching grammar

I separate grammar teaching from teaching the other skills, and I believe this helps my students learn language effectively.	
I separate grammar teaching from teaching the other skills, but I do not believe this helps my students learn language effectively.	
I integrate grammar teaching and teaching the other skills, and I believe this helps my students learn language effectively.	
I integrate grammar teaching and teaching the other skills, but I do not believe this helps my students learn language effectively.	

Again, overwhelmingly, teachers stated that they integrated grammar, and they believed this approach led to effective learning for their students (90%). In addition, a small percentage of teachers (3%) responded that they separated grammar, but they did not find this approach effective, which could, on the one hand, mean that they believed integration would be more effective, or on the other, that they saw the approach they were taking as simply not an effective one for their particular students. A small number of teachers stressed that they separated grammar teaching (5.6%) and found this approach to be effective. We asked the teachers to cite their reasons for indicating these responses through this question:

How do you know that your approach to separating or integrating grammar is or is not effective in helping your learners improve their English?

Their qualitative responses clustered around a number of themes. Student performance was one aspect, with comments that the teachers observed communicative ability and progress as indicators that their teaching approach was effective. Student affect, personal and emotional responses to teaching, also led teachers to believe their approaches were working. Teachers also pointed to the feedback their students gave them as well as to student performance on assessments. Finally, teachers noted that their own experiences as teachers in the classroom with their learners informed them that they were being effective in the approaches they were adopting.

From the teachers' descriptions of how they actually undertook their practices of integrating grammar into their teaching (the why, when, and how of the title of my talk), we noticed that two major orientations emerged from their comments. The first was what could be called a *contextual orientation*, in other words, teachers used the context of the lesson, the task, and the interaction that would unfold between the two in order to guide their decisions about their practices. Thus, in deciding what grammar to teach either before or during a lesson, they would draw the grammar focus from the text they were using for a particular task or

lesson. Alternatively, they chose texts with the purpose of illustrating a particular grammar point they wished to cover. Another approach was to focus on the grammar that they felt students required for a particular task.

The second orientation was what we termed a temporal approach, where the teacher determined the appropriate timing for teaching grammar in relation to what was to be covered or developed. Thus, grammar might be taught beforehand in order to prepare for particular skills work (e.g. the grammar needed for tasks that promote reading development). Alternatively, teachers claimed they taught grammar to follow up work that had been planned to develop a skill (e.g. speaking) when it became clear that the students' grammar was not sufficient. A third aspect of this orientation was to teach grammar during skills work in order to enhance students' ability to complete the task.

Some conclusions

Here I will discuss some conclusions and implications for teaching grammar that can be drawn out of this research and from this brief discussion in general.

What can be concluded from the research?

Despite the fact that these findings cannot be said to be statistically significant or generalizable, what is interesting about them is that these teachers from eighteen widely dispersed countries in Europe, Asia, Australia, and Latin America share overall a strong belief in the need to avoid teaching grammar in isolation of skills work. Thus, in an era when communicative language teaching is now widespread, the idea that grammar teaching should be a contextualised feature of classroom practice appears to have become prominent. The teachers expressed strong beliefs that grammar integration, not separation, is effective in promoting language learning. The concept of integration appears to rest on two major orientations that motivate teachers' decisions about their practices – first, the importance of contextual factors and second, the importance of temporal factors. These two orientations form important linkages that teachers state as underpinning their practices. Interestingly, the evidence teachers cite for the effectiveness of

integration rests overwhelmingly on experiential and practical considerations as they relate to their interactions with their learners in the classroom. It was rare in our data to find teachers basing their beliefs on formal theories about grammar teaching that appear, for example, in the second language acquisition literature. There was a distinct absence of technical terms or explicit references to a particular research finding or theoretical concept. This does not suggest that the teachers are ignorant of formal theory – a substantial number of the teachers we surveyed had master’s level qualifications – but rather that in the complex interactions and decisions that make up their daily work, teachers rely on practical approaches, often well-honed by their teaching beliefs and experiences, to mediate their pedagogical actions.

What can be concluded from this discussion and the literature?

A number of points can be made on the basis of the discussion in this paper. Teachers’ decisions about grammar and their orientations to teaching it suggest that students need grammar not for its own sake, but in order to scaffold their learning effectively so that they can achieve particular skills and tasks. Thus, teachers will always need to make decisions about whether grammar should be integrated before, during, or after communicative activities. This research, as well as other recent research (e.g. Norris & Ortega, 2000), suggests that teaching grammar “at the point of need” is the most effective approach. This means the teacher makes judgments about what is most appropriate for their students – when they need grammar in preparation for particular tasks or skill work, as they are doing the activity and need input on a particular grammatical feature, or after an activity to strengthen their knowledge and to help them to refocus attention on key patterns or vocabulary needed to complete a similar activity.

Grammar teaching has not disappeared in the age of CLT. It is more the case that it is slowly coming of age. To find ways of effectively integrating grammar teaching into CLT practice, it is also important that teachers’ beliefs about grammar and the personal and practical knowledge they hold

about ways of teaching it should be placed more centrally into the research spotlight.

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Global English? Implications for the teacher

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Abstract

The global spread of English is now a given. However, there are two main ways of conceptualizing it: as a highly complex, infinitely varied number of interactions, each of which needs to call on 'accommodation' for its success – English as an International Language (EIL); or as a newly-evolving variety of English 'in its own right,' termed English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). In this paper I shall try to demonstrate the untenability of an ELF model and offer some alternative suggestions for teaching English in international settings.

Introduction

The emergence of English as the dominant language of global interaction in the second half of the 20th century has been the subject of much speculation, debate, and scholarly inquiry (Crystal, 2003; Kachru, 1992; McArthur, 1998; McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008; Rubdy & Saraceni, 2006). While few, if any, would deny the fact that English is a global language, the nature of such a language is hotly debated. On the one hand, there are those who focus on the description and discussion of the many varieties of English and the multitudinous contexts of their use around the globe. This we may call an English as an International Language (EIL) or Global Englishes (GI) approach (Görlach, 2002; Kirkpatrick, 2007). On the other hand, there are those who contend, sometimes with great vehemence, that they can detect the emergence of a new global variety of English, which they call English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), (Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2001). In this paper, I shall attempt to show that the ELF approach is both unfounded and unhelpful to teachers and to offer an alternative approach based on the acceptance of difference and the mutual negotiation of meaning in international settings.

What are the claims for ELF?

There seem to be three main claims underpinning the case for ELF:

1. It is claimed that there are now considerably more non-native speaker (NNS) users of English in the world than there are native speaker (NS) users. From this fact, it is deduced that there must therefore be more NNS to NNS interactions than there are NS to NS interactions. Therefore, the way the language is developing is increasingly in the hands of NNSs, so this is what we should be focused on, rather than on some NS standard. Some have even gone so far as to state that NSs are 'irrelevant.'
2. In their analysis of phonetic and grammatical features of NNS-NNS interactions, Jenkins (2000) and Seidlhofer (2001) have identified what they call 'core' and 'non-core' items. Core items are those which would cause misunderstanding if they are not mastered. Non-core items are those features which do not cause misunderstanding and which can therefore be safely ignored by learners and their teachers. On the basis of this analysis, it is claimed that there is an 'emergent' (or 'emerging') new variety of English, which

they call English as a Lingua Franca, characterized by common features among all its speakers.

3. It is further claimed that this new variety deserves due attention from linguists, administrators, materials writers, and teachers. Such is the importance of their research into this new variety that its pedagogical significance should be recognized and eventually used as the basis for language teaching syllabi and materials, and as an alternative to standard language models, which are inevitably dependent on NS norms.

Do these claims stand up to scrutiny?

The statistical claim

There are a number of issues which render the statistical argument a good deal weaker than is claimed. In particular, there is a logical weakness in the claim that because there are more NNS than NS users of English in the world, therefore there are more NNS-NNS interactions. What are these weaknesses?

1. The reality is far more complex than is claimed. There are approximately 350-450 million NSs interacting on a daily basis, which is not a negligible number. Using Kachru's (1992) three circles model, which describes an Inner Circle of NS countries like the UK, the USA, Australia, etc., an Outer Circle where English is used widely and is officially sanctioned, as in India, parts of Africa, etc., and an Expanding Circle, where English is a foreign language, as in China, Russia, etc., there are also numerous other kinds of international interactions which cannot be reliably counted. These are interactions between Inner and Outer Circle users, between Inner and Expanding Circle users, between Outer Circle users within the same country (as in India), between Outer Circle users from different countries (for example, Indians and Nigerians), and between Outer Circle and Expanding Circle users (for example, between Chinese and Indians). It is significant that none of the above are considered under the ELF model, which

concentrates exclusively on NNS-NNS interactions. The claim that NNS-NNS interactions form a majority of global interactions in English is therefore open to considerable doubt.

2. It is useful to make a distinction among types of NNS users. Many of the so-called users are, in fact, learners, rather than fully-fledged users, and there is clearly a world of difference between a learner of English and a proficient and active user. There are also those who are relatively passive consumers of English rather than fully participatory users. Many people, even if they are proficient in English, do not engage in actively using it much. Their engagement with English comes through watching films and TV, surfing the WWW, or reading newspapers and books in English. As such, they cannot be regarded as contributing toward changes in English, since they are consuming, not creating, English. The last group is the fully-proficient users. This is necessarily a much more restricted number. And even such fully-proficient users may not be engaging in interactions in English all day and every day. Needless to say, such users are least likely to be using the non-standard variety of English described by ELF researchers.

For all the above reasons, we can legitimately question the claim that a majority of global English interactions are between NNS-NNS users. The situation is far more complex and nuanced than that.

The emerging/emergent variety claim

How accurate is the claim that the identification of core and non-core items marks the emergence of a new ELF variety? Again there are some pertinent objections to this claim.

1. For a new variety to emerge, it needs a base in a speech community, where daily interactions within the same community over a period of time lead inevitably to the evolution of the language, as has occurred in countries like India, Nigeria, and the Philippines. The global totality of interactions does not have such a basis in a

community. Virtually every new encounter is unpredictable and needs to be negotiated afresh. It is this process of negotiation or accommodation which is central, not some newly-minted product in the form of an ELF variety.

2. The so-called core and non-core features so far identified are very few in number. Jenkins (2000) has identified a number of common non-core features in the spoken language, and Seidlhofer (2001) has done the same for grammatical features. However, the list of these features is not long and hardly justifies the claim that ELF is an emerging variety. One has only to compare the relatively exiguous features listed by Jenkins and Seidlhofer with the lists of distinctive features of existing varieties (see Kirkpatrick, 2007 for a recent account of some of the major world varieties) to note the weaknesses of the ELF claim.
3. Whether language features interfere or not with efficient communication between speakers from different communities depends greatly on context. In particular, the degree of shared knowledge will play a major role. If two participants from different language backgrounds interact in English, they will do so more successfully if they share a familiarity with the subject matter than if they do not. For example, if an astronomer from Russia and one from India interact, they will make sense to each other whatever the differences in their individual language features. The role of context and shared knowledge has been well documented by Anderson and Lynch (1988) as well as Brown and Yule (1983).
4. It is misleading and unhelpful to postulate a new emerging variety. What happens in international interactions is a pragmatic process of negotiation of meaning, not the deployment of a new variety. The phenomenon of accommodation, whereby speakers tend to mutually converge towards a comprehensible exchange of information, is well-documented, and it is this, rather than the promotion of a mythical new

variety, which should be the focus of our attention. In other words, we 'do' ELF, we do not 'use' ELF.

5. There is credible counter-evidence which shows that in prototypically ELF contexts, proficient users, in fact, use a standard variety of English. The study by Mollin (2007) of people working in English in the context of the European Union showed that these proficient users tended overwhelmingly to use a standard model of English, with no evidence for non-core usage.

In view of the issues discussed above, the case for an emergent new variety loses a good deal of its persuasiveness.

The pedagogical claim

The proponents of ELF speak with forked tongues about the applicability of an ELF variety to the teaching of English as a foreign language. At times, they deny that this is their intention. At other times, however, it is clear that they do see ELF emerging as a challenger to a standard variety of English as the model for syllabi, teaching materials, and teaching. They certainly argue quite vehemently that ELF should be taken seriously by all the stakeholders: linguists, publishers, exam boards, curriculum designers, etc. There are again a number of objections to these claims for recognition.

1. On the few occasions when learners themselves have been consulted about the variety of English they wish to learn, they have unequivocally expressed a preference for a standard variety (Prodromou, 1992; Timmis, 2002).
2. Teachers, too, have been less than enthusiastic about the idea of basing their teaching on the new ELF model, as Jenkins herself admits, even if she regards them as 'misguided,' an epithet she liberally applies to anyone who does not share her views (Jenkins, 2007). This is hardly surprising, given that there is no full description of ELF, and there are no materials for teaching it. It is also true that teachers are innately conservative, in particular when it comes to

threats to the standard variety of English which they have spent so much time and effort to acquire.

3. It is also patently clear that teachers actually teach what they are able to teach. They may aspire to a British or American model, but they will inevitably only approximate more or less closely to it. In most cases they will use a local variety of English, because that is the variety used in their community, while trying to ensure that it is maximally comprehensible to other English users internationally. And this is perfectly fine. What alternative do they have?
4. As to changing to an ELF model, it is not even on their screens. Teachers typically have more pressing concerns: long teaching hours, additional administrative and pastoral duties, pressures from the examination system, etc. They are also expected to perform impossible tasks: to bring students to a reasonable level of 'competence' within a ludicrously small number of classroom hours and at the same time, to prepare students for 'capability,' that is, being able to operate with competence in the real world after the course is over. These are responsibilities teachers have to their students, as Penny Ur reminds us (Ur, 2008a, 2008b). It is hardly surprising that they are unenthusiastic about sea changes such as those implied by ELF. The most realistic position is that described by Prabhu in his article *Teaching is at Most Hoping for the Best* (Prabhu, 1999).
5. As for publishers and examination authorities, there is next to no chance that they will sacrifice a cash cow for a white elephant! Standard varieties are their bread and butter. To switch metaphors, they are hardly likely to kill the golden goose of standard English(es) for the unfledged ugly duckling of ELF. Those in charge of curriculum specification and syllabus prescription are equally unlikely to embrace what they, rightly or wrongly, would perceive as a substandard variety.
6. Last but not least, we need to draw a clear line between applied linguistics research

and the day-to-day practice of language teaching. Applied or even pure linguistic investigation into the nature of languages and the patterns of use is a wholly legitimate endeavor. But its results have no necessary connection, direct or indirect, with real teaching. Research has as one of its aims the discovery of new truths. Teaching has to do with the pragmatic management of learning in difficult circumstances. It is unfortunate that academic researchers, with their greater power (through access to publication, etc.), have tended to present themselves as essential and relevant to teaching, when they are no such thing.

Alternatives for language teaching

What practical strategies can teachers adopt to cope with the English communication needs of their students in a globalized world?

Concentrate on existing varieties

It makes sense to concentrate on teaching within existing varieties. Apart from the relatively well-established and well-described varieties in the Outer Circle countries (in the Indian sub-continent, East and West Africa, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, etc.), there are clearly recognizable varieties in, for example, Spanish-speaking countries, Brazil, Scandinavia, Russia, Middle Eastern countries, Vietnam, etc. Teachers in these countries will naturally use English which is close to a standard but more or less strongly flavored by local characteristics. Working with and within local varieties will be far more productive than trying to introduce an unacceptable new ELF variety. It will also validate the responsible, professional practice of well-trained and committed teachers worldwide. They will always be striving to achieve the highest level of proficiency they can, while recognizing that local features will inevitably be incorporated.

From product to process

I suggest that, in terms of teaching, we need to move away from a product-based to a process-based approach. Rather than attempting to incorporate the core features of ELF into our teaching, we should be inducting students into an awareness of diversity

and of strategies for dealing with it. (And this is something which could also profitably be extended to NSs!) There is no way we can teach all the diverse varieties students will meet. What students need is some firm basis from which they can confidently reach out. As in art or music, we need to master the fundamentals before experimenting with variations. What we can try to teach is how to deal with diversity, through developing a respect for difference and a positive attitude to accommodation. These qualities will be the key to survival in the world of English outside the classroom. In other words, we will always be faced with a degree of unpredictability, so that it makes better sense to prepare students for this than to equip them with a codified system which will fail to meet their needs. It is the skills of accommodation which are needed, not another codified system. As Canagarajah points out,

We know from studies in speech accommodation that speakers make mutual modifications in their speech to facilitate intelligibility. We also know from conversation analysis that speakers skillfully employ strategies of repair, clarification and paralinguistic interpretation (that includes gestures, tone and other cues) to negotiate differences (as cited in Rubdy & Saraceni 2006, pp. 208-209).

In adopting this approach, we would be more concerned with the use of the language rather than the teaching of a model: with the *user* rather than the *code*.

Learning out of class

The limited amount of exposure to English which students receive in classrooms is a key issue. There is no way a student can achieve reasonable proficiency with five hours a week of classroom teaching over seven years (Barker, 2009). I suggest that we need to expand the opportunities and incentives for students to encounter and engage with English outside the classroom. That is, after all, where most of us learn what is useful to us in the real world. Given the massive expansion of multi-media and electronic communication, getting an education outside school is now a far easier task

than it once was. Through popular songs, e-mail, the WWW, blogging, texting, DVDs, TV, and the abundance of reading materials now available, learners have the opportunity to acquire aspects of English we do not or cannot ordinarily teach in the classroom. They are already primed and motivated to do this. Our role is to encourage, rather than to discourage it. But we also have the responsibility of trying to develop a sense of appropriacy through our classroom teaching. Learners need clear-cut and authoritative guidance, and they need to feel secure that their own English is fit for the purpose of reaching out to others whose English may differ markedly from their own. It is our responsibility to help our learners navigate the troubled waters of convention, as well as preparing them for difference.

Concluding remarks

In conclusion, I would like to clarify some possible misreadings of my position.

- I have argued that the ELF position is untenable. This does not imply that I am taking up a position in defense of the continuing dominance of the NS as the model for language teaching. On the contrary, I favor the polycentric model of many varieties of English. Such varieties have the function of defining local identities while remaining comprehensible in the international arena.
- The proponents of ELF tend to conflate 'Native Speaker English' with 'Standard English.' This is unfortunate. It is not necessary to be a NS to use a standard variety of English. Indeed, many NSs themselves do not use a standard variety. The problem arises from the confusion of 'provenance' with 'competence.' The fact of being born and raised as a NS does not guarantee competence in the use of a standard variety. And the fact of not having been born and raised as a NS does not prevent NNS users from achieving high levels of competence in a standard variety. It is in some ways regrettable that the Kachru three circles model has gained such wide acceptance by segregating users on the

basis of geographic provenance. A better model would be the one where the central higher ground is occupied by the most highly proficient users, with less proficient users fading away to the margins.

- One of the more disturbing characteristics of the proponents of ELF is a populist, anti-NS stance and a concern for PC (Political Correctness). This leads them into adopting highly polemicised 'critical' positions against anyone who happens not to share their views. This is unfortunate, if only because the 'critical' view they have of others does not extend to themselves. By setting themselves up as critical judge and jury, they flout the Latin tag *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* (Who polices the police?) Those who criticize must themselves be subject to criticism.
- My position throughout this paper has been to respect language variation and to suggest how better mutual comprehension can be achieved. To do this, we do not need a new variety; instead, we need to develop interpretative skills, tolerance of diversity, and the willingness to engage with 'the other.'

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How intelligible is Cambodian English variety? A look from foreigners' perspectives

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Abstract

It is generally accepted that English has now become a global language – a language for communicative, technological, economic, and political means for the world. Cambodia has also received the spread of English within her borders, particularly in the fields of education and international relations. This development has brought more communication between people from diverse backgrounds, which later could result in communication problems. The current study was based on foreigners' perspectives obtained from questionnaires, consisting of two parts: objective questions and the narrative frame proposed by Barkhuizen and Wette (2008). The study found that pronunciation, word choice, grammar, and cultural differences limit the intelligibility of Cambodian English variety and could lead to communication breakdowns. The study also revealed that communication strategies adopted by Cambodians and native and non-native English-speaking foreigners were very helpful in resolving communication problems.

Introduction

English has become a global language (Crystal, 1997), a language for worldwide communication among people from diverse cultures to achieve different purposes in areas such as missionary work, tourism, business, education, technology, and politics. Thus, the demand for English is growing so strong that local people need to be able to know and manipulate it in order to survive and catch up with massive advancements in the world. As a result, different English language varieties have emerged when English is localized. English in Singapore and English in the Philippines are examples of these varieties in ASEAN countries. Cambodian English has undergone this development as well, forming its own variety.

The wide spread of English in Cambodia began in the early 1990s with UNTAC, the United Nations Transitional Authority of Cambodia, which was

formed with various international authorities to prepare for the first national elections in 1993. Cambodian English has rapidly grown in the post-UNTAC period, with certain features or characteristics which, to some extent, have split away from Standard English. Cambodian English has been developing some unique features of non-standard English. In the author's previous study, a preliminary study on English language variety in Cambodia, these emerged features are:

...phonological features such as adding /s/ sounds to the end of words, dropping ending sounds of words, wrong stress on individual words, and so on, Khmer words transferred into English language, overgeneralized linguistic features, wrong word choices, and some features derived from influence of

Khmer, the mother-tongue of Cambodians
(Keuk, 2008, pp. 98-107)

to name a few. As included in the paper, if these language features are not intelligible to other speakers of English who are involved in the communication, miscommunication can take place (Keuk, 2008).

Literature review

“Cambodians speak a lot more English than most foreigners expect and are easier to understand than other Asian nationalities,” said a foreigner (questionnaire 122) who has worked as an English teacher in Cambodia for three years. This teacher has been exposed to Cambodian English for three years, so Cambodian English is intelligible to this person.

The extent to which spoken English in Cambodia (Cambodian English variety) is intelligible to other speakers, both native speakers (NSs) of English and non-native speakers (NNSs) of English, is an important question. Smith (1992, p. 76) defined ‘intelligibility’ as the degree to which words spoken or utterances are recognized by listeners. It can thus be perceived that if speakers and listeners, or people involved in communication, are not familiar with other national English varieties, the degree of intelligibility is low, particularly in contemporary situations in which English is not only spoken between NSs and NNSs, but also between NNSs and NNSs. ‘Intelligibility’ does not lie in the nativeness of the speakers, as Smith (1992, p. 76) restated what he and Nelson (Smith & Nelson, 1985, as cited in Smith, 1992) had previously said: that “native speakers are not the sole judges of what is intelligible, nor are they always more intelligible than non-native speakers.” The key point to increase intelligibility is the familiarity that speakers of the language have with the utterances produced by speakers of other national varieties. Smith (1992, p. 76) argued that “the greater the familiarity a speaker (NS and NNS) has with a variety of English, the more likely it is that s/he will understand, and be understood by, members of that speech community.”

However, Smith (1992, p. 76) suggested that ‘intelligibility’ is the lowest level of understanding spoken English, compared with the other two components, ‘comprehensibility,’ which refers to meanings of utterances, and ‘interpretability,’ which refers to hidden meanings of utterances. Understanding a speaker’s spoken English requires listeners to achieve these three levels. Hence, both speakers and listeners involved in communication must be intelligible to each other not only in terms of linguistic features but also in terms of something beyond the language. Kirkpatrick (2007) asserted that language has three fundamental functions: communication, identity, and culture. People use language to communicate with others, to express who they are and what they possess, and to describe their cultures to others. Regardless of whether the speakers are NSs or NNSs of English, there are underlying cultural values in their speech; these influence the ability to encode and decode the language phenomena between interlocutors. Perception, evaluation and interpretation are culture-bound, internalized, and unique to each individual (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 11).

As observed, there is no trend to prevent the emergence of English language varieties. More scholars have turned their attention to finding ways to assist people from diverse cultural backgrounds in bridging cultural gaps when they interact with each other. Most important is how new English language varieties are treated, which brings about interlocutors’ attitudes toward their partners’ English status. For success in communication, the notion of interrelating people – in appearance, manners, and possibly thought patterns and their presupposed cultural values– with the language they speak is of great benefit. Kirkpatrick (2007) states that:

People who complain that Singaporeans who speak Singlish do not speak proper English fail to understand that language serves these different functions [communication, identity, and culture] and that the variety of language spoken will differ depending on the function it is serving. (p. 11)

The concept of ‘intelligibility’ plays vital roles in dealing with this matter. “It is unnecessary for every user of English to be intelligible to every other user of English but only to those with whom he/she wishes to communicate in English” (Smith, 1992, p. 75). To do this, regardless of being a NNS or NS of English, and for the merit of successful communication, he/she should acculturate to the new speaking environment through either downward or upward accommodation speech acts (Giles & Powesland, 1997). The speaker should utilize a wide range of communication strategies to assist his/her communication.

Brown (1994, pp. 118-123) asserts that “communication strategies pertain to the employment of verbal or non-verbal mechanisms for the productive communication of information.” He also restates Faerch and Kasper’s (1983, as cited in Brown, 1994) definition of communication strategies as “potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal.” Brown (1994) suggests some useful common communication strategies adopted by learners. These strategies range from avoidance, word coinage, language switch, mime or body language, and prefabricated patterns, to name a few.

To investigate the intelligibility of Cambodian English and how interlocutors refresh and maintain communication if it is likely to break down, this paper seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are foreigners’ perspectives of Cambodian English?
2. What are the causes of misunderstanding in communication in English?
3. What strategies are used to foster communication?
4. What are implications for English language teaching to minimize communicative problems in interactions between Cambodians and foreigners who are both native and non-native speakers of English language?

Methodology

Participants

Both NSs and NNSs of English were selected to participate in this survey. The English of the NSs is from the “Inner Circle”; NSs in this group include Americans, English, Canadians, and Australians, according to Kachru (1992, p. 356). NNSs of English refer to those who speak English as their second language (the “Outer Circle”) and as their foreign language (the “Expanding Circle”) (Kachru, 1992, p. 356). The former include Indians, Malaysians, Nigerians, Pakistanis, Filipinos, and Singaporeans; the latter include Chinese, Indonesians, Koreans, and Japanese (Kachru, 1992, p. 356). Cambodians may be included in the “Outer Circle,” but in the current investigation, NNS does not refer to Cambodian speakers of English. They are treated as interlocutors of the NSs and NNSs of English who are involved in the study. Selection was done on the basis of availability. The author’s student assistants, who were working with foreigners, were asked to administer the questionnaires to these foreigners. Three teachers who were teaching the Khmer language to foreign students at the Institute of Foreign Languages also helped to administer the questionnaires to these students.

Instruments

The questionnaires were in two parts: part one was designed to collect personal data from the participants, while the second part was designed to seek their perspectives on Cambodian English. The questionnaires investigated both NS and NNS foreigners’ perspectives on Cambodian English variety spoken by students and office workers. Cambodian English variety was chosen in this context; students and office workers are important sources for the production of Cambodian English variety in this current society, and they have close contact in the target language with foreigners in schools and offices. Moreover, the decision was due to the contemporary situation of English speaking in Cambodia, in which English is not fully spoken across the country. This study followed Littlewood’s (1994) suggestion that to seek any understanding of a newly emerged variety of

English language, the learners' language should be studied.

The questionnaires allowed the participants to express their own views through following narrative frames, using Barkhuizen and Wette's (2008) model. This provided them with opportunities to openly express their stories of experiencing communication in English with Cambodians by filling the gaps given in the frame (see the questionnaire in Appendix 2). The data about participant strategies for fostering and repairing interactions which were about to break down were transcribed and tabulated into categories, and the percentages were computed for the analysis.

The data obtained from the narrative part illustrate the common experiences the respondents had and these could provide significant information in this paper. The questionnaires returned were numbered consecutively to keep track of the views. The first (Respondent 1), the middle (Respondent 62), and the last (Respondent 123) questionnaires were quoted so as to provide more explicit analyses of the obtained data (see Appendix 1).

Data analyses

Two hundred and twenty questionnaires were administered by the researcher and student assistants, but only 123 questionnaires were returned for analysis. Among the respondents, 51% were male and 49% were female, ranging from the ages of 20–30 (26%), 31–40 (31%), 41–50 (28%), and above 50 (15%). Eighty-five percent of the

respondents were employed in Cambodia; of those, 63% had been working in Cambodia for longer than one year, 9% longer than 6 months, 24% around 6 months, and only 5% less than 3 months. These figures indicate that most foreign participants in the survey have been in Cambodia long enough to be adequately exposed to English speaking in Cambodia.

Of the 123 participants, 84.55% (104 participants) identified their occupations. Table 1 below shows the majority of careers. According to Table 1, the majority (44.23%) of respondents in this survey are teachers of the English language. Senior managers (18.27%), foreigners holding high positions in offices as directors, deans, supervisors, advisors, etc., form the second majority. Foreigners who identified themselves as NGO and UN employers and employees were put together and formed the third majority at 15.38%. Other groups are missionaries at 4.81% and consultants, students, and teachers of Korean at 2.88% each. Many other occupations were counted in 'others,' at 8.65% of the respondents. The figures illustrate that the data gathered for the survey were obtained in various settings among schools and workplaces.

Participant perspectives on the level of understanding in regard to Cambodian English were sought. Respondents indicated their level from a range of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). Table 2 shows positive feedback on the self-evaluation of understanding Cambodian English variety with 29%

Table 1. Participant occupations

Career	Consultant	Student	Missionary	Senior Admin	UN & NGO	Teacher of Korean	Teacher of English	Others
Percentage	2.88	2.88	4.81	18.27	15.38	2.88	44.23	8.65

Table 2. Participant evaluation of Cambodian English

Level of understanding	1 (Below 25%)	2 (25-50%)	3 (51-70%)	4 (71-85%)	5 (85-100%)
Cambodian English	1%	11%	29%	35%	23%

at level 3, 35% at level 4, and 23% at level 5. It illustrates the overall picture that more success than failure is achieved in communication. This information is supported by the open responses of the participants. Respondent 1, a female between 31-40 years of age who has been working as a director for longer than one year in Cambodia, provided a good view of Cambodian English as “a very clear and understandable English.” She surprisingly highlighted that Cambodians, especially in urban areas, spoke good English. She said, “I could express everything I needed and was understood and also could understand everything that was said” (see Appendix 1). Moreover, Respondent 123, a female between 41-51 years of age who has been working as a teacher in Cambodia for more than a year, gave a very remarkable view of her experiences. Very surprisingly, she has been able to understand Cambodian English better than she thought she would since she arrived in this country. She indicated the improvement in English speaking in this contemporary society. Respondent 62, a female between 41-50 years of age who is responsible for “student work,” as stated in her questionnaire, has been in Cambodia for more than one year. She had more difficulty with communication as “not many people spoke English” at the beginning, but she now finds it easier to speak English with university students.

Despite this positive feedback by the participants, Cambodian English variety does have some

negative points which are worth taking into consideration. Some failed experiences in interactions taking place between Cambodian speakers and NS and NNS of English were reported. According to Table 3, among all respondents participating in this survey, 93% reported that they had misunderstood what Cambodian students and office workers said in English, in contrast to 7% who said that they had never misunderstood Cambodian English.

Table 4 shows foreigners’ perspectives on what causes miscommunication in interactions. Respondents were asked to choose more than one option. The most common factor was pronunciation, at 91%. Respondent 62 raised her concerns about weaknesses in Cambodian English: that “they [Cambodian students and office workers] spoke memorized chunks of language they had learnt, they did not have good pronunciation, and that they did not have much practice on speaking.” Respondent 123 highlighted that Cambodian speakers mispronounced some ending sounds in plurals.

Word choice was the second most common problematic factor leading to miscommunication, at 69%. Grammar and cultural differences were the third and fourth most common factors to cause communication breakdowns, at 49% and 44%.

Table 3. Participant views on miscommunication

Have you ever misunderstood Cambodian English in communication?	Yes	No
Percentage	93%	7%

Table 4. What are causes of misunderstanding Cambodian English?

What causes miscommunication?	Percentage
Pronunciation	91%
Word Choice	69%
Grammar	49%
Cultural Differences	44%
Communication Strategies	28%
Communication Purposes	19%
Awareness of Interlocutors	22%

From Respondent 1’s experience, although she was able to achieve what she wanted to in her communication, she found that the difficulty which made her likely to misunderstand meanings of the language spoken by her interlocutors was different cultural background, which could be seen through choosing the wrong word, ‘big words,’ as she called them, without full understanding. In addition, Respondent 123 remarked that what made it hard for her to absorb meanings was the direct translation from the Khmer language into English, thus

producing Cambodian English with no grammar support. Communication strategies, communication purposes, and awareness of interlocutors, which were 28%, 19%, and 22% respectively, did not seem to create significant obstacles for communication.

Although the possibility of miscommunication occurring in conversations between Cambodians and foreigners, NS and NNS, is seemingly high, successes in achieving communication purposes can be seen in the study. According to Table 5, the results from what the respondents pointed out show that Cambodians used certain speaking or communication strategies during the course of communication. The most useful strategies helping to obtain this success were code-switching (53%), English language simplification (52%), and body language (50%). Interestingly, 49% of Cambodian speakers turned for help in the interactions, and even more insightfully, the survey shows that 56%

of Cambodian speakers, the highest proportion compared to the others in this matter, withdrew from the communication. Cambodian speakers did not manipulate words to produce new English words on their own, which does not comply with the rules of native language. This strategy was used at a very low level (8%) compared to the other items.

In fostering and/or repairing communication, the respondents were very active in assisting successful communication to take shape. Table 6 illustrates the information about the communication strategies they used in interactions (see question 10 in the questionnaire attached in Appendix 2). Open responses were categorized, tabulated and computed. Analysis shows that the respondents manipulated various communication strategies. Common and helpful strategies used by the participants involved in this survey were clarification by asking questions (12%), using body

Table 5. Cambodian communication strategies viewed by the respondents

Communication Strategies	Cambodian English (Students and Office Workers)
They simplify the English language	52
They codeswitch between English and Khmer	53
They coin new English words	8
They use body language	50
They turn to someone for help	49
They withdraw from the communication	56

Table 6: Foreign communication strategies

Communication Strategies	Percentage
Clarification by asking questions	12%
Using body language	7%
Withdrawing from communication	5%
Speaking more slowly	3%
Speaking the Khmer language	17%
Simplifying English language	6%
Repeating what they have said	6%
Finding someone for help	8%
Explaining difficult words, phrases, and sentences	5%
Correcting errors	4%
Others	12%

language (7%), simplifying the English language used (6%), and repeating what Cambodians said (6%). These were followed by less common yet useful strategies such as explaining difficult words (5%), correcting errors (4%), and speaking more slowly (3%). Besides these strategies, some of the respondents turned for help from other people around (8%) while some others withdrew from the communication (5%). Interestingly, speaking the Khmer language in interactions was the most common strategy the subjects used to achieve their purposes, accounting for 17% of the responses. Numerous strategies with low response rates were included in 'others,' which made up 12% of responses. These reveal that both NSs and NNSs of English employ various communication strategies while they are interacting with Cambodian speakers of the language.

Discussion

As seen, more than 90% of the foreigners who experienced communication with Cambodians have misunderstood Cambodian English variety. This figure can draw our attention to looking into the degree of intelligibility of this new language variety. This study highlighted that from the foreigners' perspectives the most problematic factors affecting the intelligibility are pronunciation, word choice, grammar, and cultural differences.

It is probably accepted that, through the history of English language teaching and learning in Cambodia, the so-called incorrect pronunciation may be a result of inappropriate training. More than twenty years ago, ELT in Cambodia was in the situation in which more knowledgeable persons of English taught less knowledgeable ones, and there were no clear goals and syllabi for English programs. The teachers, most of whom were not trained as teachers of the language, selected any textbook available to and teachable for them when they were to teach English. For example, in secondary schools, teachers whose majors were not English but who knew English better than others were asked to teach English to students. Additionally, the phonological systems of the Khmer language may affect ways Cambodians pronounce English words. Respondent 123 remarked on this feature as a cause of the difficulty

in understanding what Cambodians expressed in English. She stated that "... due to Khmer language lack of [sh] and [s] at the end of plurals – missing. These mistakes are carried over to English language when Khmers speak the language." Respondent 62 added that [Cambodian] teachers may not have a good pronunciation. These situations have resulted in such phonological problems.

Moreover, ways of teaching English many years ago trained students to memorize chunks of English language, with more focus on grammar and vocabulary. As raised in Respondent 62's experiences, the target language outcome from this teaching approach poses difficulty for her in understanding the messages. She pointed out that "they just memorized a few words, but don't really know the meaning of many ... their lack of practice speaking ... they need more practice speaking."

In addition, Cambodians learn English for immediate communicative goals, most of which are for surviving and working. Even though there is not enough input in the English language either through formal or informal settings, they may attempt to communicate with foreigners using what they have just learnt, although their language outcome or competence is not achieved yet. This results in selecting the wrong word or grammatical features when they are communicating with foreigners in English (Littlewood, 1994).

Cultural differences are also one of the factors causing the misunderstanding of messages sent by Cambodians. Khmer cultural representations may influence English language formation and use when Cambodians speak this language. Keuk (2008) proposed some certain features of Cambodian English variety which have emerged in this transitional era of English language history in Cambodia, and which are influenced by the Khmer language and cultural background. Foreigners who were familiar with these features were more successful in communication. Respondent 123's experiences have confirmed this perception, demonstrating that she did not have much difficulty in understanding Cambodian English variety because she was used to Asians communicating in English. Therefore, following Smith's (1992)

suggestion, both Cambodians and foreigners involved in communication should try to be intelligible to each other.

Although these factors proved to cause communication problems, it is very insightful to realize that, according to the data analyses, both Cambodians and foreigners have employed certain communication strategies to maintain and/or repair their communication when it is about to break down so as to achieve their purposes. The active participation from the foreign interlocutors is very helpful for the success. However, most Cambodians, in the highest proportion among other strategies at 56%, and some foreigners (5%), withdrew from the communication. This striking information may to some extent indicate that the people who withdraw may not have used communication strategies to repair the interactions in order to achieve their goals.

Although the percentage was still very low at 8%, Cambodians are seen to have coined their own words from the English language. Littlewood (1994) points out that EFL learners may create new words in the target language in the hope that they will encode the correct messages they want to send to their interlocutors and that this coinage may result from literally translating from their native language. Moreover, Cambodians are also seen to most commonly codeswitch between English and Khmer (see Table 5). This significantly forms evidence that Cambodians are in the process of developing a variety of the English language by creatively constructing this language to achieve their communication purposes. Littlewood (1994) calls this communicative strategies commonly used by EFL learners, especially those whose English competence is insufficient.

Implications for ELT in Cambodia

The present study has provided insightful and informative messages to ELT practitioners, especially teachers, to revisit their ways of teaching, designs of learning materials and learning goals. This means that English language teaching should not be ended with the language per se. It should guide learners, whether they are learning English as a native language, a second language, or a foreign

language, to be more deeply aware of other propositions beyond the language.

First, ELT has to promote learner awareness of ‘intelligibility’ of their English language to other speakers of the English language. To achieve this, Kirkpatrick (2007) suggests that the selection of English language materials for training in both formal and informal settings should be done on the basis of intelligibility. We can infer from Kirkpatrick’s message that learners should be exposed to more English language varieties in the world in addition to just standard language varieties such as American English and the like. For higher levels, learners should be exposed to different varieties of English through media.

More importantly, EFL learners should also be trained with correct sounds of the language and be aware of different sounds possibly spoken by both NSs and NNSs of English. To attain this goal, Kachru (1992, p. 361) proposes a “variety exposure” model. He explains that this teaching and learning model should adopt an “exposure of the repertoire of major varieties of English, native and non-native: their uses and users, specific texts related various interactional contexts, shared and non-shared features at different linguistic levels.” He also adds a practical procedure for this teaching and learning model, saying that “one might focus on one specific variety and at the same time emphasize awareness and functional validity of other varieties.”

Second, as Cambodians learn English for their immediate needs of survival and work, a teaching and learning model which provides them with only English language per se does not seem to benefit them much. For this reason, Cambodian learners should be enriched with communication strategies. Without these, it will take them a very long time to be able to use the target language learnt. Brown (1994) suggests a list of communication strategies English language teachers can use to train their students. These strategies mainly include paraphrasing, borrowing, appealing for assistance, requesting clarification, avoidance, repetition, memorization, and formulaic expression, to name a few. Among communication strategies, according to

the findings of this study (see Table 6), asking questions for clarification, using body language, simplifying language, and repeating what was said are more common than other strategies in the respondents' experiences. Thus, these strategies could be integrated into real classroom practices. Kachru (1992, p. 361) suggests a model of "contrastive pragmatics," in which the practice of teaching should explore "the relationships of discoursal and stylistic innovations and their relationships to the local conventions of culture," in, for example, the comparison and contrast between strategies used for persuasion, apologies, condolences, and regrets (Kachru, 1992, p.361)

Limitation and further research

As the current study investigated the intelligibility of Cambodian English via foreigners' perspectives reflected in questionnaires and narratives, the data gathered may be restricted to some extent for the investigation. Moreover, the participants involved in the study were predominantly teachers of English who had been working in Cambodia for a long time. This status could possibly gear the given data into one particular interpretation. Future research on the intelligibility of Cambodian English should be done with more in-depth examinations of the communication strategies of Cambodians and foreigners, their attitudes and behaviors revealed in interactions, as well as intelligibility issues along with comprehensibility and interpretability (Smith, 1992) through actual communication between Cambodians and other NSs and NNSs of English. The next studies should be extended to various functions of uses of English for different purposes such as English in media, English in workplaces and in shopping centers.

The fact that the participants involved in the study resorted to speaking Khmer or switching to Khmer language in communication probably shows that English speaking in this country is not countrywide. Thus, any absolute conclusion about the intelligibility of Cambodian English variety will not be well-informed, as Smith (1992) concludes that the speakers' English proficiency does affect the intelligibility of their English. Hence, the concept of

intelligibility of Cambodian English variety is questionable.

Conclusion

Overall, pronunciation and word choices mostly affect the intelligibility of Cambodian English, and these elements can cause communication problems. The paper also gives insightful information that although miscommunication, as experienced by the foreigners taking part in the study, takes place, this problem is usually resolved when both participants employ various communication strategies. Significantly, the common causes of miscommunication and the fact that most Cambodians withdraw from communication found in the studies are informative messages for people concerned with ELT, in Cambodia and perhaps in some ASEAN countries sharing a similar background, to reconsider their focus in English language teaching to promote more intelligible pronunciation, correct word choice, and grammatical forms, and to shorten the gaps of cultural representations between people involved in interactions. They should be aware that teaching communication strategies to students is necessary so that Cambodians, with these strategies as tools, can deal with possible miscommunications so as to satisfactorily achieve their communication purposes.

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Appendix 1

Narrative Stories (1, 62, and 123)

Respondent 1's experiences

When I first came/ arrived in Cambodia, I was trying to communicate with Cambodians in English. I found that Cambodians *in general speak a very clear and understandable English*. I realized that I could *I could express everything I needed and was understood and also could understand everything that was said*. However, I sometimes felt that *meanings were different or had different connotations due to a different cultural background*. I think what makes it difficult for me to understand their English speaking are *sometimes the choice of*

words, especially when 'big words' are used without full understanding. But now I felt that my communication in English with Cambodians *is easier since I understand the context better*. I think that *a surprisingly large group of people (esp. in the urban area) speak a very good English*.

Respondent 62's experiences

When I first came/ arrived in Cambodia, I was trying to communicate with Cambodians in English. I found that Cambodians *not many people spoke English*. I realized that I could *I could communicate easier if I knew Khmer*. However, I sometimes felt that *they just memorized a few words, but don't really knew the meaning of many*. I think what makes it difficult for me to understand their English speaking are *their lack of practice in speaking. Their teachers might not have good pronunciation*. But now I felt that my communication in English with Cambodians *is much easier when talking with university students*. I think that [they] *need more practice speaking*.

Respondent 123's experiences

When I first came/arrived in Cambodia, I was trying to communicate with Cambodians in English. I found that *I could understand their English better than I thought I could*. I realized that I could *simplify my language and use gestures to help me*. However, I sometimes felt that *due to people literally translating from Khmer to English, it was not easy to understand as it was literally Khmer, so their English has no grammar to back up..* I think what makes it difficult for me to understand their English speaking are *I don't think I have much difficulty in understanding their English because I am used to Asians communicating in English*. But now I felt that my communication in English with Cambodians *is of course much better, easier because more Khmers speak/use English, and are becoming more proficient at using the language*. I think that *definitely that English is improving in many Khmer speakers though they still make general mistakes due to the Khmer language lack of [sh] and [s] at the end of plurals – missing. These mistakes are carried over to English language when Khmers speak the language*.

Appendix 2

Questionnaire

Topic: How Intelligible is Cambodian English? **A Look from Foreigners' Perspectives**

Dear Sir or Madam,

We are doing a research to investigate if English spoken by Cambodians is intelligible to foreigners, both native and non-native speakers of this language, for the 5th CamTESOL, which will be held on 21 and 22 February, 2009.

This study needs actual information from foreigners who have experienced communicating with Cambodians in English. **We wish to study the intelligibility of Cambodian English spoken by students and office workers.**

We would like you to participate in this study by answering the questions in the questionnaire below to share your experiences. Whatever you share in this study will be used only for suggestions to improve English Language Teaching (ELT) in Cambodia.

We look forward to receiving your responses to this questionnaire.

Truly yours,
Keuk Chan Narith
Coordinator of Literature Studies
Royal University of Phnom Penh
Institute of Foreign Languages
English Department

I. Personal Data

Please fill in the following questions with your personal information. Please check (✓) your answers in the appropriate boxes.

1. Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Age:
☐ Below 20 ☐ 20 – 30 ☐ 31 – 40 ☐ 41 – 50 ☐ Above 50
3. Are you currently working in Cambodia?
☐ Yes (If yes, proceed to question 4.)
☐ No (If no, proceed to question 6.)
4. How long have you been working?

5. What is your occupation in Cambodia?

II. Research data

6. Have you ever communicated with Cambodian students and office workers in English?
☐ Yes (If yes, proceed to question 7.)
☐ No (If no, thank you very much. Please return your questionnaire.)
7. Have you ever misunderstood what Cambodians mean in English?
☐ Yes (If yes, proceed to question 8.)
☐ No (If no, proceed to question 12.)
8. What do you think causes such misunderstanding in communication? (Please choose more than ONE option.)
- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. pronunciation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. word choices | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. grammar | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. cultural differences | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. communication strategies | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. communication purposes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. awareness of interlocutors | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h. other (please specify): _____ | |
9. What do you observe Cambodians often do when they cannot express ideas in communication? (Please choose more than ONE option.)
- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| a. They simplify the English language. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. They codeswitch between English and Khmer. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. They coin new English words. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. They use body language. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. They turn for help. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. They stop talking and withdraw from the communication. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
10. What do you often do when you realize that misunderstanding occurs? (Please write your answer in the space provided.)
- _____
- _____
11. Overall, how much do you understand the English language spoken by Cambodians in communication?
☐ Below 25% ☐ 25 – 50% ☐ 51 – 70% ☐ 71 – 85% ☐ 85 – 100%

12. Narrative Frame

(This question focuses on your experiences in communicating with Cambodians in English in general.)

The following is a Narrative Frame (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008), in which you can express your real experiences in communicating with Cambodians in the English language. Please contribute as much information of your experiences as possible.

When I first came/ arrived in Cambodia, I was trying to communicate with Cambodians in English. I found that (your impression about Cambodians being able to speak English) _____

I realized that I could (your communication) _____

However, I sometimes felt that (your difficulty in understanding what they said) _____

I think what makes it difficult for me to understand their English speaking are _____

But now I feel that my communication in English with Cambodians _____

I think that (your general comments on English speaking in Cambodia) _____

(extended spaces for answers not included in this publication)

Thank you!

Globalization and the use of volunteers in ELT: Enhancing volunteer impact

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the actual and potential impact of globalization on the use of foreign English-speaking volunteers as a means of enhancing access to English among some of the poorer sections of the Cambodian population, with particular reference to rural areas. Informed by the author's personal experience of helping in a rural school, it begins by examining the implications of globalization for recruitment and selection. Next, the paper outlines a number of ways in which globalization can be harnessed to expand and optimize the volunteers' contributions, both on location and beyond the end of their stay. This leads to a discussion of the benefits to be derived from the involvement of language professionals able to provide expert input. The paper concludes by asserting the need to achieve greater effectiveness through the development of systems that enable efforts to be better coordinated and outcomes to be shared.

Introduction

Recent accounts of foreign language learning in Cambodia have shown that English remains largely confined to the more affluent urbanized sections of the population (Clayton, 2006). It cannot be denied that teaching English in economically less-developed areas is a controversial undertaking. Portrayed by some, e.g. Phillipson (1992), as a neo-imperialist activity that perpetuates the dependence of former colonies on the centre, ELT is open to claims that it may act as a conduit for Western values and should not have a high priority. Such arguments, however, must be set against ample evidence that, in Cambodia as elsewhere, "knowing English is like possessing the fabled Aladdin's lamp which permits one to open, as it were, the linguistic gates to international business, technology, science and travel. In short, English provides linguistic power" (Kachru, 1986).

Whether English attracts learners because it promises opportunities to travel, to join a worldwide community of speakers, or to work with an international organization, there is no doubt that the

present difficulties experienced by populations in rural and remote areas in gaining access to English exacerbate inequalities and contribute to a growing gap between the capital and rural areas. In theory, all Cambodian children have a right to nine years of education as part of a plan to develop the human resources required for a knowledge-based society able to compete in a globalised world. In practice, one finds a geo-economic divide in relation to education, with secondary school attendance in rural areas only just above half of urban areas. There are several reasons for this, including a lack of lower secondary school facilities and the direct, indirect, and opportunity costs associated with schooling. High among the factors that reduce enrolments in secondary school is the cost of transport. Because of the long distances involved, the time and money necessary to get to secondary school can be a significant issue for households in rural areas, sometimes causing children to drop out if those with whom they share transport cease to attend (Hocking, 2008).

Failure to achieve equitable access is arguably worse in relation to the learning of foreign languages, which are being introduced in a staged process and are usually taught privately, making access dependent on the ability to pay. In addition, the characteristics of rural areas (poor facilities, etc.) can make it difficult to attract and retain teachers. Admittedly, occasions to use English in rural areas are currently limited, but this may change, especially with the development of tourism. Besides preventing the local population from moving to jobs requiring English located in other parts of the country, the lack of opportunities to acquire some command of English is liable to jeopardize future prospects of local employment. It also excludes potential learners from the wealth of knowledge and information accessed through English in domains ranging from health to agriculture, hence the efforts made by a number of charitable organizations to offer English language learning at low or no cost.

As might be expected, the provision of ELT in disadvantaged areas encounters immense obstacles. This has led some enterprising institutions to try and enhance provision by using volunteers from abroad. This paper focuses on the actual and potential impact of globalization on this strategy. Informed by the author's experience as a volunteer in August 2008 at Chumkriel Language School (hereafter CLS), a subsidized evening school near Kampot that teaches English to approximately 250 students of various ages, and by reports from other volunteers in South East Asia, the paper begins by examining the implications of globalization for the recruitment and selection of volunteers. Next, it outlines a number of ways in which globalization can be harnessed to expand and optimize the contribution of volunteers both on location and after they leave. It concludes by asserting the need to make voluntary contributions more effective through the development of systems for coordinating efforts and disseminating information.

Recruitment and selection

Globalization and recruitment

Volunteer recruitment has been helped in recent years by two key dimensions of globalization: the growth in travel and tourism and the diffusion of

information and communication technology. Cheaper tickets and better standards of accommodation made volunteering less expensive and less physically challenging. With more visitors, local needs and opportunities can be made known to a wider public (notices in local brochures, etc.). At the same time, improved means of communication enable the net to be cast wider by allowing organizations and institutions to have a presence on the Internet. Volunteer abroad organizations such as Cross-Cultural Solutions, Global Crossroads, Global Service Corps, I-to-I, and Travel to Teach all have websites giving details of their programs, possible placements, what volunteers do, how they benefit, and so on. CLS, despite lacking the range of information and communication technologies equipment commonly found in richer institutions, has its own website, with sections on volunteering opportunities, and is contactable by email.

Importantly, because the difficult conditions under which English is taught in poor areas make any additional input valuable, institutions accept short-term volunteers. While using one's skills to help communities in poorer countries is nothing new, it did require until recently substantial financial and time investments. The possibility of making a more modest contribution, perhaps as part of a touring holiday, represents a significant development that opens up volunteering to people who cannot contemplate taking time out.

Globalization and selection

As a result of the worldwide spread of English, the number of people speaking English as a second or foreign language now far exceeds the number of native speakers. This expansion has spurred a lively debate within the ELT community regarding the kind of English that should be taught (Kirkpatrick, 2007; McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008) and the respective merits and shortcomings of native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and local non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) (Árva & Medgyes, 2000). Setting the first issue aside, to require a teaching qualification and/or the ability to speak Khmer would obviously place impossible constraints on volunteer recruitment. However, should all volunteers be native speakers of English?

From a pragmatic perspective, to make nativeness a criterion is bound to limit the pool of potential volunteers. The impact is unlikely to be very significant at present, but would grow as English spreads further – according to Graddol (2006), there may be around 2 billion people learning English in 2010 – and levels of English proficiency continue to rise throughout the world. On the other hand, to replace nativeness with a concept such as expert/fluent speaker of English raises quality control issues, even if the process is largely self-regulating, since non-fluent speakers are unlikely to volunteer to help support ELT.

Here one must consider more closely the kind of English that learners need to acquire. It is clear that the vast majority of Cambodian learners from poor areas have little prospect of visiting a country from the ‘inner circle,’ such as the UK. They may, however, need English in their work. Whether they work in the tourism industry, in NGOs, or for the government, most of the people learners will interact with, both face-to-face and in mediated communication, will be people for whom English is not a native language. The same applies to interactions outside work. In other words, the situations that learners need to prepare for are those in which English acts as a lingua franca. Irrespective of the model of English actually taught, there is a case for not limiting volunteering to native English speakers and it is common practice for volunteer organizations to accept people with a working (as distinct from native) knowledge of English. In fact, it can be argued that much is to be gained from including volunteers from a non-English background (exposure to a range of accents, cross-cultural expertise, etc.).

Acting as volunteer in Cambodia ***What do volunteers do?***

Volunteer English language teaching takes a variety of forms, from supporting teachers in the classroom, through providing general assistance outside class by producing handouts, having informal conversations with students, and taking part in sport and/or extra curricular activities, to helping in special facilities such as a drop-in centre or an orphanage, teaching English to monks, or running English camps.

Formal English language teaching in rural areas is likely to take place in buildings with poor lighting (making it difficult to see in the evening) and poor sound proofing (making it difficult to hear when it rains). The classroom will typically be equipped with tables, chairs, and a blackboard/whiteboard, but there will probably be little available in the way of teaching aids and learning resources, although students may have copybooks and pens. Exposure to written English will be provided by the teacher and the textbook, while exposure to spoken English will be confined to the teacher’s utterances. Therefore the volunteers’ main role will be to provide additional exposure to spoken English and to interact with students to build their confidence.

Unless they have appropriate experience, volunteers do not normally take a class on their own, at least initially, but work as classroom assistants. The Thailand section of the Travel to Teach website describes what volunteers do as follows:

As an English teacher in Thailand most volunteers will work alongside a Thai English teacher helping in areas such as pronunciation and general conversation. However, the Thai teacher often encourages you to take the lead role in the classroom, since their level of English is almost always lower than the volunteers.’

The volunteers’ role will therefore vary from class to class and lesson to lesson, depending on their personality and skills, the level of the class, the degree of fit between the planned lesson and what volunteers can realistically contribute, as well as the teacher’s ability and willingness to take advantage of the volunteers’ presence.

Specifically, volunteers may be called upon to:

- introduce themselves to the class when they first arrive (with the teacher providing a translation into Khmer if necessary)
- read out English texts and dialogues
- assist the teacher with the provision of examples
- model role-plays with the teacher
- help with the running of exercises

- provide feedback to students (e.g. with regard to pronunciation, or to spelling when checking homework)
- organize games and singing

Although access to English is enhanced and enriched by the use of volunteers, dovetailing their deployment with existing practices on a day-to-day basis presents significant challenges. One key issue is the prevalence in Cambodia of a culture of learning that places heavy reliance on grammar-translation (Neau, 2003). From a practical point of view, the dominance of grammar-translation leads to exchanges in Khmer, which, however well-advised, reduce the time available for English, temporarily turning volunteers into spectators. In extreme cases, constant code-switching may reduce volunteers to a token presence. From a methodological perspective, grammar-translation leads to a mismatch between the kinds of activity the students are used to and those most liable to benefit from the presence of volunteers. This can be challenging, as illustrated by the following quote from an Australian primary school teacher working as volunteer in Cambodia: “My style of teaching is so different to the Khmer way and it has taken me and the kids some time to become used to this” (Out2explor, 2009). Thus, the problems associated with reworking lesson plans at short notice to accommodate volunteers are likely to be compounded by pedagogical obstacles because of the small number of activities that can easily be resorted to.

When working in a drop-in centre or similar facility, volunteers will again talk about themselves and read texts aloud, probably on a one-to-one basis, with the student repeating after them. Most of their time, however, is likely to be spent on devising and running group activities. Among the favorites at CLS learning centre were hangman, finding opposites, and card games. Singing is widely reported as very popular and can be quite useful. For example, a song like “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes” helps teach body parts (Marleen, personal communication, August 21, 2009). Many aspects of alternative settings, from the layout of the facilities to the greater informality of the atmosphere, and the fact that attendance is optional,

combine to make them more congenial environments for communicative activities than the classroom. Moreover, when groups and individuals work on different projects with few teachers around able to interpret, the incentive to communicate in English is stronger. There is little choice but to negotiate meaning using the kind of strategies (comprehension checks, clarification requests, etc.) that increase exposure to comprehensible input and opportunities for producing comprehensible output. In this sense, drop-in centers, English camps, and similar initiatives produce more authentic contexts for developing communication skills in that they afford opportunities to use English for purposes (e.g. negotiating activities) that represent, or approximate genuine communication.

The relative novelty of communicative tasks and the shortage of resources beyond access to a whiteboard, some reading materials, pens, paper, scissors, and a few pictures can be taxing on a volunteer’s ingenuity, hence the advice posted by a former volunteer to “bring more supplies – crayons, paper, workbooks, readers, etc. as your resources are limited so you need to get creative” (Julie, 2007). Useful supplies include a range of rewards:

I gave them colored stamps, stickers, smiley faces etc. when they made a contribution. The kids used to line up for me to review their efforts in their exercise books and I use[d] to write comments like ‘well done’, add a smiley face, and signed it ‘Robert’. The kids loved being recognized and encouraged. (R. Wright, personal communication, August 16, 2009)

It is worth stressing that reading materials may well consist of publications (novels, etc.) left behind by visitors, which are unlikely to be suited to the learners’ level. When the author checked whether the student practicing reading with her understood what she was reading, she found that, as suspected, despite the fact that the student had selected the book herself and claimed to have read it before, her comprehension did not match her ability to repeat. By putting severe limits of what can be undertaken, especially on the spur of the moment, the lack of adequate resources encourages the use and reuse of a few well-tried popular formulae, making resource

development a key priority and restricting what can be achieved. This is a situation that calls for improvements.

Potential developments

One of the easiest ways to start remedying the lack of resources while simultaneously increasing the effectiveness of volunteers' visits is to make their contribution less ephemeral. This can be done by asking volunteers to bring a few photos of themselves, their families and surroundings, and write out some captions or short descriptive texts. Laminating these materials and keeping an electronic copy would ensure durability and provide both models of English for learners to study and resources for other volunteers. A set of passport photographs, for instance, lends itself to a variety of uses: identification games (who has long hair and blue eyes?), spot the differences, versions of bingo, questions about the date of the visit, and so on. This is not merely a way of producing materials. Former visitors form part of the wider context of the students' experience and as such are more authentic topics of conversation than total strangers or imaginary characters in textbooks. With permission, this might be extended to taking photos of the children as described by a former volunteer:

I have been able to make learning resources to help provide visuals for the English topic that we are learning. I was even able to give each student a photo of themselves when we were learning how to tell someone their name. The children loved this. It is so exciting for them just to see a photo of themselves on the digital camera but to then have a personal copy was something very special for them. (Out2explor, 2009)

Another means of adding value to volunteers' visits is to get volunteers to do some audio recordings. MP3 recorders, because of their relative affordability, are the obvious device to use. The aim is to give a degree of permanence to the interactions volunteers engage in face-to-face. For example, volunteers might record how they introduce themselves to classes, interview each other, or act out role plays. Even without an immediate solution to issues of duplication and use, it is essential to

take some steps towards the building of a collection of audio materials, all the more so as students do not have access to the CDs, cassettes, and DVDs that routinely accompany the written materials of series like New Headway.

A third way in which volunteers might be used to address the need for resources is through involvement in the production of contextually appropriate materials containing language relevant to the learners' concerns. Many scholars have commented on the lack of relevance of standard textbooks to rural life: "The situations represented – such as commuting by plane, cooking with a microwave, or shopping in department stores – assume an urbanized, Western culture that is still largely alien to rural students, and likely to clash with their traditional values" (Canagarajah, 1999). It is true that recent textbooks feature people and scenes from a range of countries that can be seen as in keeping with the desire of Cambodia to become part of the global economy. Nevertheless, the lifestyle and surroundings depicted remain far removed from those of rural learners.

To take an example, a student who has completed lesson 8 of New Headway Beginner might be able to understand a description of a volunteer's house and draw it, but will lack the vocabulary necessary to describe his/her own house in detail. Many houses in rural Cambodia are built on stilts. This term is understandably absent from New Headway Beginner, so a student living in such a house will not be able to explain one of its essential features. The point is that language is not only for obtaining information. It is also for self-expression. The principle of mutual respect demands that pupils learn to use English to describe their own world (home, occupations, etc.) besides that of others; unless learners are equipped with appropriate terms and structures to talk about their lives, any attempt to interact with a volunteer will be imbalanced, and this will hamper second language acquisition. To provide help with the relevant lexical items is one of the tasks that can be undertaken by volunteers.

In the first instance, volunteers might just draw on their developing awareness of the most salient features of daily life and customs in Cambodia and

discuss their observations with the teachers. To help students to “talk and write about their own experiences using their own voices” (Hiep, 2006), they might ask the learners, if necessary through an interpreter, about their life stories, concerns, and aspirations. The findings can then be worked into lists, model sentences, and mini dialogues, and illustrated as appropriate. Another possibility is for volunteers to walk around with some students and/or teachers (in itself a good opportunity for learners to engage in meaningful interaction) and document what they see, in writing, orally, or both. Even if they venture no further than the school compound, they could use an MP3 recorder to record what is going on, or describe the playground from different vantage points for learners to identify when they listen to the recording.

Globalization and support from afar ***Globalization and former visitors***

While the end of a volunteer’s placement often marks the end of their involvement, some volunteers return and/or continue to offer assistance from home. While leaving the country puts an end to face-to-face interactions, it is possible to use global communication networks to continue to offer support from afar. Mediated communication with individual students is unlikely to be a realistic option, but volunteers may be willing to write general emails about their daily life, or to read up about Cambodia and produce further word lists together with illustrative examples of usage. Importantly, the return home provides opportunities for using one’s contacts. It is not uncommon for volunteers to involve their family and friends in fund-raising. The same people can be enlisted to create listening (or other) materials to be sent as attachments through the Internet.

Although volunteers are seldom trained teachers, many will know people working in education who can point them towards relevant resources when given a description of the Cambodian context. The experience and skills of the volunteers’ personal contacts, whether involved with literacy, language teaching, or the kinds of sectors that Cambodian learners might aim to work in (e.g. tourism), therefore represent a significant, albeit variable

potential asset that can enhance quality as well as provide new leads.

Globalization and the professionalization of volunteer use

Volunteers are capable individuals full of energy and resourcefulness. But the effectiveness of their contribution is bound to be adversely affected by the general conditions, methodological vacuum, and lack of infrastructure in which they operate. One volunteer reports that the school she was at had a lot of volunteers, but no system in place for recording what they did. As a result, volunteers did not know what had been covered. She suggested a very simple solution: the use of a notebook so that volunteers could read what the person before them had done (Marleen, personal communication, August 21, 2009).

Volunteers coming through organizations normally receive some induction before and/or on arrival into the country to provide them with basic materials, teaching tips, and some insights into cultural differences. Even so, teaching for the first time can be difficult: “my first hour-long plan lasted 10 minutes, providing me with the challenge of having to do some fairly fast improvisation” (Smith, R., 2006). Volunteers recruited independently are likely to be thrown in at the deep end. While the freedom of action that volunteers currently enjoy must not be constrained by directives that curb their enthusiasm and jeopardize their rapport with students, there is a need for better guidance and a more supportive structure. The inescapable conclusion is that this requires the involvement of language professionals.

Again, globalization is helpful by allowing knowledge and expertise to be shared across geographical boundaries. In the first place, globalization makes it easier for language professionals to travel to disadvantaged areas. Thus CLS has been visited by several teachers from Australia, who held activities related to their personal field of expertise. However, what endows globalization with transformative power is the opportunity that telecommunications offer to call on experts outside Cambodia.

Expert input can take many forms, notably assistance with materials development, database design, and staff training. One way of helping volunteer contributions to be better focused is to make guidelines available, including techniques for exploiting recordings. Crucially, without a template for describing, cataloguing, and storing materials, the learning resources made and/or sent by volunteers run the risk of not being used or of being used less effectively than they could be. Assistance on such matters can be provided from a distance, given some awareness of the local context. There is also a need to read the standard textbooks with a critical eye to identify areas in need of localization and then develop appropriate companion materials in collaboration with local teachers.

Another way in which experienced professionals can help improve the current situation is by identifying relevant resources among the wealth of free materials available on the Internet. Cambodian teachers have neither the time nor the facilities to surf the World Wide Web, while volunteers do not have the expertise necessary for evaluating the potential of what is on offer. Experienced professionals, however, will know what to look for, where to look, and how to assess the results of searches, not to mention how to appeal for assistance to the relevant communities of practice.

Among the many avenues worth exploring is the application of approaches that require little equipment, such as the Total Physical Response method (Asher, 1969), which lends itself particularly well to implementation in informal situations. Materials on TPR are easy to find, but will not usually be serviceable as they stand and will need customizing. For instance, while Wilson's (2000) list of 502 Words that Can Be Learned with TPR starts with items that can easily find a place in a Cambodian learning centre, some of the vocabulary of later sections is alien to life in Cambodia and needs to be pruned or substituted. Another source of inspiration within the same tradition is Thomson's (1993) *Kick-Starting Your Language Learning*. Aimed at fieldworkers interested in self-directed language learning, this online book contains many sections that could be adapted for use by volunteers, who fulfill a similar

role to the target language resource person who offers the fieldworker the vocabulary and sentence patterns (as opposed to conventional teaching) necessary to communicate.

Another possible direction involves investigating governmental educational websites with the use of volunteers in mind. To give just one example, the endorsement given to phonics in the Early Years section of the National Strategies website of the UK department for children, schools and families (<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/earlyyears>) invites looking at the potential of the method for early foreign language learning. Information on phonics and phonics resources is readily available on the Web, but like everything, needs to be sifted to assess how much of the methodology, cultural content, and delivery system could be appropriated by volunteers working in disadvantaged areas.

Conclusion

Due to the multifaceted nature of globalization and the complexity of the issues facing ELT in rural Cambodia, it has not been possible to do more than sketch out a blueprint of some of the ways in which the impact of volunteers might be enhanced. Having looked at three of the dimensions of the interrelationship between globalization and ELT (volunteer recruitment and selection, in situ contributions, support from afar), it can be seen that just as globalization has been instrumental in creating a rising demand for English, it offers some means of mitigating the effects of poverty and isolation in relation to the learning of English.

With regard to the implementation of the emerging program of action outlined above, it must be acknowledged that expert input is unlikely to make a real impact on the use of volunteers if left entirely to individuals contributing their time and skills independently from each other in their spare time. For the benefits of individual efforts to be cost-effective and reach a sufficiently large number of learners, communication and dissemination must be improved and efforts coordinated. Once again, the solution lies in telecommunications, for instance, the setting up of a dedicated well-signposted website where news and views can be exchanged

and materials known to be effective in a Cambodian context can be uploaded and downloaded. To increase the effectiveness of expert input, more research should be undertaken into the use of volunteers, the volunteers' perception of their needs, and what can be reasonably be expected in the way of preparation and contribution. This entails the appointment, or secondment, of some paid staff and has financial implications. But the funding required is relatively modest, whereas the benefits could be considerable.

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English for future careers: Globalization for mechanical technology students

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Abstract

English for Future Careers is taught in some government universities with the expectation that students will be armed with a CV (Curriculum Vitae) in English and interview experience to boost their chances of employment once they leave. In reality, many Thai students will not be working in an environment where English will be part of the job requirement, with even less chance of English being used in the interview process.

This paper details how the course has developed over time to reflect a form of “creative subversion” in order to comply with government directives and enable teachers to “adapt the course creatively” to maximize the benefits for students. Mechanical Technology students have learned to appreciate that even in northeastern Thailand, English can be used to express what they can do and have done in order to secure future work opportunities, making them part of the globalization process.

Introduction

Udon Thani Rajabhat University is in the northeast of Thailand and is one of over forty local community universities set up by HM The King of Thailand. Initially, Rajabhats were teacher training colleges; however, these establishments were upgraded to institutes and now they have been granted university status. Udon Thani is a mainly agricultural region with a history of being slow to change with the times (Phongphit & Hewison, 1990) and even in the twenty-first century, still has to contend with local villagers migrating to Bangkok and other major cities in search of work (Klausner, 2000).

The government-directed English for Future Careers course was born out of a course description called English for Occupational Purposes, which had the aim of developing the four English skills necessary for students’ future careers. The emphasis was on language and techniques used for different purposes, for example, how to write a biography

and a resume, as well as how to prepare for interviews.

At its inception, details concerning the new course were passed by word of mouth, resulting in course preparation being conducted without prior knowledge of the English for Occupational Purposes course specifications. Furthermore, there was some confusion as to whether the students would be English majors or non-English majors. The initial planning and preparation was for the former; however, as time progressed, it emerged that the course would in fact be for non-English majors, creating a substantial amount of extra work.

Non-English major students possess a low level of English language skills combined with a lack of motivation to learn English. This is due partly to the continued failure of primary and secondary schools to meet quality assurance standards (Graham, 2008) as well as a delay in the implementation of the 1999 Education Act, which lays down the foundations of a major shift in education policy from teacher-

centered rote learning to a more learner-centered communicative approach. Most students in this region do not see the relevance of learning English, as it has nothing to do with their daily lives.

The course objectives had to be limited to the writing of curriculum vitae with a covering letter, the use of Microsoft Word and email to complete assessments, and a simulated interview. These limited objectives reflected the meager English language skills the students possessed. The use of Microsoft Word and email to forward work for the midterm test was a recent innovation reflecting the effects of progress and globalization, which have even reached students in Udon Thani. These tasks had to be achieved in a sixteen-week semester containing a maximum of forty-eight contact hours, not accounting for national holidays.

Originally, there was a course book and a workbook. However, the teachers who taught the initial courses decided that it would be advisable to reduce the coursework to just one book, which was in line with adapting the original course for English majors to non-English majors.

Mechanical technology students and their teachers

Over the years, class sizes for mechanical technology students have been in excess of forty students; however, recently the numbers have been reduced to the high twenties. It is not certain whether this has been a conscious effort on the part of university administrators or whether there has been a sharp increase in dropout rates. Classes tend to consist of third-year male students who have attended local technical colleges to obtain certificates and diplomas before studying at the university for a B.Sc. in Mechanical Technology.

In Thailand, mechanical technology students, like all other students, have to study English and obtain enough credits in the subject to graduate. The problem for them, as well as all the other non-English majors, is that they have been studying English for ten years by the time they find themselves enrolled in the English for Future Careers course and placement tests show that these

mechanical technology students are classed as English language beginners. W. Baker (2008) states that English is in practice the de facto second language in Thailand and is used in a wide range of domains; however, this is not so in this province. Although some of these students have placement test scores showing them to be elementary students, these individuals rarely speak and may in fact be false beginners.

There is some reluctance by teachers to teach these students. They have a proven track record of being difficult to motivate, partly due to their low English language skills. In addition, the atmosphere in the class is different due to the fact it is an all-male environment. To overcome the lack of motivation, teachers need to generate some enthusiasm and encourage in the students the belief that they can achieve something from their time in the classroom; this is accomplished by developing rapport.

Teachers at the Language Center have voiced their concern for some time that the English for Future Careers course does not serve a real purpose, as it seems unrealistic that students from this university would use any English language skills to find employment after they have graduated. By using creative subversion and rapport in the classroom, it has been demonstrated that students can achieve their desired grade, fulfill government requirements, and also benefit from discovering more about themselves.

Creative subversion and the development of rapport

“Creative Subversion” is a phrase coined by Professor Debra Myhill from Exeter University; she points out that while both knowledge in the subject area and intellectual ability are necessary for teachers to be effective, these qualities alone are not sufficient (Baker, M., 2008). In addition, teachers need to engage in reflection, focusing on both what has occurred in the classroom, and how to change it (Baker, M., 2008). By adapting the course creatively, it was possible to focus on something that the students could realize as having real meaning to them. Introducing some form of critical pedagogy (Akbari, 2008) would hopefully broaden

the students' horizons as well. In order for this to happen, the main focus was on the curriculum vitae. The curriculum vitae used for the course is a targeted version, allowing the students to be directed towards their skills and qualities contained in two of the main headings, capabilities and achievements. An example of a generic targeted curriculum vitae is in Appendix 1. The capabilities and achievements headings are explained as "what you can do" and "what you have done." Five of the sixteen weeks focused on the vocabulary needed and then on what the students could do and had done in relation to their job targets.

This five week period was the period of creative subversion (Baker, M., 2008), where the writing of a secondary objective in the course description ensured that students would have effectively identified their personal strengths and qualities and would be motivated to demonstrate their confidence in producing oral and written English. Furthermore, this meant that government directives had been adhered to and that the teachers were given the opportunity to creatively adapt their teaching energies to something that would benefit the student, not just in regard to their English language skills, but also as a whole person.

By focusing on what students can do and have done, it was possible to motivate the students to think and express themselves about personal skills and abilities that they would probably never consider, even in their L1. Job targets ranged from welders to mechanics and mechanical engineers to teachers. The students worked in groups of three to find out what they "can do" and what they "have done."

Dörnyei (2001) informs us about the importance of having a pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom when trying to motivate students. To this end, it proved an extremely effective technique to engage these classes of all male students in subjects outside the classroom. Thailand is a football-loving country, so it was easy to stimulate the students by talking about the English Premier League. This engagement led to the development of rapport, which proved vital in the motivation of these students (Senior, 2008). Those teachers with a background not used to football, such as the USA,

would have to find a different subject; however, football has been tried and tested in these classes, resulting in a torrent of English, especially when the teacher's football team lost over the weekend. Sports, the opposite sex, and the uses of English in Udon Thani have all proved useful subjects in establishing rapport, motivating the students to focus on their studies.

In addition, the local demography has provided another source of motivation. Recent newspaper reports have stated that there are over 30,000 foreign households in Udon Thani province. There may not be 30,000 foreigners living in Udon Thani; however, there are 30,000 families who have a family member who is from another country, albeit some may only visit on occasions. The mechanical technology students were very interested in this fact when it was pointed out to them that most, if not all of these foreigners would have some kind of motorized transportation and that it would need servicing at regular intervals. Who would they go to: the mechanic who can speak English or the one that runs for cover as soon as a foreigner opens his mouth to speak?

To illustrate this, and with a view to developing rapport in the classroom, various scenarios were played out where the teacher played the role of a foreigner with a car or motorcycle problem and different students played the parts of mechanics that could or could not speak English. It proved very amusing, but also educational as it reinforced that English does have a part to play in their future employment.

An eclectic approach

It has been ten years since the 1999 Education Act was passed in Thailand and even now, in the primary and secondary schools surrounding Udon Thani Rajabhat University, little has changed. The result is many of the university students here have not experienced any form of modern English language teaching methodology. This does have a positive effect in one area of this course: a large amount of new, specialized vocabulary is needed to complete the tasks in this course, so some translation and dictionary work which might seem incredibly boring to students in the West, seems not

quite so bad to students in Thailand. Working in groups of three has proved beneficial for this task and students find it easier to ask for verbal feedback on their writing whilst in groups, rather than as a whole class. It is also an effective time-saving measure when correcting writing activities in Thai classrooms (Choombala, 2007), especially in large classes.

In the first week, the students have a question and answer session to obtain information about their new teacher. This can be quite difficult at the beginning as students are reluctant to ask questions; this is not a culturally correct activity in Thailand. However, if the teacher perseveres, the students will ask many questions, even though there are some long embarrassing periods of silence at the beginning. Explaining to the students in the first week that they need to speak and ask questions in class, along with the significance this will have on their English language learning as well as their grade, is designed to reduce student anxiety (Liu, 2008). Having established the first step towards any kind of rapport, the course aims, objectives, and requirements are explained, taking care to put them across in a humorous manner while still stressing the importance and seriousness of what has to be achieved to acquire the required grades. Next, a set of videos is shown of previous classes completing their interviews on their final tests. This is done to show the new students what is required of them and to give them something for them to aim for. Finally the lesson is concluded with a thirty-minute placement test to assess the level of the students in the class.

It has been noted on several occasions that the class leader, the one that speaks the most English and acts as a go-between when the language gets really difficult, does not necessarily have the highest placement score. In fact, the class leader normally comes about halfway in the placement ranking; the top students tend to be very quiet and hide from any leadership responsibility. MacIntyre (2007) conducted a study showing students' willingness to communicate. Class leaders in various classes were questioned and it appears that they have all had some exposure to English in use, ranging from a parent working overseas to having friends from

countries that use English as a second language, such as the Philippines.

Week two has the students concentrating on their job targets and deciding on the type of employment they want when they leave university. They are asked to look at classified advertisements from the Bangkok Post and each student selects a job from the ones on offer. If there is not one that relates to the student's job target, he is allowed to choose any job he would like to do. Once a student has selected an advertisement, he cuts and pastes it onto a piece of paper. Then working in groups of three, the students write the different qualifications and skills/qualities that the advertisement is looking for under two headings. This activity in itself may take between two and three hours to complete.

The next five weeks involve the students concentrating on vocabulary. New vocabulary needs to be brought into productive use and the students need to be motivated and to have the opportunity to use it (Pratontep & Chinwonno 2005). Whilst compiling the course material, written permission was granted from Careerfinder Ltd, Somerset, UK, to use material that they were displaying as part of a package compiled for the Institute of Leadership and Management. Two papers were selected; one concentrated on how to participate in interviews and the other on how to impress bosses and win interviews. The vocabulary was selected from the latter under the heading, "Words for the Wise." The vocabulary has been divided into twelve headings:

1. Management and Leadership
2. Financial
3. Communication
4. Creative
5. Clerical and Detail
6. Research
7. Technical and Physical
8. Problem Solving
9. Achievement
10. Initiative
11. Teaching
12. Helping

Not all the vocabulary has to be completed, only that which relates to the chosen job target of the student. The students translate the English action

verbs into Thai and then use them in English sentences to show that they understand the correct meaning of the verbs they have chosen. For example, under the heading Technical and Physical, the action verb “repaired” will be used in the following way to demonstrate what a student can do and has done, taking into account grammar rules at the same time:

- I can repair diesel engines.
- I have repaired diesel engines.

It is important for students to understand the difference between what they “can do” and what they “have done,” as well as the grammar rules that reflect the differences. This is where the “creative subversion” takes place, as the students have the opportunity to not only learn about themselves in English, but also in Thai. Teachers can focus on the secondary objective to help motivate the students to concentrate on their personal attributes. Students are given the opportunity to write between five and ten examples about themselves under each heading, and all the results are put up on the whiteboard. They are then able to transfer examples they had not thought to produce themselves into their course books for use later on if needed.

During weeks eight to ten, students look at their work history and education as these are two further headings that make up the curriculum vitae. In week ten, after the covering letter is completed, it is time for both documents to be put together in the same way as the course book and emailed to the teacher as the midterm test. The covering letter is standardized and involves adapting a two-paragraph existing covering letter to include a generic personal profile. An example of a completed covering letter is in Appendix 2.

The “I can” and “I have” statements the students have accumulated need to be whittled down to the eight that are most dynamic and relevant to their job target and adapted to mirror the example curriculum vitae in the course book. For example:

Capabilities:

- I can design car engines.

- I can evaluate the performance of machinery.
- I can formulate solutions to workplace problems.
- I can renovate motorcycle engines.
- Proficient in designing car engines.
- Experienced in evaluating the performance of machinery.
- Accomplished in formulating solutions to workplace problems.
- Adept at renovating motorcycle engines.

Achievements:

- I have supervised the running of a workshop.
- I have implemented maintenance programs.
- I have developed new machinery technology.
- I have installed NGV in cars.
- Successfully supervised the running of a workshop.
- Consistently implemented maintenance programs.
- Constantly developed new machinery technology.
- Effectively installed NGV in cars.

The interview process

The simulated interview, an example of which is in Appendix 3, is scripted with one area where students can learn about their personal qualities from a list supplied by Jackson (1995). They complete a similar process as with the curriculum vitae in that they have to accumulate the vocabulary first by translating from English to Thai and then choosing ten words they feel best describe themselves. Then the words have to be used in English in the following way:

- I am a creative person.
- I can be versatile.
- I have designed a series of water pump systems.

This process is completed five times for the simulated scripted interview. The words creative and versatile come from the list of personal qualities

by Jackson (1995). The third statement is an explanation of how the two words are true personal qualities of the potential job applicant. It is taken from the student's own list of "I have" statements from the compilation of their curriculum vitae material in their course books.

Pronunciation is another area that is focused upon during this course. The interview process gives the teacher the opportunity to correct the students' pronunciation as well as grammar points such as plurals. Thai students have the habit of not pronouncing the final "s." Highlighting this during the practice sessions has proved quite humorous and also seems to be quite effective, at least in the classroom. The beginning of the interview has the candidate explaining how far he has travelled and how long it has taken him to get to the interview; this is where students can demonstrate the pronunciation of "s" in kilometers and minutes.

Whilst the simulation is not authentic, the mechanical technology students obviously enjoy it and demonstrate their satisfaction with loud applause when candidates for jobs manage to successfully complete the interview process. Final examinations are videotaped, which allows students in following courses to see their seniors successfully complete the interview process, thus encouraging them to do the same. Once again, this has proved to be a motivating force and it is planned to put the best students on the internet for all to see later this year.

Discussion

During the group-work stages, students were observed developing their own strategies to complete their tasks. It was noticeable that there was a large amount of Thai and Isaan (local dialect) spoken. Carless (2008) suggests that it is possible that students can use their mother tongue to make comparisons between the grammars of their first and second languages; however, that is not the case here. As based on data from their placement test results, the students in question do not possess enough English language to make a comparison. Using Thai and Isaan in the classroom was beneficial in completing the tasks and understanding the new vocabulary and had to be

used if any new learning strategies were to be explored by the students.

Mechanical technology students, in general, are able to learn enough initial vocabulary in order to pass their courses. Kim (2008) states that the level of task-induced involvement affects the initial vocabulary learning of ESL students, which is confirmed by casual observation of the students working together. They work very hard to complete their tasks even though they are not used to task-based learning or working together in groups. One motivating factor built into the course was that once the students completed their tasks to the required standard, they were allowed to leave early. However, as students do not have the opportunity to use English outside the classroom, the retention of this new vocabulary is unlikely to last very long.

Mechanical technology students have communicated to their peers the fact that good grades are attainable if students are prepared to work for them. There are some strict rules and regulations about the use of mobile phones in class, timekeeping, and other habits; however, if these rules are followed and the work completed to the required standard, students know they will be rewarded with grades they can use to improve their grade point average. This form of motivation may seem strict; however, mechanical technology students have responded well and there are rarely any disciplinary problems. On the contrary, students are well-motivated, proving that the teacher's use of motivational strategies in the classroom does matter (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). Of the seven classes of mechanical technology students observed, 79% of the students passed the course, with 24% achieving an "A" grade.

If this course is to be successful, teachers are going to have to be creatively subversive and adapt the course accordingly to motivate beginner-level students and enable real learning to take place, while adhering to government directives and goals. Not all teachers find it easy to motivate students who have spent the last ten years learning English as a school subject and never using it in any tangible way, not even in the classroom. The building of rapport to motivate students has been

very important in the success of this course. Lack of rapport has proved to be an important factor in the unsuccessful courses teachers have run, demonstrating that if the teacher is not happy teaching the course, the students can feel this and find it demotivating. Rapport between the teacher and students is easy for some and more difficult for others; however, it is a vital component in classroom management and can influence the success or failure of effective English language learning for mechanical technology students in this globalised world.

Steven Graham works at the Language Center at Udon Thani Rajabhat University in northeastern Thailand. His main interests include teacher training, English for specific purposes, and writing for journals and newspapers. Current projects include the training of primary school teachers and the motivation of non-English majors studying English.

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Appendix 1

Example of a generic curriculum vitae

JOSE GARCIA MORENO
127 Ash Road, Aldershot,
Hampshire, GU12 4BZ
(01252) 694496 / 07986 723065

JOB TARGET: JEWELLERY BUYER

CAPABILITIES:

- Proficient in running a team to attain specific goals for the company whilst being attentive to the needs of the team.
- Experienced in being flexible and adjusting to the rigors of modern business.
- Accomplished in problem solving as part of a team and also as an individual.
- Adept at using English, Spanish and Italian to attract potential custom.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Successfully managed a team to produce results and adhere to directed deadlines, whilst maintaining quality control.
- Consistently demonstrated the ability to manage the purchase of gems, diamonds and gold lines for various companies.
- Constantly using customer relations to conduct market research in order to stay ahead of the competition and formulate new ideas into practice.
- Effectively managed an import/export department, overseeing meetings with clients and overseas customers.

WORK HISTORY:

2001-Present	G & Sons Diamonds S.L. Cordoba, Spain Dimensione Oro SRL, Arezzo, Italy
2002-2004	Manufacturers Jewellery Association, Cordoba, Spain
1998-2000	B.M. Graham Ltd. Jewellers, Aldershot

EDUCATION:

2001-2003	CAMARA DE COMERCIO DE CORDOBA ICEX Import and Export Diploma
1999-2000	BRITISH ASSOCIATION Retail Jewellery Diploma

1996-1999 FARNBOROUGH COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
Windows 95 and Microsoft Office 97 Computer Workshop
Cambridge First Certificate in English
Cambridge Advanced Certificate in English

Appendix 2
Example of a completed covering letter

8/112 Moo 5
Romyen 5 Village
Nong Bua
Udon Thani
41000

Mr. Brown
Human Resources Manager
Udon Thani Engineering
64 Tahan Road
Amphur Muang
Udon Thani
41000

February 2009

Dear Mr. Brown,

I am a recently qualified graduate and would like to apply for a position at your company. As you can see from my resume, I have recently graduated with a Bachelor of Science, Mechanical Technology major, from Udon Thani Rajabhat University.

I am an enthusiastic and focused self-starter who uses his own initiative and sets high standards. Keen to pass on knowledge and skills to others, I have excellent communication skills and am used to dealing with a wide range of people. I am a fast learner who is looking for an opportunity to use his strong interpersonal, management, and team skills.

I would like to meet you to further discuss the possibilities of our working together. I will contact you shortly to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely

A. Nother

Appendix 3

Simulated scripted interview

(Knock Knock)

Come in. Hello, my name's _____.
_____. Pleased to meet you.

Hello, my name's _____.
_____. Pleased to meet you, too.

Please, have a seat.

Thank you.

How did you come here?

I came here by _____.

Did you come far?

About _____ kilometers.

Did it take long?

About _____ minutes.

So, tell me something about yourself.

Five sentences using ten personal qualities, for example: I am an honest person. I can be trusted.

I worked in a shop and took care of the cash and stock on my own.

Thank you. Why do you want to work for this company?

I'm not looking for just a salary. I enjoy my work and I am proud of my profession. Your company aims to be the best and I think that gives us certain things in common. I believe that I would fit in well with your team.

Do you have any questions for me?

Yes, I do. Why is the job open?

The person who was working here before left to travel around the world.

Where does the job lead?

After about a year, you will be eligible for promotion, which means you can be transferred to any of the departments in the company. Do you have any more questions for me?

No, I don't think so.

Thank you for coming, we will let you know.

Thank you, goodbye.

Goodbye.

Breaking the silence barrier: Language education and cultural appropriacy

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Abstract

The authors explore the culture of silence in the context of language education. After a look at the cultural agenda, they examine inculturated behaviors, including *sasshi* (social expectation of implied needs) and the need to preserve relationships. Then they look at techniques used in the ESL classroom to encourage speaking and fluency, discussing effectiveness based on both personal experience and a series of interviews of Japanese and non-Japanese teachers. Finally, they consider the impact of the imposition of an external discourse - or set of discursive paradigms - on what is arguably an internally consistent cultural code and ask whether, in fact, ESL teaching that deliberately targets and attempts to overturn existing social mores is the best way to proceed. Alternatives are discussed and it is hoped this paper will provide a jumping off point for what has the potential to be an interesting debate.

Introduction

One of the most common complaints that one hears in staffrooms or at conferences from teachers of either EFL or ESL is that their students are too quiet. This is particularly noticeable when the teacher comes from a culture where a participation model is the norm, such as the United States, Australia, or the United Kingdom.

Before launching into a discussion of some common techniques for dealing with this perceived problem and the question of whether or not the responses are appropriately motivated or situationally correct, we would like to offer some representative comments from actual teachers on the issue of student fluency and in-class behavior to establish context:

Professor A, the Japanese head of a department of Intercultural Studies in Tokyo, said:

We want our students to be exposed to international culture: to the strong communication style of the West. This will help them, whatever they decide to do after graduation. Japanese students are quiet. This is natural, but it's difficult in business, I think. (personal communication, 2008)

Professor B, a British teacher of English in Kanagawa, said:

I insist on English only in the classroom - I want my students to come out of their shells. You know, it's often the girls who are most

willing to do that. I think that, if Japanese women ever decide to take the lead in this country, with their attitude and drive, they'll take over the world...They don't want to talk at the start of the year but, by the end, they're chattering away like anything. (personal communication, 2008)

Professor C, a British teacher of English in Tokyo, said:

It's hard sometimes not to reward students simply because they are more extroverted: they talk more, participate more, and it seems like they are contributing more. Of course, often, it's the quiet ones who really understand, but we don't sometimes realize until the tests come in. Maybe we don't know for sure even then. (personal communication, 2008)

Professor D, an American teacher of English in Chiba, said:

Sometimes they just sit there like sheep. What are they learning? Do they think that, if they just sit there passively, the language will just flow into their heads? (personal communication, 2008)

Professors E and F are the Japanese and Canadian teachers, respectively, of the same group of students in Tokyo. Professor E teaches formal grammar. Professor F teaches communication:

Professor E:
Those students are terrible. They won't be quiet! (personal communication, 2008)

Professor F:
Those students are great. They just keep on talking! (personal communication, 2008)

What can we learn from comments such as these? This paper will consider the issue of silence: how it is commonly 'broken' in the classroom, why teachers feel the need to break it, and whether or not it is always right to do so. The examples given

throughout are taken from the tertiary system in Japan, but we feel that the questions raised are generally applicable to a broader cultural context.

The cultural agenda

Language is not only a tool for communication. Discourse, as Foucault reminds us, is power (Herrick, 2005, p. 249). There is a considerable body of writing considering the issue of hidden agendas in language promulgation, much of it tied to the *Lingua Franca* debate. There is no doubt that English is currently the dominant world language in terms of international communication. Science, business, and politics all rely heavily on Englishes of one type or another, and in an age where the Internet allows instant access to written and spoken texts worldwide, its influence continues to grow. Crystal (2003, p. 65) estimates that whilst the number of speakers for whom English is a first language is around 330 million, the number of secondary users and learners might be over a billion. This means, however, that there increasingly exists a reflective element in the use of the language, which can be associated with shifts in perception on the nature of communication itself due to developments in critical theory. These developments have gradually made themselves part of general usage, due to what Ermarth (2001, p. 34) has described as "seismic shifts" in humanist Eurocentric culture. These have, in turn, have influenced the international community.

A common theme in writings on the growth of English as a world language is its basis in economic and political agendas for expansion (Djité, 2006, p. 2). It was in the nineteenth century that English began to achieve worldwide ubiquity, initially through the imperialist agenda of the British Empire. Mesthrie (2006, p. 388) distinguishes between "colonies of settlement" such as those in the United States and Australia, and "colonies of exploitation" such as those in large parts of Africa and India. He notes that in this period, the former tended to have the language transplanted, while the latter generally had it forced upon the inhabitants. As well as colonized territories, there were also a number of 'protectorates' such as Egypt and Lesotho, where imposition of the language was part of a process designed "to wrest them away from the

influence of rival imperialists” (Mesthrie, 2006, p. 385). Later, the language gained further prominence due to burgeoning trade centering on the United States (Reksulak, Shughart, & Tollison, 2004, p. 252). Educational organizations such as the British Council ensured a prescriptive approach to English learning, but this concept has, inevitably, eroded over time as the language has spread further and further from its sources.

There are many concerns about English as a world language. Perhaps the most common is that the language carries with it encoded values that can, potentially, assert themselves culturally in a transplanted context. Ermarth (2001, p. 40) describes the “discursive condition,” which privileges language and is based on the idea that all systems have a language-like structure in order to operate. Thus, language can influence systems by a process of association. This idea, exemplified by the “Linguistic Human Rights movement” (Wee, 2007, p. 325) seems rooted in the imperialist history of English.

In the late twentieth century, the expansion of the media and dissemination of the language through film and music meant that there was a widespread perception that English, along with its encoded cultures, was spearheading a movement towards global homogenisation (Friedrich, 2007, p. 73). This was not always characterized as deliberate, but rather as the unthinking consequence of the progress of a behemoth. Arguably, this process is ongoing in many countries, such as Japan, where the use of English is not only as a spoken language, but as a source of loanwords for Japanese itself (Seargeant, 2005).

The idea that a variety (or set of varieties) of World English is emerging and is important still remains contentious, however. Two papers at the 5th Annual CamTESOL Conference (2009) in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, highlighted the dichotomous approach. In the first place, the opening plenary speaker, Jun Liu, gave a history and context for the growth of the concept of English as a world language. Alan Maley, however, argued that ELF (English as a Lingua Franca), which he characterized as the label

used by Widdowson and others to describe an emerging variety of English, was a nonsense.

Differing educational paradigms

In the average university class where the culture is based on Western paradigms and the first language is English, interaction is common. A lecture/tutorial model is frequently employed, especially in the Humanities. Here, students are expected to take a passive role in lectures, but an active one in tutorial discussions. Groups are small and silence is actively discouraged.

Contrast this with a system such as that prevalent in Japan. Here, the ‘teacher-centered model’ is much more frequently the norm. From primary school onwards, students often put a lot of effort into memorization before exams by listening to the teacher talking, taking notes on what is written on the blackboard, and solving problems from text books. Giving prescribed knowledge to students, making them memorize it, and rewarding them for giving correct answers on an exam are commonly perceived as study.

With this study style, reading and writing are the more natural focus. Some public schools do use an L1 speaker of English as an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT), but our interviews with teachers suggest that classes with an ALT are often treated as little more than recreational. Such sessions are often held only once a month or so. Thus, the assumption is that Japanese English learners have a working knowledge of grammar from six years of study in junior and senior high school focused on reading and writing, but they do not develop conversation skills (Nunan, 2003, p. 600). It may be true that students who have been educated in such a system are not good at speaking in English. The assumption that Japanese are good at writing and reading in English has also been questioned frequently, especially regarding students for whom it is a secondary area of study (Hirai, 1999, p. 379). One reason suggested for the difficulty has been what Saito, Horwitz and Garza (1999) have identified as “foreign language reading anxiety.” Even though there is a tendency to focus especially on improving speaking skills, learning a language thoroughly also

requires input skills such as reading, listening and writing.

Many English teachers expect students to speak only in English and face the problem of the students being reserved. They reconcile themselves to the idea that it is the nature of Japanese. As some researchers have shown (Hasegawa & Gudykunst, 1998, pp. 677-680), it is true that Japanese use silence more than English speakers do. It can be due in part to the atmosphere in the classroom, or they may have their own reasons to be silent. It is, however, important for teachers and also students to understand the possible meanings behind such behavior.

The concept of *sasshi* – the deduction of the real meaning behind words or understanding indirect messages and reacting accordingly – (Thissen, 2004) is a fundamental element in Japanese social interaction. Silence is thus important, as it allows time for reflection or consideration. One is expected to notice the needs of others. Also, within Japanese society, speaking when it is not strictly necessary is often considered to be impolite, as is speaking without thought (Ayabe & Kitamoto, n.d., p. 6). The time that L1 English speakers take to begin feeling awkward with silence is generally shorter than that of Japanese speakers. Thus, in class, while a student is thinking how to put what he or she is trying say, their teacher may be irritated by the resulting silence.

One recent study of this issue was undertaken by Morita (2004). She argued that an examination of the classroom context, which often has an effect on learner participation, could be a key to understanding the behavior of L2 learners in academic communities. In this study, the author focused primarily on the meanings behind the silence of individual Japanese students who were studying English as an L2 in an academic setting. Taking advantage of being Japanese herself, Morita was able to offer opportunities for the students to express their perspectives, thoughts, and feelings in whichever language they felt was more comfortable to speak or write. Several students, therefore, chose to write certain parts of their journals in English as well as Japanese. They also felt able to open

themselves to her because she came from a similar cultural background to theirs.

Through the incorporation of longitudinal research techniques, it was revealed that whilst the students were faced with similar issues with regard to “negotiating discourses, competence, identities, and power relations and [being] recognized as a legitimate and competent member of a given classroom community” (Morita, 2004, p. 583), their approaches and perspectives toward these problems varied between individuals and also depended to a large extent on classroom contexts.

Exploring three common classroom techniques for breaking silence

L1 English teachers often quickly build a repertoire of techniques for getting students to talk. Three of these are discussed briefly below, with possible issues to consider.

Speed speaking

In this activity, the teacher asks students to speak as much as they can in a short space of time. Grammar is not the focus, but rather production. Typical time spans are one or two minutes. Students can be paired and timed. The teacher may then choose to have them swap partners, or decide on other arrangements. The advantages of this activity are that it does encourage fluency and it is a fun, ice-breaking activity. There is also something of a competitive element, and it can even be made into a scored activity. On the other hand, some students find this type of activity intimidating and embarrassing. It does not allow time to reflect or respect the fact that silence is part of discourse for Japanese.

As Goddard and Wierzbicka note (1997, p. 237), in Japanese culture, reflection is a very important part of communication. Because choice of words is a crucial part of social interaction in a language riddled with registers, for the majority of Japanese people, the act of simply speaking without thought is considered to be impolite. In a second language, thought processes are necessarily slower, thus an insistence on fluency can amplify the discomfort

caused through forcing an individual to speak quickly.

Personal classroom experience by both of the authors supports this assertion. As a student, Ms. Shimura remembers well the feeling of intimidation associated with having to speak quickly and the fear of not being able to express thoughts appropriately, which could, in Japanese culture, easily lead to serious social exclusion. Mr. Ralph has noted that speed speaking is one of the more difficult activities to supervise in class, as very few students will undertake it for any length of time without close supervision.

Shadowing

This involves the learner following a passage of text, attempting to copy speed, intonation, and related elements. It is sometimes done between one or more students and their teacher, but it can also be done with a CD, movie, or other recording. It does, however, tend to privilege the validity of a given accent or pronunciation style over others. In addition, due to its difficulty, the pressure of this activity is high, and discussions with students at lower levels of fluency indicate that they often find it stressful and sometimes humiliating, especially when done in the presence of others.

One of the issues faced by both the authors of this paper is that while students will certainly promise – and indeed, may well intend – to undertake extensive shadowing practice at home, it is very hard to check and regulate this activity. In fact, private discussions with former students indicate that they very rarely completed home tasks set in class unless they were directly assessed through some sort of system. This would, therefore, seem to be an ideal opportunity to employ interactive CALL resources, which can both record and rate success, should they be available.

Games

There are literally thousands of games used in the ESL and EFL classroom, from solo to team-based activities. One thing that most of them have in common is an element of competition. In Japan, as in many other cultures, this is not necessarily

appropriate to discourse. The inappropriateness of competition in discourse can be ascribed in part to a phenomenon that has been described by Matsumoto (cited in Yashima, 2006, p. 56): when a relationship is close, showing anger is often avoided. A “close relationship” here refers not only to family members, but also to friends at school and co-workers. Essentially, it covers all those with whom one might have an important relationship for a time. Thus, the teaching of conversation through competition implies an antagonism that is not part of all cultural paradigms. Saito and Ebsworth (2004, p. 112) examined a related issue in a recent study of student motivation. They noted that the existing literature indicates that Japanese students have tendencies towards group harmony rather than individuality and generally appear reticent with regard to questioning in class.

The authors have found that a wide variety of games can work well, but that care needs to be taken not to draw distinctions between winners and losers too clearly. Allowing an opportunity to salvage face is important, as not doing so can have a long-term negative impact on classroom morale.

All three of these are common types of classroom activity, but, as we have seen, each has issues with its usage. This is not to say that they should be avoided, but teachers need to be aware of possible problems, and reasons why, without due care, many such techniques can have a negative effect on learner motivation.

An insistence on the target language

One thing that many teachers do is to teach exclusively in the target language. The idea, at least as given most frequently, is that this will aid in the long-term development of learner fluency. English L1-speaker teachers are particularly keen on this idea. There are three obvious reasons – pedagogy, ease of teaching and preservation of status – for insisting on teaching in the target language, and we would like to consider each in turn.

Pedagogy

Discussions with students show that they feel that it is better to learn English from a Japanese teacher in

the initial stages. This is because they feel that Japanese teachers are able to explain grammar more effectively and that they have more empathy for the problems faced by the students, having, in all probability, gone through some of these themselves. At higher levels, however, native or L1 speakers of English are seen as superior for a number of reasons.

As Dobson has noted, L1 speakers themselves are “seen as a source of ‘correctness’” (2001, p. 62). This leads on to a prejudice in the choice of teachers, as Ellis has pointed out, arguing that ‘students of English often have strong preferences for native speaker teachers because of their perceived superiority in fluent, idiomatic spoken English and pronunciation’ (2002, p. 71). This bias is sometimes described as ‘the native speaker fallacy’ (Tsuruoka, 2008).

Tsuruoka (2008) stressed the importance of meta-cognitive education about the process of language learning to improve the awareness and motivation of students. The ‘native speaker fallacy’ potentially limits the possibilities of developing a better methodology and pedagogy. A good teacher should not be defined by their being an L1 or L2 speaker of the language but by whether they are being able to realize the advantages and disadvantages of their situation and attempt to make the best of them.

In addition, there are some arguments for the use of the L1 of the students in the classroom. One such is in vocabulary acquisition. Yoshii (2006) looked at the difference in effect between L1 and L2 glosses. As he noted, glosses increase overall language retention, particularly in the case of incidental vocabulary (2006, p.85), although there is considerable debate as to whether an L1 or L2 is more effective (2006, p. 86). Yoshii’s results indicated no significant difference between L1 and L2 glosses in immediate recall testing, but found that there was less decay in retention in the group who used L1 glosses (2006, p. 96).

Ease of teaching

One empirical observation, based on our observations of and discussions with teachers within the Japanese university system, is that the better

their Japanese skills, the less they tend to insist on absolute use of the target language. One teacher who is actually fluent in Japanese stated that students at a particular institution were incapable of dealing with a ninety-minute lesson entirely in English. Another teacher (with an almost nonexistent command of the language) at the same institution said that they had never had any problems and taught all of their classes in English.

This phenomenon can also be observed in the *eikaiwa* (English conversation class) industry. According to Teacher G, a local manager for one of the largest *eikaiwa* chains in Japan, there is a common pattern:

We wish our instructors to use no Japanese. We say that this is for pedagogic reasons, and teachers are generally happy to comply at first. As they stay in the country for longer, however, they tend to pick up more and more Japanese expressions and have, quite naturally, a desire to use them whenever possible. At this time, there is a tendency to question the relative soundness of the policy and they start using Japanese words in class. Really, it’s got nothing to do with their classes and everything to do with their egos. (personal communication, 2009)

Preservation of status

As well as the question of ease and convenience, there is also the question of status. When an English L1 teacher is speaking in the L1 of their students, they are reversing the hierarchical structure of the class. Suddenly, they are the person with inferior communication skills.

As we have seen, in the Japanese model, there is an expectation that the teacher is aloof – removed from the students by social expectation and an assumption of superiority. In the Western model, this boundary is blurred, and can sometimes be confusing for Japanese students. Ms. H, a student who undertook tertiary studies in Australia for several years, was particularly aware of this:

When I first went to University, it was a bit of a shock. The teachers were so friendly. I remember in my Honours year the first time that my supervisor told me that they were looking forward to reading my research because they hoped to learn something from it. I was amazed – I thought they knew everything already! (personal communication, 2008)

The breaking of the silence barrier in the classroom tends also to lead to a breaking down of the barriers that exist naturally between teachers and students. From a Western perspective, this is generally regarded as a good thing, preparing the students for the outside world. In the case of Japanese students, however, they are entering into a work environment that is much more rigidly hierarchical and formal, and an egalitarian perspective might well lead to frustration.

It is, of course, important to preserve the role of the teacher, and staying in the target L1 can be one way to achieve this. The question of whether or not it is best for the students remains open, however, and it is important to understand that there are other factors at play than purely educational considerations.

We suspect that the use of the target L1 is sometimes – although not always – presented as a sort of universal panacea acting as a substitute for real educative principles.

Conclusion: Alternatives

Is it possible to teach language without teaching culture, without imparting elements of the hidden discourse in language itself? We suspect that the answer to this is a theoretical yes, but an actual no. Western teachers do not generally want to teach English in a teacher-centered lecture style, and nor, for the most part, do their students want to receive such teaching from them.

As individuals, we do not recognize our self-encoding of culture, any more than we recognize our use of, say, the subjunctive when we speak. The compromise approach means being aware of

cultural bias, embracing it to a certain extent on one hand, and compensating for it on the other hand. One possibility is through the presentation of cultural alternatives, such as “In America, it is common to do this, whereas in England...,” but to be careful to offer such distinctions without their accompanying value judgments.

This can be furthered through careful attention to such matters as differences in US/UK spelling, grammar and general corpus issues, along with idioms and the like. Classroom models can further be reconfigured. Giving the students a number of options can help. Allow them to choose from the following list, for example:

- Classes conducted in English
- Classes conducted in a mix of English and the student L1
- One large group, teacher-centered
- Many small fixed groups, student-centered
- Many small rotating groups, student-centered

One important difference here is that, by allowing the students a choice (or, perhaps more accurately, the illusion of choice), it allows for a different attitude towards in-class activities. It could also have a positive effect on the teacher. Imagine, for example, that one class forces the instructor into English/L1 teaching to a large group for a year. It is entirely possible that, as a teacher, he or she might learn a lot that is new about classroom dynamics and working within a different cultural paradigm. If the teacher finds this difficult to cope with and cannot teach effectively, is that necessarily a failure of the system? An argument that this is the case would be difficult to sustain, given that many other teachers in the university are probably using the same model.

Thinking in this way whilst trying to consider cultural aspects is difficult – it is, perhaps, impossible. We suspect, however, that the quest, the consideration of factors, the act of thinking carefully about cultural impact, will make us all better teachers – and, perhaps, better members of society.

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Interviews

Comments A-F were transcribed from interviews with tertiary teachers in Japan conducted by the authors in the last quarter of 2008.

Comment G was transcribed from an interview conducted by the authors in January of 2009.

Comment H was transcribed from an interview conducted by the authors in December of 2008.

Speaking in different communication styles

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Abstract

The issue of raising awareness of intercultural communication in various English-speaking settings has been discussed for years. This study examines the theory of intercultural communication styles between different cultures and innovative patterns of enhancing speaking practice in the classroom. Through action research, it was found that an obvious gap exists between international English speakers and local Chinese English speakers in understanding indirect communication styles. Local English speakers activate and switch between direct and indirect communication styles, while international English speakers have a low ratio of changing styles to pay attention to relations with interlocutors. Thus, the research indicates that it is significant for bicultural and bilingual English speakers, especially non-native English speakers, to learn cultural differences in communication styles, so that they can gradually develop better speaking skills in appropriate communication styles to meet the needs of cross-cultural communication.

Introduction

In the 21st century, English is used as an international language. There are far more non-native English speakers than native English speakers all around the world. However, because of their different values, expectations, verbal and nonverbal habits, and interaction styles, English speakers from different countries use the language with certain characteristics of their regional variables in both linguistic and cultural aspects. So learning about other cultures and raising cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity have become high priorities for successful communication in today's world.

Those who can use English to communicate well with people from other cultures have a greater advantage over those who cannot. Based on the concepts of intercultural communication, generally, a majority of intercultural miscommunications can be traced to ignorance or misunderstandings of cultural differences. People usually bring with them their long-standing communication styles in intercultural communication, which may cause misunderstandings and cultural conflicts. Therefore,

it is vitally important to study and underscore the differences in communication styles applied by speakers from other cultures.

An example which highlights this point is that of a Chinese businessman with rather high self-estimation. He was once shocked and hurt when he read the performance evaluation emailed to him by his American boss. It read: "Mr. Zheng, this is your interim evaluation summary. It indicates that your strengths are in communication. The other areas are not as strong as your communication skills. Some are even poor, but frankly speaking, it is difficult to evaluate those areas. Good job!" (Storti, 1994) To a western employee, this comment is quite positive; to a Chinese ear, the words "even poor" sound rather sharply negative. The common practice in China is just mentioning major strengths without commenting on weaknesses.

Another example is that of an American software engineer who worked with a Chinese company. He failed to meet the deadline of his project and apologized to his Chinese superior. However, his Chinese boss' response was completely unexpected

to him. He said: “Well, that’s a bit of a nuisance. But, never mind. It doesn’t matter” (Storti, 1994). What did he imply by “a bit of a nuisance”? Did he really mean “it doesn’t matter”? Or did he just indirectly convey his strong feeling of dissatisfaction and annoyance that he did not want to express openly?

Being aware of the impact of the styles on intercultural communication is essential and critical for English users. In the case of China, which is a high-context culture, people would like to anticipate the thoughts and feelings of interlocutors and practice responsive communication, in which saying “yes” or nodding does not necessarily mean agreement. It may just indicate “I’m listening” or “I’m giving you feedback to encourage you to proceed on.” But North Americans and most people from western countries generally speak directly and explicitly. They mean what they state without considering contextual variations and interlocutors’ feelings. Thus, these diverse styles may bring about challenges and perplexity to people who need to communicate across cultures.

Literature review

The American linguist Grice indicates that the correct decoding of information comes not only from understanding the actual content of the discourse or texts, but also from awareness of the way the content is conveyed, including indirect meaning, verbal emotional intonation and nonverbal cues (Grice, 1968). Holtgraves puts forward the assumption that a communicator’s understanding of an utterance lies mainly in relational concerns besides linguistic cognition of what is said (Holtgraves, 1997). According to his relational intimacy theory, people have expectations about what type of styles speakers will use. Among

friends and colleagues, a variety of informal language structures and expressions are expected to be used, while in the context of work settings, an employer would expect employees to use more formal and respectful communication styles.

Storti, an American expert and trainer in the fields of intercultural communication and cross-cultural adaptation, indicates cultural grouping can help people understand cultural differences (Storti, 1998, p. 160). In his books, he writes about many relevant components of communication styles, such as degree of directness, role of relations, types of contexts, concerns of “face values,” styles of emotion expressions, and positions of grouped cultures (Table 1). He also categorizes possible misinterpretations in multicultural settings and even generalizes the differentials in formulating five basic contrasting elements in communication styles in the workplace between China or Asia and North America or Europe (Storti, 1998, p. 106).

These five qualities are crucial to comparing and analyzing communication styles, for these characteristics and features are likely sources of and explanations for common misunderstandings and misinterpretations in intercultural communication. Therefore understanding of these five differences enables communicators first to identify diverse norms and views on styles and then adapt to the styles of communication in the target culture they need to understand.

When giving explanations for the reason why North Americans usually believe that concern about interpersonal relations is unprofessional and should be discouraged and restricted in work settings, I cannot ignore Sanchez-Burks’ “Protestant Relational Ideology (Sanchez-Burks, 2002).

pattern	pattern
Interpersonal relation sensitive	Professional

Table 1. Storti’s chart of communication styles (1998)

Style in China or Asia	Style in North America or Europe
Indirect	Direct
Relation-related	Task-related
General	Specific
Spiral thinking	Linear thinking

According to Burk’s theory, people in traditional Protestant cultures firmly believe relationship concerns do harm to friendships in the workplace; co-workers should comply with the principles of “focus on the task,” “don’t take things personally,”

and “act professionally.” In contrast, these beliefs and principles do not work well in China and some other Asian countries, where people are accustomed to building up sensitivity to interpersonal relations to suit the need of both work and non-work communication contexts (Farh, Tsui, Xin, & Cheng, 1998).

Research design

The present study conducted an action research on the basis of intercultural communication theory, aiming at investigating and examining cultural variations in communication styles in the workplace, in particular focusing on direct and indirect communication styles. English speakers, native English speakers (NES) or non-native English speakers (NNES), no matter where and when they apply the language, would like to choose a certain appropriate communication style. The purpose of this research was to provide an enlightened vision and innovative perspectives for identifying and adapting to various intercultural communication styles.

Subjects

The research consisted of two sections. The four groups of subjects involved came from both international and local faculty of the English Language Center at Shantou University, in mainland China in the 2007-2008 academic year. In the first section, two groups of subjects participated in the research. One group consisted of 16 international English teachers from North America and Europe. All of the teachers were in China for the first time and none spoke Chinese. Only one had several years of working experience in an Asian country - Korea. Another group included 17 local Chinese English teachers. Eight were young teachers who had just come back from English-speaking countries after pursuing further study there. During the second section, two other groups participated in the study, including 11 international English teachers and 8 local Chinese English teachers who are bilingual and bicultural English speakers.

Procedures

In the first section, the subjects were required to read about five cross-cultural encounters in the form of dialogues (see Appendix 1) which involved some cultural conflicts and clashes caused by the misinterpretation of affirmative or negative messages. They filled in a response form with their interpretation of the encounters. The forms would be assessed to distinguish direct responses from indirect ones.

In the second part of the research, to observe the interaction and shift between directness and indirectness, subjects were told to complete a questionnaire by ticking the responses which expressed themselves directly or indirectly in 8 intercultural situations (see Appendix 2). By comparing and analyzing subjects' responses to those situations, their preferences or tendencies to apply certain conversation styles were demonstrated.

Then the 8 young bilingual Chinese teachers, who had intercultural experience, were interviewed by the author, in person or through email, to determine if they often switch between direct and indirect communication styles while conversing with native English speakers.

Results

Besides incomplete or invalid response forms, 18 valid forms were collected during the first section, half of them from international teachers and the other half from local Chinese teachers. To observe the differences in basic characteristics of styles in delivering and receiving affirmative or negative responses, utterances were divided into two categories: one was that the verbal meaning and the real intention of the speaker were consistent; the other was that they were inconsistent. The main focus of this investigation was to identify the differences between global and local faculty groups in their understanding of the signals of approval or disapproval in daily conversations.

With the help of SPSS 13.0 (data analysis instrument) and with “case” being the controlled variable, the Mantel-Haenszel chi-square stratified analysis detected significant difference between the

international and the local faculty groups in terms of their responses ($X^2_{mh} = 6.773$, $P=0.009<0.05$). Responses affirming that a stated “yes” meant “no” in Cases 1 - 5 are 3, 1, 8, 0, 6, respectively, by the international faculty group, while those by the local

faculty group are 1, 0, 1, 1, and 4, respectively (see Table 2 below). The result seemed to support the fact that there exists a certain gap between international and local teachers in understanding indirect communication styles.

Table 2. Interpretation of indirect meanings

A stated “Yes” means a real “No”	Faculty Groups	Affirmative Responses	Negative Responses
Case 1	I	3	6
	L	1	8
Case 2	I	1	8
	L	0	9
Case 3	I	8	1
	L	1	8
Case 4	I	0	9
	L	1	8
Case 5	I	6	3
	L	4	5

I = International faculty group; L = Local faculty group

Similarly, in the second part of the research, by Mantel-Haenszel chi-square stratified analysis, with “dialogues” being the controlled variable, significant difference was found between the global group and the Chinese group in terms of their responses ($X^2_{mh} = 50.316$, $P<0.001$). Through data analysis, it was found that over 67% of the Chinese subjects chose indirect responses except for Situation 1, while almost all of the international teachers chose direct responses except for Situation 7. It can be seen that international teachers seemed not to realize the differences in communication styles, for they had just come to China, and they still remained direct in their new work settings. In other words, they acted directly in indirect communication contexts. Meanwhile their co-workers, Chinese faculty, persisted in comparatively indirect and relational concerned styles of communication (see Table 3).

Obviously, on the one hand, it seemed no notable contextual impact was shown on international teachers’ preference of styles, even when, in most cases, they communicated with NNEs in an environment where English was a non-official language. On the other hand, local Chinese teachers who had been abroad for one or two years seemed to have a bicultural-orientated tendency, shifting frequently between two styles. A young Chinese teacher who studied in UK said:

Bilingual and bicultural communicators can notice that they are not communicating with just one culture when having conversations. They conventionally may talk more directly when conversing in English (particularly with native English speakers); because they assume that they are using English in the target culture. When conversing with local English speakers (if the communicators’

Table 3. Direct and indirect conversation styles

Subjects	Intercultural Dialogues	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
International Group	Direct	11	9	10	10	9	11	6	11
	Indirect	0	2	1	1	2	0	5	0
Chinese Group	Direct	3	2	2	0	1	0	2	2
	Indirect	3	4	4	6	5	6	4	4

native language is Chinese), the speakers may belong to the same culture, and they may talk in a “Chinese style,” which may be more indirect. (F. Fang, interview, Aug. 15, 2009)

Another teacher, who had studied in US for two years, said:

I prefer to say bicultural communicators shift much more often between two conversation styles than bilingual communicators, while cultural background plays a more decisive role in choosing conversation style than linguistic background. Take, for example, I, a Chinese, switched between two conversation styles freely in multi-cultural conversation groups while Chinese Americans (usually born in the States and picked up Chinese at home from daily home conversations with their Chinese families) were very direct in conversations. (X. Liu, interview, Aug. 20, 2009)

Obviously it is true that many bicultural and bilingual local communicators would speak English in a way that keeps in mind their local interlocutors’ face values, while when communicating with native English speakers, they would adjust to a much more direct style.

Another local teacher put forward a different opinion. She indicated that besides communication styles, other factors also impacted an individual’s communication. She said:

It is true that people’s communication style is influenced by the cultures they are exposed to, and it is likely that they sometimes consciously or unconsciously switch the way of talking to adapt to the target culture. However, it should be noted that some individual factors (personalities, for example) mediate cultural influence on individual communication. So it may need further investigation to draw such a conclusion. (L. Yuan, interview, Aug. 18, 2009)

However, psychological factors which also affect communication, such as individual attributes and attitude or emotional orientation, are not yet included in the present research.

Discussion

When the extent to which international teachers misinterpreted the implied or hidden meanings in the intercultural dialogues was examined, it was found that one of the factors affecting people’s ability to correctly decode meanings was whether they understood the interlocutors’ culture-bound communication style preference. There are many distinctions to make in conversation styles, such as directness or indirectness, face values, understatement, tone of modesty, avoiding “No,” silence, routine courtesy, and body language (Storti, 1998). Many people from Asian countries pay careful attention to their interlocutors’ attitude and emotions, especially their “face values” (Farh et al., 1998). So when a negative response is necessary, they do not deliver it directly. They go to all lengths to avoid unpleasant confrontations. Therefore, when

international teachers move to a global workplace, say, a coastal city like Shantou in China, they are likely to interpret a message that a local colleague sent indirectly using the direct style. As a result, they find themselves puzzled and perplexed about an indirect implication which states “yes” but really means “no” or points out “one” but actually means “another.” This is one of the main reasons why they misinterpreted and misunderstood the intercultural dialogues more than the local teachers.

The data analysis of communication style preferences suggests that the international faculty group have a low ratio of shifting styles to concern themselves about relations with their interlocutors. This result can partly demonstrate that, although they have made efforts to raise their intercultural communication awareness and to build up flexible strategies, in most cases, they are accustomed to persisting in the conversational style of their mother tongue - the direct one, which is deeply rooted into their own culture.

The research also shows that NNEs, e.g. Chinese English speakers, would like to try their best to apply an appropriate conversation style when talking with multi-cultural groups, because the latter are unavoidably influenced by their mother culture. In the course of the survey, many bilingual and bicultural Chinese teachers expressed the notion that adequate attention should be drawn to communication styles. One young teacher said, “When we talk in different languages, we have to conform to the speech conventions of different cultures. This is particularly important with various situations where particular attention should be given to intercultural conversation styles” (H. Fang, interview, Aug. 20, 2009).

Conclusion

The research concludes that in the context of global communication, diversity in styles remains permanently rooted into cultures. At present, people would like to assume that they are able to adapt to new communication settings, but in fact, they still stick to the communication style of their original culture. Although they are gradually able to understand the different characteristics of the styles

in other cultures, it does not necessarily suggest they are able to apply the style freely and naturally. The present study indicates that, as matter of fact, there exist diverse culture-bound communication styles in global workplaces. If communicators choose inappropriate styles to communicate with people from other cultures, as a consequence, it would lead to intercultural communication failures. In the long run, intercultural English communicators should raise their cultural sensitivity and awareness to avoid the negative impact of their original cultures’ styles and adjust their perception and actions to the needs of various communication settings.

All in all, in the era of globalization, people constantly contact or communicate with strangers with whom they never have a chance to establish a relationship. If they communicate in English with the direct style of western culture, they can certainly benefit much from a high level of efficiency and effectiveness. However, an increasing number of cultural misunderstandings and communication breakdowns are happening, so it is vitally important to adjust communication styles to fit intercultural communication needs. The study suggests that adequate attention be paid to when, where, how, why, and with whom a communication takes place. In diverse cultural environments, multicultural communicators, no matter NNEs or NES, need to consciously and constantly adapt to the “target” culture, so that they can raise their level of cross-cultural communication competence and guarantee successful communication around the globe.

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Appendix 1

Samples of cross-cultural encounters

Instructions: Please read the following dialogues and decide whether each reply sends an affirmative or negative message based on your interpretation.

No.	Initiation	Reply	Affirmative / negative
1	Mr. Wang, I'm very sorry to say that I'm not able to meet the deadline for the assignment.	That's a bit of a nuisance. But, never mind. It doesn't matter.	
2	Hi! Bill, would you mind giving me some feedback for my project proposal?	Not at all. Well, the logic needs tightening, and the methodology is problematic. But you have some very interesting ideas.	
3	I'm sorry, I don't know. Yes. Ms Zhang.	As an adult, you should at least have some idea about the question; no matter how difficult it is, even though your answer may be totally wrong. It's much better than just saying "I don't know." Understand?	
4	I think the result is unsatisfactory. We need to do something to make up for it.	Is it necessary to do it all over again?	
5	I was told you'll let me know about my performance evaluation.	Ms Zheng, this is your interim evaluation summary. It indicates that your strengths are in communication. The other areas are not as strong as your communication skills. Some are even poor, but frankly speaking, it is difficult to evaluate those areas. Good job!	

Appendix 2

Checklist for indirect conversation style

Instructions: Please tick the response to each situation you think is appropriate from your perspective.

No.	Situations	Style	Responses	
1	At a meeting, someone's mobile phone rings loudly.	D	Please turn off your cell phone.	
		I	Did I forget to tell you to turn off your cell phone?	
2	At a discussion, someone takes an opportunity to dominate the floor without appearing to say anything that actually contributes to the discussion.	D	Sorry, what is your point here?	
		I	Our time is running out. May we have the next speaker?	
3	A young colleague of your son's age inappropriately addresses your husband by his name instead of his title or order of rank.	D	I don't think young people should call him by his name.	
		I	Do you call your father by his name?	
4	At a faculty meeting, your colleagues have misunderstood what you meant to say.	D	I would ask him to repeat what he has heard and clarify the doubt or mistake immediately.	
		I	I'll wait and find an opportunity later to clarify it privately.	
5	Someone meets you first time and asks questions about your family, like marital status, the profession of your parents, number of children and income.	D	I don't mind telling him if he really wants to know me for some good reason.	
		I	I think it impolite to raise these questions when you are still a stranger.	
6	Someone wants to turn off the air-conditioner, but you still feel hot and want to keep it on.	D	Please keep it on. It's rather hot here.	
		I	How do you feel? Isn't it very hot here?	
7	Someone often says "maybe" or "perhaps" or "it seems to be all right" when he means "Yes," "all right."	D	I feel puzzled and confused and not sure about what his intention is.	
		I	I can understand the intended meaning, for people always use these phrases.	
8	What would you say to your host when you are full at a dinner party?	D	I would say, "Thank you, I'm full. No more food."	
		I	I'll keep saying repeatedly, "Thank you. I appreciate your wonderful dinner. But I really cannot eat any more."	

Developing pragmatic competence: Study abroad and classroom instruction

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Abstract

This paper examines the effects of both a study abroad program and explicit classroom instruction on the development of the pragmatic competence of Japanese EFL college-level learners. Data from a pre- and post-Discourse Completion Test on the speech act of requesting was obtained from 86 learners participating in a study abroad program and 28 non-study abroad learners studying in a traditional classroom setting. The results from the study abroad program were analyzed to determine what structures and strategies could be taught in an EFL classroom setting to develop pragmatic competence. Results from both groups showed that learners made gains in the use of specific pragmatic strategies that were more in line with native speaker norms. We conclude that learners in a variety of EFL cultural environments exposed to carefully managed explicit instruction in traditional classroom settings can develop pragmatic competence similar those of students in study abroad programs.

Introduction

Pragmatic ability is now considered an important skill in regard to competence in a foreign language. Acquisition of grammatical forms, lexical forms, and phonology has long been in the literature, but it is now recognized that to interact appropriately in different situations, pragmatic knowledge is essential. To better understand what is meant by pragmatic competence, research on cross cultural and interlanguage pragmatics has been carried out over the past 25 years. This research includes comparisons of native speakers (NSs) and non-native speakers (NNSs) and the way they perform different speech acts such as requests and apologies (Kite & Sakui, 2002; Garcia, 1989; Kumagai, 1993). Another area of pragmatics research has looked at interlanguage pragmatic development

through longitudinal studies to monitor changes in performance (Trosborg, 1987; Kondo, 1997a; Kondo, 1997b; Rose, 2000; Fukazawa & Fordyce, 2005; Churchill, 2001). Even more recently, a few studies have turned to the effects of classroom instruction on pragmatic development (Takahashi, 2001; Rose, 2005; Vyatkina & Belz, 2006).

Exposure to the target language in a second language setting is often purported to be a more effective way to acquire pragmatic competence in a foreign language. There is a growing body of research using longitudinal and cross-sectional methodologies to track the development of learners exposed to the target language in study abroad (SA) programs and immersion programs. Kasper and Schmidt (1996) state that “a second language environment is more likely to provide learners with

the diverse frequent input they need for pragmatic development than a foreign language learning context” (p. 150). While an SA program may be seen as desirable, it may not be an option for many language learners, particularly in Southeast Asian countries.

Researchers have debated whether the effects of classroom instruction in an EFL setting are comparable to exposure in an L2 setting. Does instruction provide opportunities for learners to develop pragmatic routines and strategies? What kinds of gains can be made with classroom instruction? Are these gains similar to the effects of exposure in the target language setting or do they differ in important ways? In support of classroom-based instruction in pragmatic development, Rose (2005) argues, “the effects of instruction in pragmatics is underscored by Schmidt’s (1993) contention that simple exposure to the target language is insufficient – pragmatic functions and relevant contextual factors are often not salient to learners and so not likely to be noticed even after prolonged exposure” (p. 386).

The present paper first looks at the effects of a study abroad program on the pragmatic development of learners. Then it looks at the effects of classroom instruction on learners in an EFL setting. The instruction focused on three specific areas of pragmatic knowledge necessary for the speech act of requests. These strategies were chosen based on the results of the study abroad program, which indicated areas in which learners might be helped to develop pragmatic strategies with explicit training in the classroom. Both the results from the study abroad program and the classroom-based instruction program were compared with NS responses. Using the NS responses as the target language norms for the four request situations, we were able to see gaps in the learners’ knowledge of request strategies.

Methods

Subjects

The participants in the study abroad program were a group of 86 Japanese university students, freshmen and sophomores, who participated in a 10-month study abroad program in Salem, Oregon. Participants in the classroom instruction program

were 28 freshmen at the university where the authors teach. Instruction was once a week for 6 weeks; each session was 50 minutes. The NSs were 25 North Americans, all speakers of American English. They were attending a four-month Japan Studies Program conducted at the same university.

Research instruments

Data were collected with four Discourse Completion Tests (DCT) for both the study abroad group and the classroom instructed group (see Appendix 1). The DCT used an open-ended format which provided a description of the situation in both English and Japanese and asked the participants to write down what they would say in each situation. The DCTs were administered to students in the study abroad program prior to departure and to the classroom group prior to instruction. The tests were administered again at the end of each program. This pre- and post-program design was used to measure changes in learner strategies for requests.

The request situations were varied for the relative status of the interlocutors according to the power variable found in Brown and Levinson (1987). The interlocutors in two situations were peers, status-equal interlocutors (-P), and the interlocutors in the other two situations were teachers or other adults, higher status interlocutors (+P). Distance (D) and Ranking of Imposition (R) were kept stable across the four situations. The situations for NSs varied slightly to accommodate differences in the two groups (see Appendix 2).

Data coding and analysis

Analysis of the DCT responses focused on the following areas:

1. The semantic strategies of head acts
2. Types and percentages of supportive moves
3. Types and percentages of syntactic downgrading

The coding system of DCTs follows the CCSARP Coding Manual of Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989). This coding system divides request strategies into head acts and adjunct or supportive moves (see Appendix 3). The head act is the minimal unit for realizing the speech act. Adjunct moves or supportive moves show the speaker’s

intention to mitigate or aggravate the request. They can occur either before or after the head act.

Results and discussion of study abroad participants

Head Acts

Each request was analyzed for the semantic strategy used in the head act. Counts were made for whether each request used the direct, conventionally indirect, or non-conventionally indirect (hints) strategy.

Figures 1 and 2 show the distribution of semantic strategies used in head acts by the SA group for the pre- and post-test responses and by NSs. As can be seen, the SA group increased their use of the conventionally indirect semantic strategy over the ten-month period for both +P and -P situations. These developments put their responses more in line with the target language norms in the NS data. This trend also confirms the results found in other studies of the shift over time from the use of the direct semantic strategy to the conventionally indirect strategy (Churchill, 2001; Fukuzawa & Fordyce, 2005).

Syntactic downgrading

A closer look at the conventionally indirect strategies in the head acts shows an overall increase in syntactic downgrading for the post-SA tests. Figures 3 and 4 show the percentages of participants who used the interrogative, past tense modal verb, and conditional in the pre- and post-tests. We can observe an increase in the use of the interrogative, past tense, and conditional in the post-tests, showing the SA group moving closer to NS norms.

Syntactic downgrading: +P requests

For higher status interlocutors, the SA group still did not meet NS norms for use of the past tense modal verb and the conditional. For the past tense, there was an increase from 40% for the pre-SA to 64% for the post-SA tests while NSs used the past tense in 91% of the responses. The SA group used the conditional in only 3% of the pre-test responses, but 24% of the post-test responses. However, this still fell below the 53% used by NSs.

Figure 1. Distribution of +P semantic strategies in pre- & post-SA tests

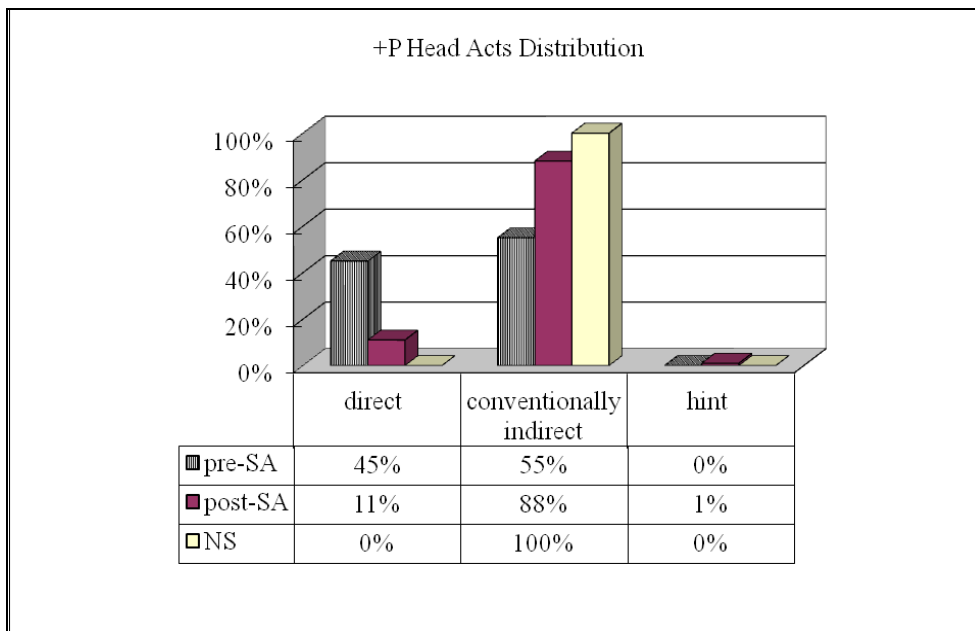


Figure 2. Distribution of -P semantic strategies in pre- & post-SA tests

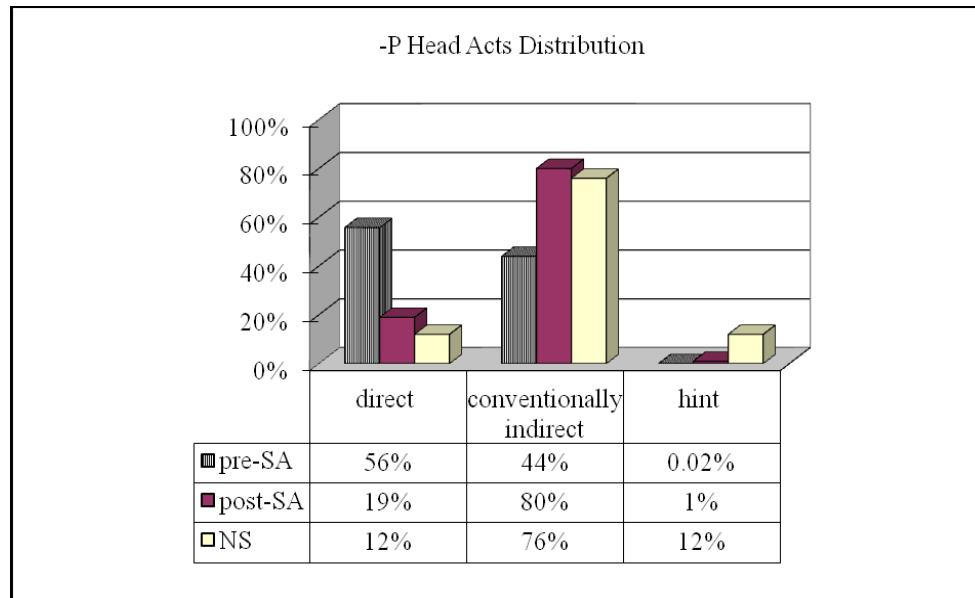


Figure 3. Use of +P syntactic downgrading in requests in pre- & post-SA tests

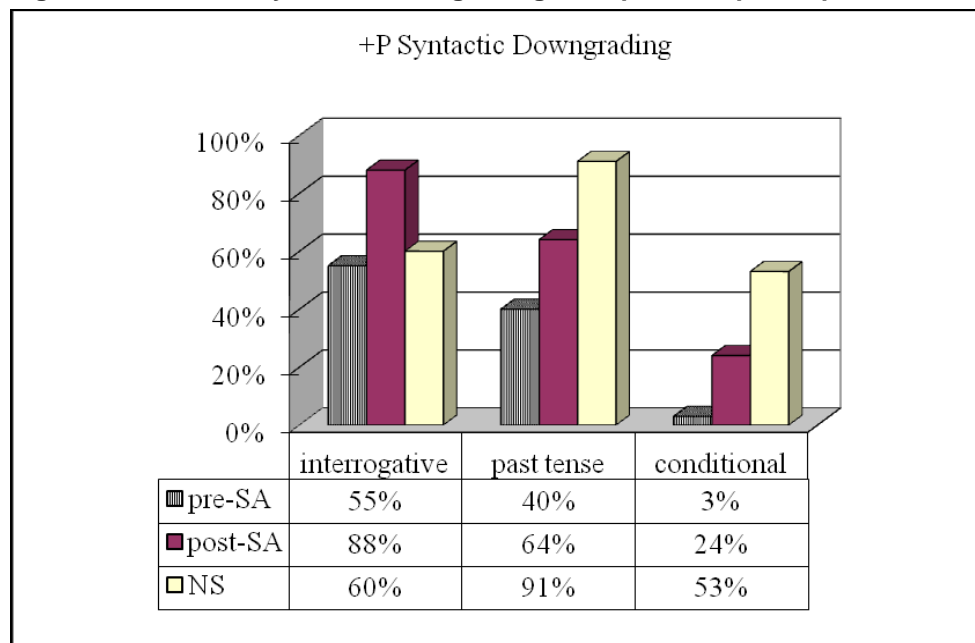
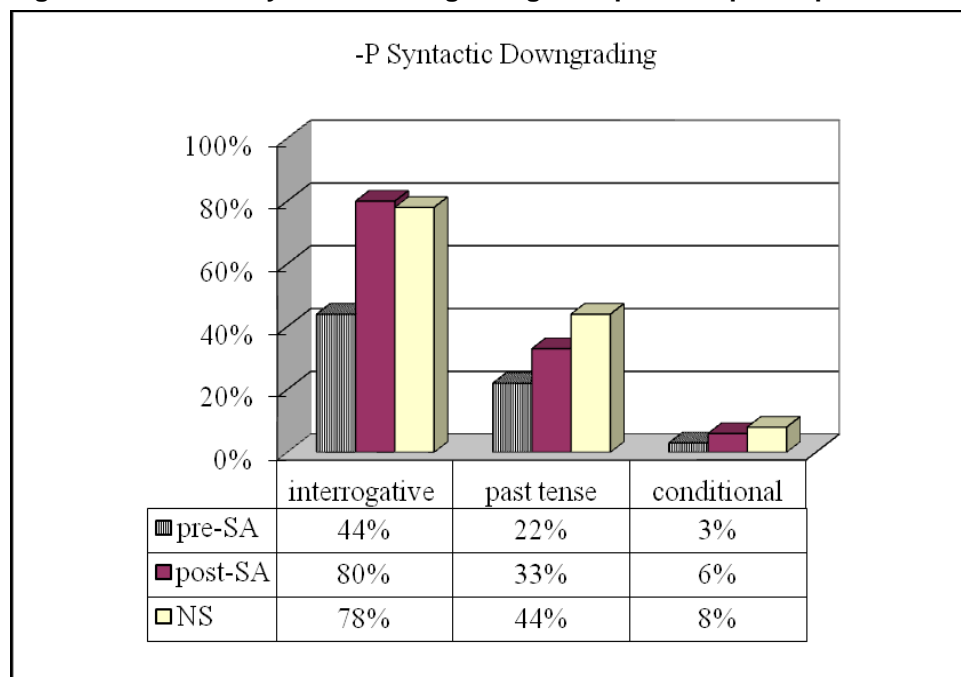


Figure 4. Use of -P syntactic downgrading in requests in pre- & post-SA tests

The SA group increase in the use of the interrogative could be predicted from the overall increase in conventionally indirect strategies for both +P and -P interlocutors. Below are examples of a typical change from pre- to post-SA tests. Each of the pre/post test examples are from the same students.

Pre-SA test: My sister come to Salem. So, please stay for one night your house for my sister.

Post-SA test: My sister will visit to Salem. Could she stay your house one night?

Pre-SA test: Please look to check my report.

Post-SA test: Could you check in my English please if you were free?

Interrogative usage by NSs with +P interlocutors occurred in only 60% of the responses compared to 88% of the SA group responses. We will look in some detail at the use of interrogatives by the two groups to try to explain this rather surprising result. The data show that NSs often chose to mitigate requests for +P interlocutors with the use of conditional declarative instead of interrogative

structures. They also used the past tense modal verb could and the downgrader I was wondering. This combination of mitigating structures reduces the level of directness, making it more appropriate for high imposition requests to superiors. Below are examples from the data:

NS response: We were wondering if he could maybe visit me here and stay a couple of nights.

I'm submitting a paper to a journal and was wondering if you'd be willing to look it over.

The SA group seemed to move closer to this kind of structure with the use of the conditional in 24% of the responses. However, they often combined the conditional clause with the interrogative rather than the declarative structure, as in the following examples:

Post-SA test: Could you let them to stay in your house for just one night, if you don't care about it?

If you have free time, could
you check my paper?

Syntactic downgrading: -P requests

Students in the SA group varied the use of conventionally indirect strategies with some use of direct strategies and hints, showing less frequent use of the interrogative. While the use of the conventionally indirect strategy was still high at 78% for NSs, they used fewer mitigating devices such as the conditional and the past tense modal verb than were used for +P interlocutors. Figure 4 for -P situations shows that on the post-test, the SA group had moved closer to NS norms, particularly in the use of the interrogative at 80%. The use of the past tense modal verb increased to 33% compared to 44% for the NS group, again moving closer to the NS norm. The use of the conditional was 8% for the NS group and 6% on the post-SA test, with both NS and SA groups showing infrequent use of this syntactic means of mitigation.

We can summarize this section by saying that the SA group moved closer to NS norms with -P interlocutors in their use of syntactic downgrading. On the other hand, while showing improvement, they remained far removed from NS norms with +P interlocutors. This difference may be explained by the amount of input available in the study abroad program from the two types of interlocutors. Students reported spending more time talking with equal status interlocutors such as roommates, dorm mates, and American classmates than with superiors such as teachers and other adults. This exposure may account for the more appropriate pragmalinguistic development with -P interlocutors than with +P interlocutors.

Supportive moves

As seen in Figures 5 and 6 below, on the whole, the SA group increased their use of supportive moves between the pre- and post-tests for both +P and -P situations.

Adjunct moves: +P requests

Alerters consist of the use of the title of the interlocutor (e.g., Professor X) or an attention getter such as excuse me. With higher status interlocutors,

there was no change in the SA group in their use of alerters between the pre- and post-tests (17%). In fact, alerters for the SA group were used almost exclusively in the request for checking a paper. As seen in Figure 5, the NS group used alerters more frequently (37%) to signal that a request would follow.

The use of grounders (explanations for the requests) by the SA group (74%) moved closer to the NS norm (82%), indicating a growing verbosity in responses. In the pre-test, the SA students used only the head act about half the time to make requests. This lack of grounders, combined with the fact that 44% of the requests used direct semantic strategies, would give the impression of a very straightforward, unmitigated request. On the other hand, in the post-test, the combination of more frequent use of grounders and conventionally indirect strategies has the effect of mitigating requests, making them more in line with NS norms. Even when a direct semantic strategy was used in the post-test, the use of alerters and grounders softened the tone of the request, as in the following example:

Post-SA test: Excuse me, Professor. ^(alserter)
May I talk to you? ^(preparatory move)
I wrote some paper for my
assignment, ^(grounder) and I'd like
you to revise my paper. ^(direct strategy)
Do you have any time to
do? ^(imposition minimizer)

Adjunct moves: -P requests

With -P interlocutors, both NS and SA groups' use of alerters mostly fall into the category of attention getters such as Hey! and Excuse me. In Figure 6 for -P interlocutors, the post-SA test shows an overall increase in the frequency of alerters, grounders, and promise of reward moves. We see a slight increase in alerters for the SA group (36%) in the post-test, but this is still far below the NS group (78%). The use of alerters may be closely related to context, and the SA group may not have developed a sociopragmatic sensitivity to the factors in these situations.

Figure 5. Distribution of +P adjunct/supportive moves in requests in pre- & post-SA tests

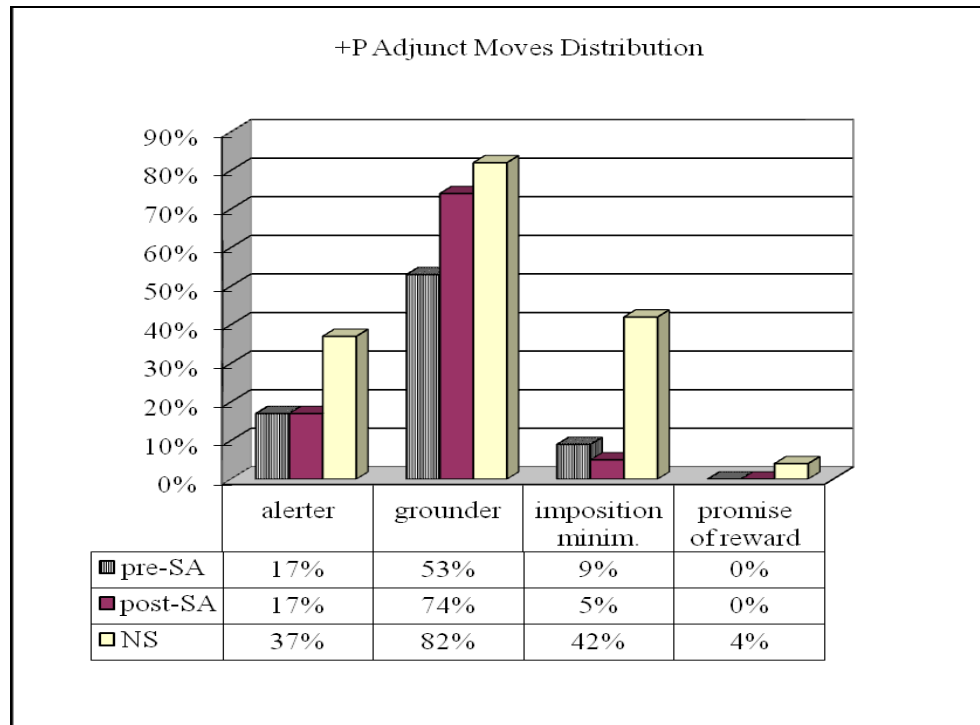
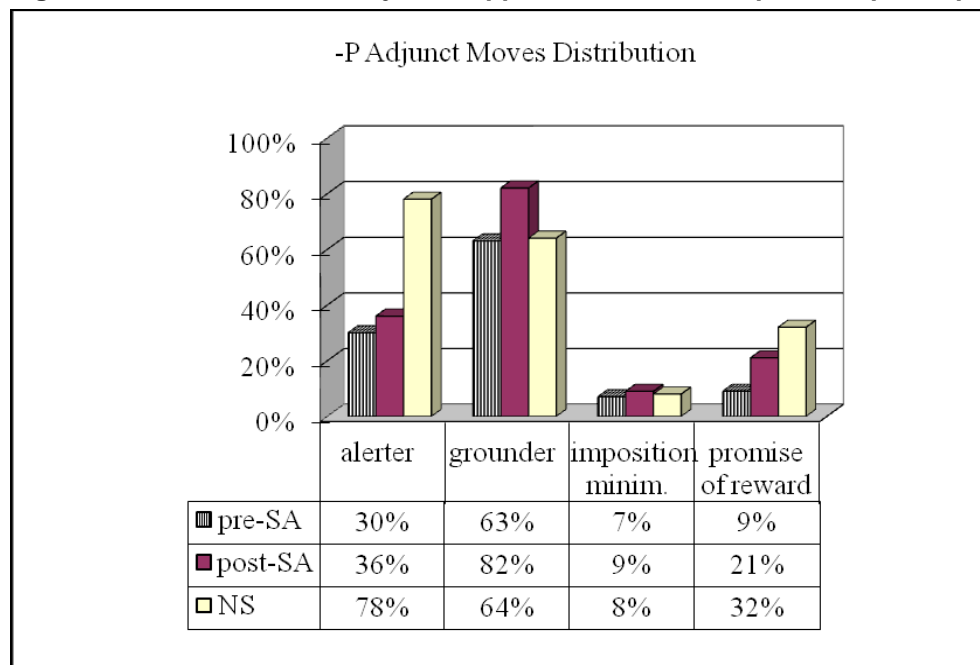


Figure 6. Distribution of -P adjunct/supportive moves in requests in pre- & post-SA tests



Looking at a comparison of grounders between the post-SA test and the NS group, we see the frequency of grounders (82%) by the SA group

exceeds that of the NS group (64%). The promise of reward adjunct move was used more frequently by both the NS group (32%) and on the SA group post-

test (21%), mostly in the borrowing money for lunch situation. The promise of reward was usually in the assurance that the money would be returned as soon as possible.

To summarize, the less frequent use of supportive moves by the SA group in the pre-test may be attributed to their limited knowledge of the range of strategies available to mitigate requests. The post-tests show an increase in the overall use of supportive moves, which can be attributed to exposure to the target language during the study abroad program.

Classroom-based instruction

As stated in the introduction, study abroad may not be an option for many learners. Research on training in the classroom indicates that explicit instruction in an EFL setting holds the potential to help learners develop pragmatic competence with equally satisfactory results. We will outline strategies to develop pragmatic competence in the classroom and give practical examples of their application.

Content of instruction

The content of instruction was determined by looking at the data from the study abroad program to see where learners made gains from implicit exposure in the ESL setting. The areas of development were:

1. awareness of the use of conventionally indirect strategies for making requests to both higher status and equal status interlocutors in the head acts of requests
2. awareness of the range of supportive moves possible as a means to soften the force of the request
3. awareness of the mitigating effects of the use of the past tense and conditional biclausal phrases in requests

The semantic strategies used by NNSs in the head act in both the pre-instruction and pre-SA DCTs showed an almost equal preference for direct and conventionally indirect strategies. This contrasted with the NSs, who used the conventionally indirect strategy 100% of the time for higher status interlocutors and about 75% of the time for equal

status interlocutors. NSs show a strong preference for the interrogative or conventionally indirect strategy, but NNSs still show a strong reliance on the direct strategy. Thus it seemed necessary to draw attention to the forms of the indirect strategy as the preferred choice in requests.

Supportive moves are seen as ways to mitigate the force of a request by adding an explanation for the request (grounders), signaling to the interlocutor that a request may follow (alerters), or by other means such as minimizing the weight of the imposition made by the request. Although not all supportive moves were used with equal frequency by the NS group, they were used more frequently than by the NNS group, leading us to surmise that either NNSs are unaware of these devices or still lack the linguistic resources to produce them. Awareness raising of and practice with the mitigating effect of supportive moves can be seen as a way to improve the request strategies of NNSs.

The third area that required instruction was the use of the past tense and the conditional biclausal phrases such as *I was wondering if*. NSs used the past tense modal verb with higher status interlocutors about 90% of the time, while NNSs used it only about 40% of the time. These figures indicate that NNSs still rely heavily on the use of the present tense as in *Can you*. NSs also used conditional biclausal phrases about 55% of the time, while in contrast, the NNSs did not make use of this form at all in either the pre-study abroad or pre-instruction DCTs.

Instruction procedure

Lesson 1

Learners read three short dialogues, each with a different degree of social distance, familiarity, and weight of imposition. A teacher-led discussion of these three dialogues helped learners to recognize these variables and see how they were realized linguistically in each dialogue. Learners were then asked to think of other situations in which these three parameters might differ. Finally, the results were summarized to pinpoint the importance of status in the relationship between interlocutors (higher or equal), the familiarity of interlocutors (how familiar they are with each other), and the

ease or difficulty of complying with the request (weight of imposition) as being the important variables in making linguistic and strategic choices.

Lesson 2

In a teacher-fronted discussion, students were introduced to the two types of semantic strategies used in the head acts of English requests: direct and indirect strategies. Examples of both types were provided and their syntactic makeup discussed. Direct strategies consist of imperatives (*Close the window.*) and sentences in which the speaker shows his desire or willingness for some act to be accomplished (*I want you to close the window.*). Indirect requests were introduced with examples from suggesting (*How about closing the window?*), asking about the interlocutor's ability or willingness to do something (*Can/Could you close the window?*), and also hints (*It's cold in here.*). These explanations and examples were followed with a list of requests, and learners were asked to decide whether each one was direct or indirect.

Two situations to be completed in the form of a short role play with rejoinders supplied by learners were given for homework. One context specified equal status interlocutors (a friend or classmate), while the other one specified a higher status interlocutor (a teacher). Results from the homework for equal status interlocutors showed an almost equal distribution between direct and indirect strategy use. However, results from the situation with a higher status interlocutor showed learners used the indirect strategy 100% of the time, the same as the NS group. We can possibly attribute this switch to the use of indirect strategies with the discussion and explanation of the indirect strategy as being more polite, especially towards higher status interlocutors.

Lesson 3

This lesson began with a review of the two different strategy types in requests, direct and indirect. The discussion then focused on examples of mitigated and unmitigated forms. Mitigation can be accomplished with the use of an interrogative as opposed to an affirmative statement. These were the indirect strategies discussed in the previous lesson.

Use of the past tense as opposed to the present tense (*could* instead of *can*) was also illustrated. A more sophisticated syntactic means was also demonstrated with the use of the "if" clause as in *Would it be okay if* or *I was wondering if*.

Explanations and examples were followed with example sentences that employed one or more of these devices, and students were asked to select the mitigating device used. The homework consisted of two scenarios for the learners to complete as role plays, again using equal status and higher status interlocutor situations.

Lesson 4

The head acts from the homework of the previous lesson were used to demonstrate the variety of ways to make requests. The request strategies used were randomized as a list, and learners were asked to reorder them from most polite (most indirect) to least polite (most direct). First, the equal status interlocutor situation was discussed, followed by the higher status interlocutor situation. In both cases, there was general agreement on both the most indirect and the most direct poles of the scale. There was more discrepancy in the middle ground for both situations. It was pointed out that there is no absolute order for these requests strategies, but that they would be relative depending on variables such as the distance between interlocutors (familiarity), perceived weight of the imposition, and the perceived status of interlocutors.

Lesson 5

Students were asked to review their own DCTs for the homework from Lesson 4: 1) ask a roommate to turn down the volume of music, and 2) ask a professor to change the date of an appointment. They examined these with respect to the ordering exercise done in the previous session and were asked to reflect on their choice of strategies. We again reviewed the range of possible choices, and the reasons they might have for selecting strategies outside the normally accepted range. For example, with situation 1, several learners used the direct strategy (*Hey, turn the volume down. and Quiet down!*). Each had imagined a close relationship with the interlocutor and having the feeling of being

angry or under pressure. We also discussed how this direct strategy would not be acceptable in situation 2, since this situation had a higher status interlocutor and would automatically require an indirect strategy.

The discussion then turned to the parameters that need to be considered when making a request, i.e. status of the interlocutors, familiarity or social distance, and the ease or difficulty of complying with the request. The homework assignment was then discussed in regard to the parameters that need to be considered when writing out the role play. The homework role play situations were: 1) ask a friend to lend his notes from a class you missed (the friend does not normally lend other people his/her notes), and 2) ask a professor for an extension on the deadline for a paper. Learners agreed that both were relatively difficult requests to comply with. The status and perceived social distance would be other factors in determining the strategies used to make the request.

Lesson 6

The discussion began with a review of direct and indirect request strategies and the means to mitigate the head act with syntactic and lexical downgraders. It was pointed out that the head act is the core of the speech act of requesting. However, there are supportive strategies or moves which have the effect of mitigating or softening the force of the request; these can come before or after the head act. We discussed how their importance and use depended on the context of the request.

To illustrate supportive moves, several students were asked how they completed the homework DCTs for the two situations. The supportive moves, such as alerters (*Hi, [name of friend], Excuse me, Professor B*), preparatory moves (*Are you busy now?*), pre-commitment moves (*Can I ask you a favor?*), and grounders (*I was absent from class yesterday.*) were taken from the DCTs and put on the board to illustrate their functions. Supportive moves which usually follow the head act were also illustrated, although student data did not have as many of these. These were promise of reward moves (*I'll treat you to something. / I'll return your notes tomorrow.*) and imposition minimizers.

After a thorough discussion of the supportive moves and examples from student work and teacher input, students were asked to critique their own DCTs to see which of the moves they had used. Some students took advantage of the opportunity to insert moves where they had not been previously used, thus showing a deeper understanding of the function of supportive moves and some critical thinking.

The next step in this study was for students to complete the same open-ended DCTs that were administered before the beginning of instruction and to compare the results of the two sets of responses to measure the effectiveness of explicit instruction in the teaching of request strategies. The results are shown in Appendix 4.

Conclusion and implications

Results from a comparison of the pre- and post-study abroad data and pre- and post-instruction data both show gains in learner development of target language norms. In comparing the two sets of data, we see that the instructed group actually made more significant gains in the use of the conventionally indirect strategy in head acts with higher status interlocutors in using it 100% of the time, mirroring results from the NS group. They also made significant gains in the use of syntactic mitigation such as the past tense for both higher status and equal status interlocutors. The increased use of the conditional and the highly mitigated *I was wondering if...* with higher status interlocutors contrasts with the study abroad group, which did not use this form to any degree in the post-SA DCTs. These examples make a strong case for the effects of explicit instruction over simple exposure. The increased use of supportive moves showed more mixed results. The SA group increased their use of grounders, which may have been the effect of noticing as well as overall development of fluency. The instructed group also increased use of grounders, likely due to discussion and practice in class. They also used alerters more frequently and more in line with NS norms. These were modeled consistently in class and seemed to have been noticed as appropriate ways to begin a request.

Although the results of the study abroad program reported here are specific for Japanese learners, it is

reasonable to assume that a replicated study would get similar results from culturally and linguistically different groups. However, as stated earlier, studying abroad is not always an option for learners. The overriding value of this study then is that while students did benefit from study abroad exposure, learners who instead received explicit instruction in an EFL setting benefited equally, and in some areas, more than study abroad learners. The study abroad portion of this project helped identify structures and strategies that can be learned implicitly from exposure. These were then used as explicit learning goals for students in an EFL classroom setting and these learners showed substantial development in these areas. We can conclude that the goals and procedures used in classroom instruction as demonstrated here would provide simple, accessible input for pragmatic development in a variety of EFL environments.

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Appendix 1

Request scenarios used for the NNS group

(+P; -D; +R) Your brother or sister is coming to Salem to visit you. You ask your host family if he/she can stay at their house for one night. What would you say?

(+P; -D; +R) You have written a 5-page paper for a Willamette University class. You ask your English teacher to check the paper before you turn it in. What would you say?

(-P; -D; +R) You are having lunch at a McDonald's in Salem with a classmate. You suddenly realize you have forgotten to bring

any money. You ask your friend to loan you money for lunch. What would you say?

(-P; -D; +R) You loaned \$50 to your roommate last week. He/She has not returned the money yet. You ask him/her to pay back the money. What would you say?

Appendix 2

Request scenarios used for the NS group

(+P; -D; +R) You are staying at a friend's house in London, England for a month. A good friend from your high school is going to school in Edinburgh. He/she wants to visit you in London for the weekend. You ask your friend's mother if he/she can stay at their house. What would you say?

(+P; -D; +R) You want to submit a paper to an online journal in your field of study (history, economics, literature, etc.). Before you turn it in, you want your major professor to take a look at your draft and give you some advice on rewriting it. What would you say?

(-P; -D; +R) You are having lunch at a McDonald's with a classmate. You suddenly realize you have forgotten to bring any money. You ask your friend to loan you money for lunch. What would you say?

(-P; -D; +R) You loaned \$50 to your roommate last week. You want him/her to return the money. What would you say?

Appendix 3

Table 1. Coding categories for requests with examples from NNS data

(Note: example sentences are quoted in the original, including all errors)

Head acts	Examples	Power
Direct	Please stay my brother in your house for one day.	+P
	Please give me the money.	-P
	I want to stay my brother in your house.	+P
	Now, I want you to pay back the money.	-P
	Please look to check my report.	+P
Conventionally indirect	Would you please check it?	+P
	If you okay, could you stay my family in your house?	+P
	Can I borrow some money?	-P
Hint	Do you remember borrowing \$50?	-P
Adjunct moves		
Alerter	Oh, my god.	-P
	Hey!	-P
	Excuse me, Professor (name).	+P
Grounder	Oh, I forgot to bring my money.	-P
	My brother is coming to Salem to visit me.	+P
	I wrote a 5-page paper for a Willamette class.	+P
Imposition minimizer	<u>If you have money</u> , I appreciate you (paying me back).	-P
	<u>If you have time</u> , would you correct my papers?	+P
Promise of reward	When I go home, <u>I'll pay that money</u> .	-P
	Please lend me today and <u>I'll give back tomorrow</u> .	-P

Appendix 4

Pre- and post-instruction distribution of classroom-instructed learners

Figure 1. Distribution of +P semantic strategies in pre- & post-instruction tests

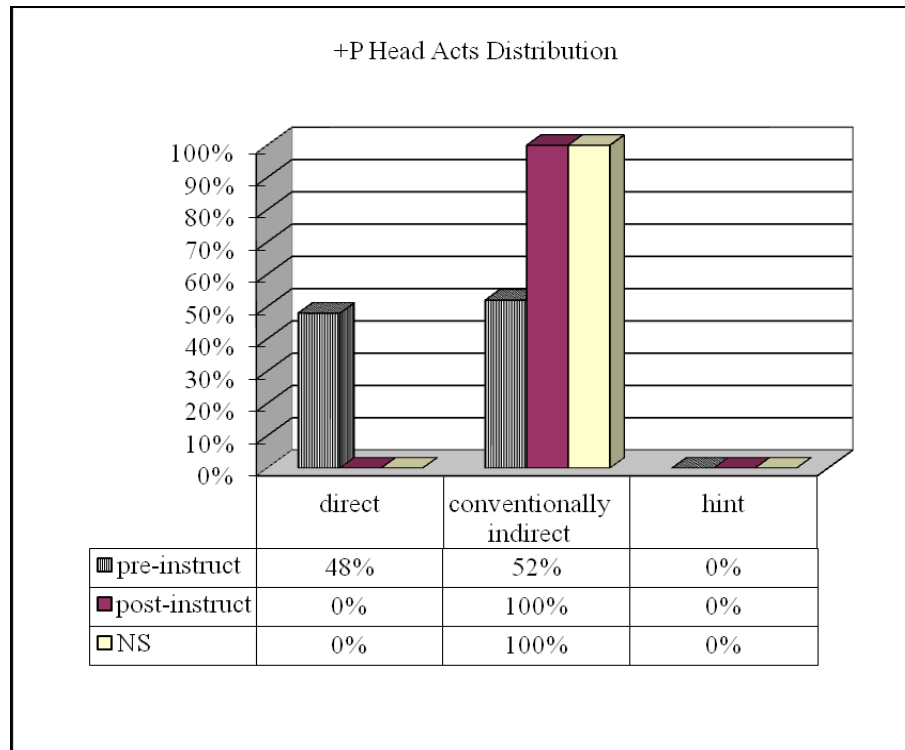


Figure 2. Distribution of -P semantic strategies in pre- & post-instruction tests

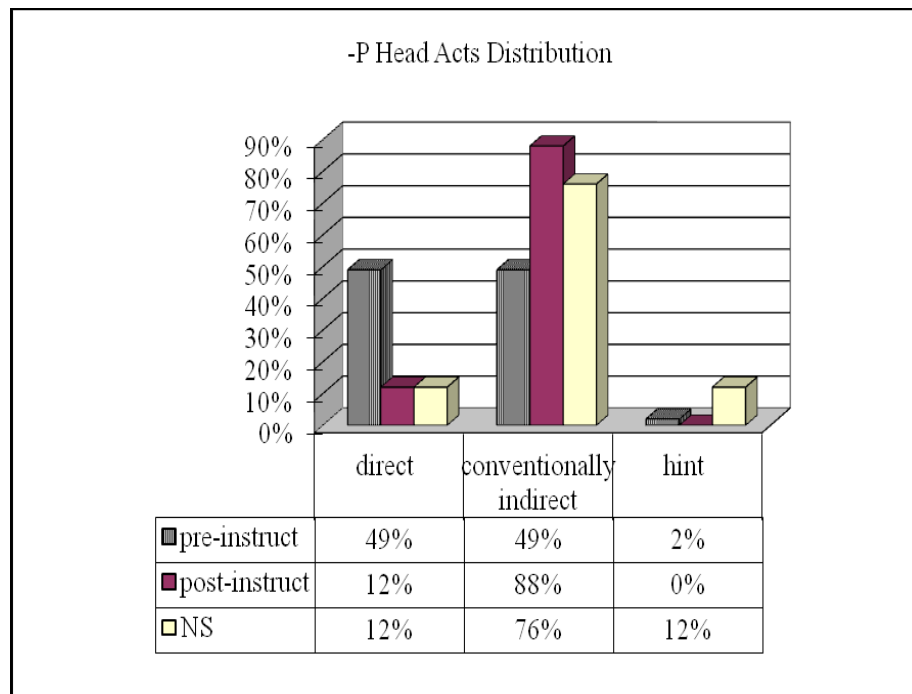


Figure 3. Use of +P syntactic downgrading in requests in pre- & post-instruction tests

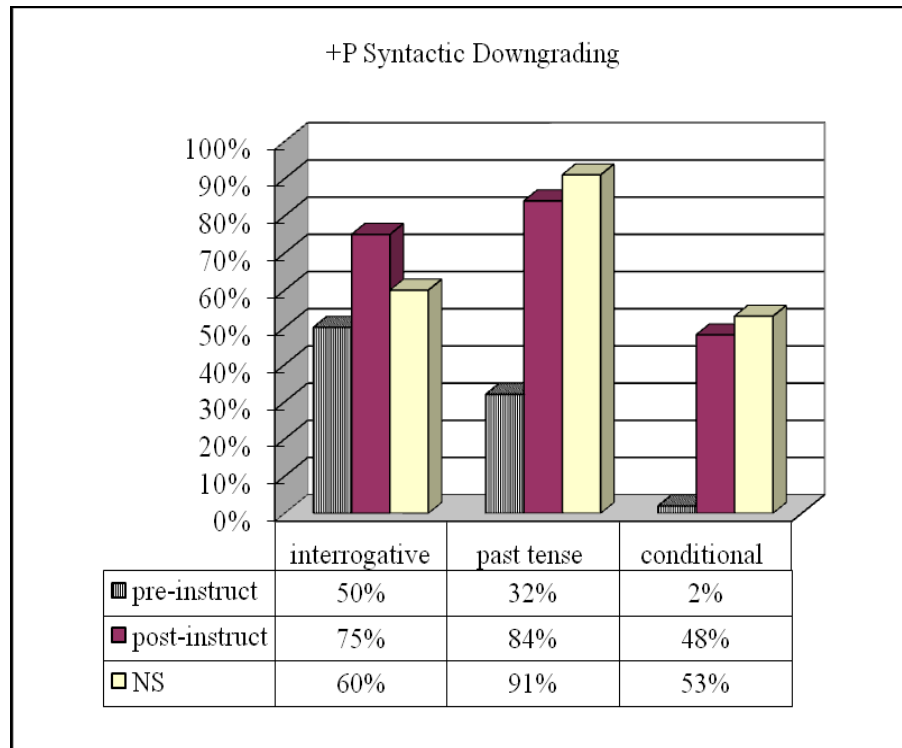


Figure 4. Use of -P syntactic downgrading in requests in pre- & post instruction tests

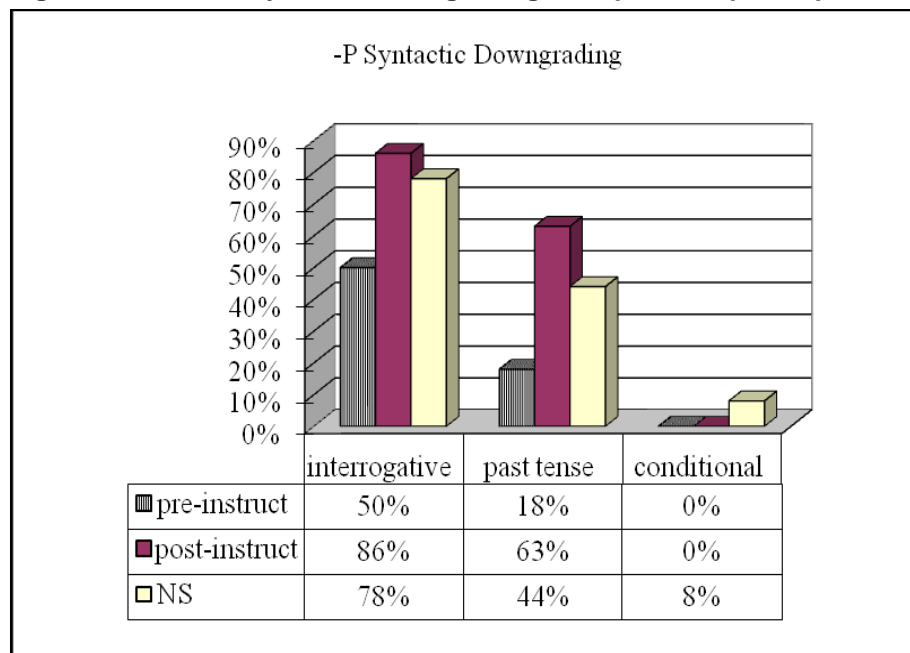


Figure 5. Distribution of +P adjunct/supportive moves in requests in pre- & post-instruction tests

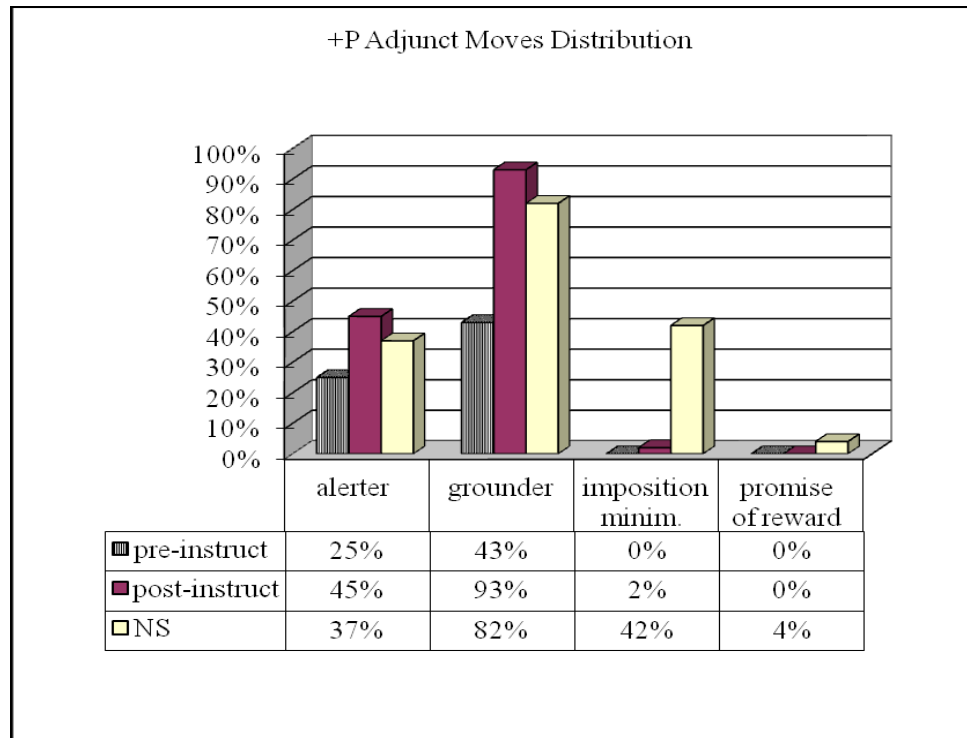
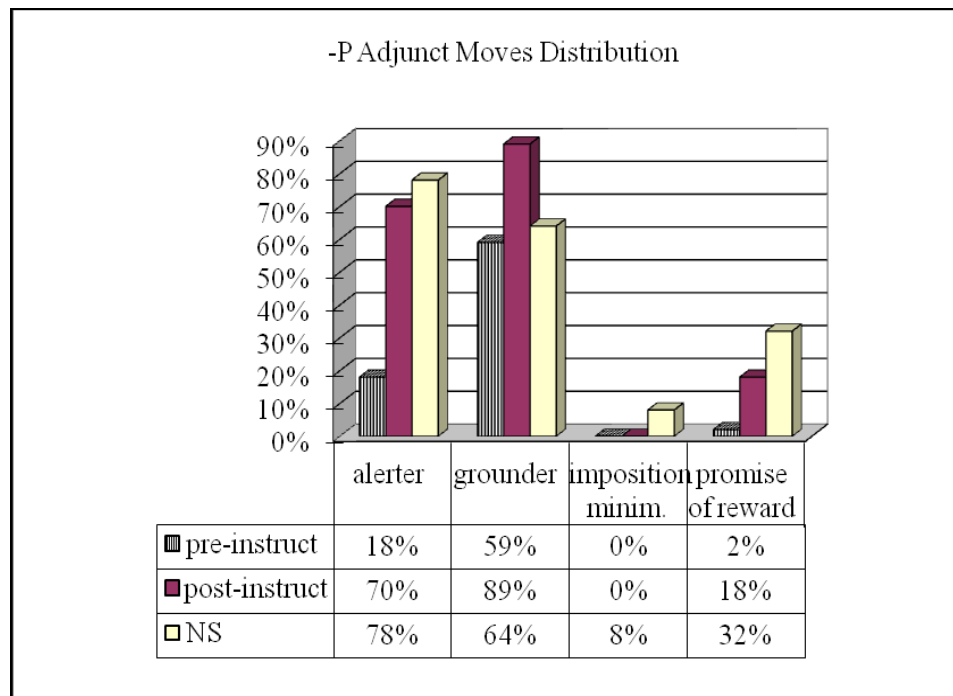


Figure 6. Distribution of -P adjunct/supportive moves in requests in pre- & post-instruction tests



Professional development needs of Cambodian teachers of English: International comparison with Japanese and Korean EFL teachers

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Abstract

A small-scale survey was conducted in Cambodia to investigate the professional development (PD) needs of Cambodian EFL teachers. The study was to shed light on the current situation and the challenges related to Cambodia's English language education. The participants of the study were asked to select three PD needs that interested them from a list of 10 need areas. The 10 need areas are the PD needs as identified by Igawa (2008), who studied the PD needs of EFL teachers in Japan and South Korea. Some qualitative data is used to supplement and interpret the results of this study. The results show that the Cambodian teachers' preferred PD areas are: Teaching Skills & Methods, Understanding Students, and Attending Conferences, Seminars & Workshops. Although more than half of the Japanese and Korean teachers were interested in Language Improvement, only a small portion of the Cambodian teachers showed interest in this area.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the nature of professional development (PD) needs of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers based on the notion that teachers are professionals who need PD comprised of diverse processes that provide ongoing intellectual, experiential, and attitudinal growth (Lange, 1990). Nearly all teachers would agree with Pennington (1990) that, "A distinguishing characteristic of the notion of teaching as a profession is the centrality of career growth as an ongoing goal" (p. 132).

The terms "Teacher Development" (TD), or "Professional Development" (PD) for teachers, are broad terms that include a variety of aspects connected not only to a teacher's professional development, but also to his/her personal development (Igawa, 2002). PD is therefore seen as "an ongoing process and an integral characteristic of a fully professional teacher" (McDonough, 1997, p. 318). Due to the pervasive dissemination of "English as the Global Language" and the massive exportation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), PD for EFL teachers is currently showing an increase in perceived validity, particularly for non-native speaking (NNS) teachers. In spite of this

growing recognition of the PD needs of EFL teachers, the content of PD has not been duly addressed in research and PD need areas are not clearly identified or delineated (e.g. Cheng & Wang, 2004; Yeh, 2005).

The purpose of this study is to address this crucial issue in language teaching and to come up with a temporary list of the PD needs of EFL teachers, which we hope will be developed into a more extensive taxonomy. It is also hoped that this study will benefit PD designers for EFL teachers in selecting the target areas for their programs.

By investigating the PD needs of Cambodian EFL teachers, this study was intended to shed light on the current situation as well as the challenges being faced by Cambodia's English language education. Thus far, these topics have been scarcely addressed in international TESOL literature. However, by studying current issues related to English language education in Cambodia, several vantage points to better view English education can be gained. This is due to the universal nature of second language learning and also the professionalism of language teachers in general. It could be argued that this universal nature is also due to the globalization phenomenon of the "interconnectedness" of our politics, economy, and culture, as well as the fact that English plays a pivotal part of the "global infrastructure" (Cochrane & Pain, 2000, pp. 15-17) for information and communication today.

The study

A small-scale survey was carried out in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in February, 2008, to investigate the professional development (PD) needs of Cambodian teachers of English. The participants of the study were asked to indicate three (3) PD needs that interested them from a list of 10 need areas. The 10 need areas are the professional development needs identified by Igawa (2008), who studied the PD needs of EFL teachers practicing in Japan and South Korea. Although the PD need areas were generated from the study of secondary school teachers of English in Japan and Korea, the scope of second language teacher education proposed by Richards (1998) was consulted in the process of delineating the need areas. Some qualitative data is

used to supplement and interpret the results of this study.

Participants

The participants in the study are 36 Cambodian teachers of English who were attending *CamTESOL 2008* (February 22 to 23, 2008), an annual international TESOL conference supported by the National Institute of Education of Cambodia. The overwhelming majority of the participating teachers were male; of the total number of participants, 25 were male, five (5) were female, and six (6) chose not to indicate their sex. The gender condition of these participants may look different from that of the wider ELT professional population, which is comprised of more female than male teachers worldwide, particularly in developed countries.

As to where they were teaching, of the 36 participating teachers, there were three (3) primary school teachers, one (1) junior high school teacher, three (3) senior high school teachers, 10 college teachers, and 13 teachers teaching at other institutions, such as the Australian Centre for Education (ACE), a language school established by the Australian Universities and accredited by the National ELT Accreditation Scheme (NEAS) of Australia. In addition, six (6) participants chose not to disclose the type of teaching institution.

This feature of many participants teaching at higher education institutions may be due to the fact that the participants were all attending an international TESOL conference. In addition, this fact may also partially explain the unusually high percentage of male teachers among the participants; the ratio of male English teachers is higher at institutions of higher education than at primary or secondary school levels. Sunderland (1994), for example, discusses the "gendering" of the English language teaching profession (see also Ehrlich, 1997).

In regard to the teaching experience of the participants, the majority of the Cambodian teachers were young novice teachers; 28 (77.8%) of them said that they had been in service for 0-5 years, 11 (19.4%) said 6-10 years, and only 1 (2.8%) said 11-20 years. The fact that the majority of the participants had very little teaching experience is

not surprising, especially when we consider the fact that English language education only officially started, or re-started, in 1989 (Vira, 2002).

Informants

Four (4) teachers teaching English at higher institutions in Cambodia functioned as informants for this study. The qualitative data they provided includes transcripts of semi-structured interviews (e.g. Bernard, 1994) conducted in Phnom Penh by one of our research collaborators, Ms. Miki Tsukamoto (see also Books, 1997 and Rubin & Rubin, 1995, for qualitative interviewing and its procedures). Ms. Tsukamoto's interviews and personal email communication with Cambodian and Australian teachers took place during the period from February 22 to March 19, 2008, corresponding to the time of the survey questionnaire and one month after that. Although the informants will remain anonymous, they kindly granted us permission to use their responses in this study. For the purpose of this study, they are identified by the following numbers:

Table 1. Informants and their identification numbers

No.	Type	Sex	Nationality
T-1	Interview	Female	Cambodian
T-2	Transcript	Female	Australian
E-1	E-mail	Female	Cambodian
E-2	Communication	Male	Cambodian

The semi-structured interview guide included rather general questions such as:

- What are the difficulties you find teaching English in Cambodia?
- How do you cope with the difficulties?
- What are your PD needs?

The questions presented during the e-mail communication were more focused and specifically asked for an explanation on some of the issues. For

example, the participants were asked the following questions: "It seems Cambodian teachers are not so much interested in their language improvement. Why do you think so?" and "Why do you think many Cambodian teachers prefer the PD area 'understanding students'?" (The 10 professional development need areas are listed in Appendix 1. Included are some specific explanations excerpted from the survey entries for Igawa [2008].) In the open-ended section of the questionnaire of this study, the Cambodian teachers were asked to specify their professional development need if they chose the last item, (j) Other (OT).

Results and discussion

The responses by the 36 Cambodian teachers were collected and then categorized by PD need area. Although the majority of the teachers identified three (3) areas as they were instructed, some of them identified only two (2). Therefore, the total number of responses stands at 110, rather than 114.

As shown in Table 3, the most commonly selected PD area for the Cambodian teachers was (a) Teaching Skills & Methods; 19 (52.8%) of the 36 teachers identified this as the area where they required professional development. The second most preferred area was (i) Understanding Students; 15 teachers or 41.7 % of the total participants selected this area. The third area was (e) Attending Conferences, Seminars & Workshops; this was selected by 13 teachers or 36.1%. The fourth was (c) Communication Skills; 12 teachers or 33.3% chose this. The other areas, such as (b) Language Improvement, (g) Cultural Understanding, and (h) Subject Matter Knowledge, were not preferred by the Cambodian teachers.

The areas of professional development needs of Cambodian teachers are listed below in order of preference (Table 2).

Table 2. Areas of PD needs: Cambodian teachers

Rank	Areas of PD Needs	No	%
1	Teaching Skills & Methods (TSM)	19	52.8%
2	Understanding Students (US)	15	41.7%
3	Attending Conferences, Seminars & Workshops (ACSW)	13	36.1%
4	Communication Skills (CS)	12	33.3%
5	Motivation (MO)	11	30.6%
6	Language Improvement (LI)	10	27.8%
6	Lifelong Education (LE)	10	27.8%
6	Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK)	10	27.8%
9	Cultural Understanding (CU)	8	22.2%
10	Others (OT)	2	5.6%
	TOTAL	110	
	No. of Participants	N=36	

The results here present quite a contrast to that of the Japanese and Korean teachers as reported by Igawa (2008). The PD areas that Japanese and Korean teachers were interested in were TSM, LI, CS, and MO. However, in the two groups, the Cambodian teacher group and the group composed of Japanese and Korean secondary school teachers,

TSM was the most favored area of professional development, with the area of CS also being highly preferred. In the areas such as LI and MO, which the Japanese and Korean group showed a great deal of interest, Cambodian teachers showed very little (Table 3).

Table 3. Areas of PD needs: Cambodian, Japanese, & Korean teachers

Areas of PD Needs		Cambodians	%	Japanese	%	Koreans	%
a.	TSM	19	52.8	15	57.7	10	83.3
b.	LI	10	27.8	16	61.5	8	66.7
c.	CS	12	33.3	10	38.5	2	16.7
d.	MO	11	30.6	7	26.9	5	41.7
e.	ACSW	13	36.1	7	26.9	2	16.7
f.	LE	10	27.8	5	19.2	5	41.7
g.	CU	8	22.2	3	11.5	2	16.7
h.	SMK	10	26.3	4	15.4	1	8.3
i.	US	15	41.7	1	3.8	3	25.0
j.	OT	2	5.6	9	34.6	2	16.7
	TOTAL	110		77		40	
	No. of Participants	N=36		N=26		N=12	

Three points of significance (TSM, LI, and US) are discussed in the following section by comparing the Cambodian teachers' responses to those of the Japanese and Korean teachers. To supplement the questionnaire results, the informants' interview transcripts and e-mails have been utilized.

The Cambodian teachers' most preferred PD area is (a) Teaching Skills & Methods (TSM). This result is the same as the result of the survey of the Japanese and Korean teacher group. This finding seems quite reasonable because teaching skills and methods are at the center of teacher professionalism. Yet, it should be mentioned that the Korean teachers show the highest ratio (83.3%) by far. It is possible that this is due to the heavy pressure the Korean government places on its teachers to teach in the manner that is officially specified. The Cambodian teachers, as well as the Japanese, are not pressured by external forces in the same manner.

It is, however, necessary to remind ourselves of what Vira's (2002) study found. In the study, it was noted that many Cambodian secondary teachers of English lack proper teacher training before actually teaching, which resulted in a large number of teachers indicating TSM as a PD need area. A possible reason for the difference between the two findings is that the participants of Vira's study were secondary school teachers, while the majority of this study's participants were young higher institution teachers. In other words, higher education teachers are more informed in terms of the current TSM and are more confident in their teaching practices. It is possible that in this respect, there is a discrepancy between secondary and higher institution English teachers.

One of the informants, E-1, mentions her experience of learning English at high school about 10 years ago:

When I first started my English course, English was not widely used in Cambodia yet. I studied with a Khmer teacher...At that time, there was only Grammar Translation, I remember. I started to know about the Communicative Language Teaching approach when I studied at [the] University. (E-1,

excerpted from an e-mail message dated March 19, 2008)

As to (b) Language Improvement, only 10 Cambodian teachers (27.8%) showed interest, while more than half of the participating Japanese and Korean teachers were interested (61.5% and 66.7% respectively). This leads us to an interesting point: Language improvement is a professional development area that is always ranked highly among non-native speaking teachers. Roberts (1998) lists two characteristics of non-native speaking (NNS) teachers:

1. NNS teachers may lack confidence in their English language ability and give their own language improvement a high priority.
2. NNS teachers may undergo erosion in their English language performance through its restriction to classroom discourse (p. 97).

It could be that these young Cambodian teachers are elite, the very best of Cambodia's English education. In fact, two of the informants say:

...most of the Cambodian teachers (of English) do have [a] high level of English [and] they think it's not important to get their English improved. (E-1, excerpted from an e-mail message dated March 19, 2008)

...through my experience in attending the conferences in Thailand and Vietnam, I should say that we are better at English than our neighbors. The reason behind this is that English in Cambodia is more important than in the neighboring countries, as it is almost the only choice to improve your opportunities both at work and your self-improvement. (E-2, excerpted from an e-mail message dated Tuesday, March 18, 2008)

These two comments sound valid. However, we must keep in mind that there is a possibility of major differences existing between secondary school and tertiary level education and the teachers at either level.

The PD area “Understanding Students” (US) was very much preferred by the Cambodian participants. However, this area was not preferred by the Japanese and Korean teachers. The fact that many Cambodian teachers selected this PD need seems to suggest that they have difficulties in understanding their students.

Because like Cambodian students, most of them are a little bit shy. According to our culture, we don’t really show off a lot. And to study English, they need people to socialize, be talkative, [and] show their opinions. It’s very hard to get the students to communicate in English. (T-1, excerpted from the transcript of the interview conducted Friday, February 22, 2008)

...because I come from Australia, I think the most difficult thing for me to learn was how to manage the classroom and how to deal with, from my perspective, very passive students who weren’t as active as what I had anticipated them to be, so doing more active group work and getting them to stand in front of a classroom and things like that. They were so shy. And I felt like I was embarrassing them all the time. (T-2, excerpted from the transcript of the interview conducted Friday, February 22, 2008)

These Cambodian and Australian teachers say that Cambodian students are timid. This shyness may explain why the teachers feel as though they do not understand their students and why the teachers think that they need professional development in this area.

The other possible explanation for this is that there is a discrepancy among Cambodians; Cambodia’s growing economy has led to an income gap in the population. The teachers may feel detached from the younger generation who come from wealthy families. Therefore, the teachers think that they need professional development to better understand their students. The Australian informant, T-2, who used to teach at a kindergarten in Cambodia, mentioned that she was surprised by how affluent the parents were: “...in the kindergarten, yes,

because it was, a lot of the students that were going there were quite wealthy. So, it was amazing the amount of resources that were there” (T-2; Friday, February 22, 2008).

Leang Study (2009)

Using a similar framework, Leang (2009) conducted a survey of 55 Cambodian teachers of English in Phnom Penh in 2008 to investigate their PD needs. In conducting the questionnaire, she utilized the 10 PD areas as identified by Igawa (2008). It may be worthwhile to introduce her study in order to supplement and interpret the results of this study when necessary.

The participants of Leang’s study teach at one of three schools; (1) The Institute of Foreign Languages (IFL), (2) The Australian Centre for Education (ACE), and (3) The Informatics and Foreign Language Centre (IFC) (see Table 4). The IFL is located within the Royal University of Phnom Penh and is comprised primarily of elite teachers and students. The ACE is one of the best English schools in Cambodia and is sponsored by the Australian government. Finally, the IFC is a local private English school in Takhmao, a town near Phnom Penh.

The results of her study indicate that the favored PD areas are Teaching Skills and Methods (TSM) and Motivation (MO). However, Language Improvement (LI) seems preferred by teachers at the IFC, a local institute whose teachers “are from various backgrounds of training.” Teachers teaching at other schools appear to have far less interest in LI.

The IFC teachers show a similar tendency in selecting Communication Skills (CS), while the teachers at the other institutions appear more or less uninterested (see Table 5). It could be argued that the student body of the IFC, located in a local community, is more diverse in terms of age, aptitude, and socio-economic status (SES) in comparison to the other two institutions: The IFC, a private language school with affordable tuition, caters to the needs of a large variety of local learners ranging from elementary to college

Table 4. Participants of the study

Name of surveyed institutions		Sex				TOTAL
		Male		Female		
1.	Institute of Foreign Languages (IFL)	19	79.2%	5	20.8%	24
2.	Australian Centre for Education (ACE)	5	38.5%	8	61.5%	13
3.	Informatics and Foreign Language Centre (IFC)	7	38.9%	11	61.1%	18
TOTAL		31	56.4%	24	43.6%	55

Note: From Leang, S. (2009, January). *English education in Cambodia*. Paper presented at the Winter Seminar for English Teachers 2009, organized by ACROSS, held in Kyoto, Japan.

Table 5. Areas of PD needs

Areas of PD needs	IFL	ACE	IFC	Total
Teaching Skills and Methods (TSM)	58%	77%	67%	65%
Language Improvement (LI)	13%	38%	67%	36%
Communication Skills (CS)	21%	15%	67%	35%
Motivation (MO)	42%	31%	50%	42%
Attending Conferences, Seminars & Workshops (CSM)	33%	23%	22%	27%
Lifelong Education (LE)	38%	15%	0%	20%
Cultural Understanding (CU)	29%	46%	22%	31%
Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK)	29%	38%	11%	25%
Understanding Students (US)	29%	31%	44%	35%
Others: consultation (OT)	4%	0%	0%	2%

Note: From Leang, S. (2009, January). *English education in Cambodia*. Paper presented at the Winter Seminar for English Teachers 2009, organized by ACROSS, held in Kyoto, Japan

students. At the same time, the student body of the ACE is limited to a segment of the urban population that can afford the higher tuition and fees.

Conclusion

As stated by Ball and Goodson, “individual careers are socially constructed and individually experienced over time” (quoted in Kilgore & Ross, 1993, p. 286). Therefore, it is important to consider the social contexts of the teachers’ profession.

Cambodia is a nation under transition (Clayton, 2006, 2007). It has achieved great heights and experienced many painful hardships. In recent years, the country has been transforming itself towards a market economy, with a rapidly growing GDP and a widening income gap. Globalization is heavily impacting Cambodia and, as a result, English has become the foreign language of choice.

Because now we are coming into the globalizations and most of the investors that

come to Cambodia, say like companies or other organizations, require those who can speak English. That's why they try to study English, either part-time or full-time. So once they graduate, they can get a job easily... That's why they study English. (T-1, excerpted from the transcript of the interview conducted Friday, February 22, 2008)

The foreign language of choice in Cambodia has gone from French, then to Vietnamese and Russian, and now finally to English. At one point in Cambodia's history, foreign language education was banned completely. Currently, Chinese is gaining popularity in Cambodia for its practical utility. However, despite the past turmoil, English language education in Cambodia seems to be going well. Naturally, many challenging situations for English teachers still exist; low teacher salaries, limited availability of teaching equipment and materials, and substandard school buildings, classrooms, and facilities (Vira, 2002). It is our hope that the overall condition of Cambodia will improve to the point where English language education will bring to its teachers and students the happiness they deserve. Much of this hope stems from the fact that there are groups of young Cambodian teachers of English who are confident in their pedagogical knowledge and communicative competence.

The following can be gleaned from this study on Cambodian teachers and their professional development preferences:

1. The Cambodian teachers' preferred areas of professional development are Teaching Skills & Methods (TSM), Understanding Students (US), Attending Conferences, Seminars & Workshops (ACSW), and Communication Skills (CS).
2. The Cambodian teachers' most preferred PD area is Teaching Skills & Methods (TSM). TSM was also the most preferred PD area of the Japanese and Korean teachers practicing at secondary schools. However, there may be a gap between secondary teachers and university teachers

in terms of the way they were prepared and informed.

3. As for the Language Improvement (LI) area, only a small portion of the Cambodian teacher group showed interest, while more than half of the participating Japanese and Korean teachers were interested. This could be due to the fact that the majority of the participants of this study are higher institution teachers who feel as though that they do not need to improve their language abilities any further. Meanwhile, the less confident secondary school teachers believe that they require more education in regard to this type of PD.
4. Understanding Students (US) was highly favored by the Cambodian participants. This was not the case among the Japanese and Korean teachers. This preference seems to suggest that Cambodian teachers have a hard time understanding their students, mainly because Cambodian students are culturally influenced to be shy and/or because there is a growing income gap among the people of this country. This income gap may be causing communication problems between teachers and their students.

Before finishing the paper, the authors must touch upon the limitations of this study. It must be taken into consideration that the institutional affiliation of the individual teachers is a significant variable. In other words, the PD preferences of the teachers could be closely linked to the schools and institutions where they teach. This was a variable that could not be controlled due to the design of this study. It should therefore be acknowledged that the results of this study cannot be generalized across various teaching institutions and levels of education.

However, we believe that this uncontrolled variable does not entirely diminish the value of this study. We recognize the importance of reporting the differences between the perceived PD needs of Cambodian teachers of English and those of Korean and Japanese teachers of English. It is our recommendation that future studies be conducted on

the PD needs within groups of teachers practicing at similar teaching institutions.

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Appendix 1

Professional development needs

a.	Teaching Skills & Methods (TSM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to learn and apply the various and proper ways of English teaching methods... (Mid-career Korean teacher: Entry No. 013) • Learn theories of teaching to give clear goals (reasons) of the activities to the students and to create effective activities in order to improve the students' skills (4 skills) (Mid-career Japanese teacher: Entry No. 382)
b.	Language Improvement (LI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to improve the four skills of English; listening, speaking, reading and writing; in an integrated way. (Mid-career Korean teacher: Entry No. 011) • To be a better teacher, my experience tells me that teachers should keep learning English. We should practice English as much as possible... (Mid-career Korean teacher: Entry No. 021)
c.	Communication Skills (CS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have a sharp sense of humor to help encourage students (Young Japanese teacher: Entry No. 161) • To improve ability to communicate (not only in English but in our native language) (Mid-career Japanese teacher: Entry No. 241)
d.	Motivation (MO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to motivate students to study English: Most of my students will not study (read) English any more after graduation. (Young Japanese teacher: Entry No. 312) • To encourage the students who are not good at English to study it. (Mid-career Japanese teacher: Entry No. 371)
e.	Attending Conferences, Seminars & Workshops (ACSW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To join various seminars to get information. We need to know and exchange our ideas to conduct classes. (Young Japanese teacher: Entry No. 141) • To participate in some workshops and seminars for English teachers and share information on English teaching. (Young Japanese teacher: Entry No. 232)
f.	Lifelong Education (LE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ...teachers should learn endlessly, not only for ourselves, but also for our students. I mean, we should try to make the best use of our knowledge and ability to put our power into action. (Veteran Korean teacher: Entry No. 021)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As society changes, its education changes. Teachers should always be concerned about education. We should get more information about education. We should know a new theory and acquire a new teaching method. We should continue to improve ourselves, both for us and for our students. (Veteran Japanese teacher: Entry no. 301)
g.	Cultural Understanding (CU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to understand the cultural difference between Korea and English speaking countries and have an identity as a global citizen in the future society. (Mid-career Korean teacher: Entry No. 012) • To be a person who has wide and long perspective. To teach English at school is not only teaching English language. Languages include cultures, people and their lives. English teachers must know them to make the world peaceful and to make children into wise people. (Mid-career Japanese teacher: Entry No. 263)
h.	Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have knowledge and proficiency in English. We must have or get enough knowledge of English to teach, for example, grammar, words, phrases, and so on. (Mid-career Japanese teacher: Entry No. 261) • To build up professional skills, I think I need to analyze the difference between English and Japanese, especially that of sound structure. (Mid-career Japanese teacher: Entry No. 361)
i.	Understanding Students (US)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand students more deeply as a consultant. (Mid-career Korean teacher: Entry No. 093) • Looking through students' minds (Maybe also the minds of the parents or that of society): It's hard to lead them to the right road with right ways. But I'm getting older, socially biased and conservative. (Young Korean teacher: Entry No. 063)
j.	Others (OT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ...we should make such a school system where we can show our class to other teachers easily and study our teaching skills. (Veteran Japanese teacher: Entry No. 222) • Having various experiences such as traveling abroad is important for teachers to widen their way of thinking (Veteran Japanese teacher: Entry No. 283)

Factors influencing EFL novice teachers' adoption of technologies in classroom practice

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Abstract

A primary research conducted with 12 Vietnamese teachers of English using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews has revealed that a big investment into technological infrastructure and the top-down approach of implementing technological change in English teaching are not a guarantee for the adoption of technology by English teachers in their classroom practice. Even when teachers are receptive to using technology and are not afraid of losing face when they are not as technically competent as their students, without prompt technological professional development and timely technical support, teachers cannot fully adopt technology in their classroom teaching.

Introduction

The application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) components such as audio and video players, computers with CD-ROMs, websites, and the Internet has been proved very effective in English language teaching (Barr, 2004; Johanson, 1999; Pennington, 1996; Warschauer, 2004).

In Vietnam, the government has recently formulated supporting policies to integrate technologies into education. One large-scale project is the Higher Education Project (HEP), started in 1997 to equip Vietnamese universities with computers connected to a Local Area Network (LAN) and the Internet (Higher Education Project, n.d.). In foreign language education, a National Implementation Plan of Foreign Languages (English Language) Education for Vietnamese students, worth 16 trillion VND (approximately 900 million USD), was proposed in 2006. One of its objectives is to "improve learning environments with investment into learning facilities such as classrooms,

multimedia labs and resource centers with books, video players or computers." (Nguyen, 2006, p. 9).

The Thai Ha University has become a participating university in the HEP project and has been equipped with 108 computers connected to a LAN network and the Internet for language teaching. Additionally, the university has invested over a billion VND (approximately 56,000 USD) in purchasing language software packages such as *English Discovery* and *English Discovery Online* for teaching English. However, these favorable political and technical conditions cannot guarantee the implementation of technology-enhanced lessons by English teachers. Previous research has pointed out a number of factors influencing English teachers' use of technologies in their practice. The most important factor is the beliefs teachers have regarding the benefits and ease of use of technologies. Lam (2000) claims that teachers decide to use technologies if they personally think that technologies are beneficial to and easily used for foreign language instruction. Leh (1995) states that

because they are not familiar with technologies and do not find technologies easy to use, many foreign language instructors are afraid of using them in their teaching. McMeniman and Evans (as cited in Egbert, Paulus & Nakamichi, 2002) conclude that unless teachers are shown the positive effects of new technology-enhanced teaching on the quality of learning outcomes, language teachers will not incorporate technologies into teaching. Peck, Cuban and Kirkpatrick (2002) discovered that because English teachers are not convinced that technology will fulfill their educational goals, they are reluctant to implement technology-enhanced lessons.

Additionally, teacher self-efficacy is identified as another affecting factor. When teachers are not confident, they are afraid that their competence is diminished because they would “look like an idiot” (Lam, 2000, p. 405). The fear of losing face in front of students makes teachers avoid instructional technologies in their teaching (George & Camarata, 1996). McGrail (2005) also concludes that English teachers tend to refuse technologies in their teaching because they did not feel comfortable using them.

Another factor is technological professional development provided to teachers. Leh (1995) revealed that although it was only for two weeks, a workshop at Arizona State University helped foreign language instructors feel more comfortable about computers and develop positive attitudes towards using them. Gray (1996) maintains that after a training course, pre-service language teachers had more knowledge about computer applications, and the majority of them intended to use computers in classroom instruction. Lam (2000) concludes that the lack of professional development opportunities results in negative teacher attitudes toward instructional technology such as video. A teacher without enough training thought that “video did not really serve much of a purpose, [it only] confused the students and demotivated them” (p. 406).

As can be seen, previous research has pointed out some factors affecting teachers’ adoption of ICT in their classrooms. However, the sample sizes of most previous studies were rather small, so the conclusions reached may not be generalized into other settings, including a Vietnamese university setting as in this

research context, without further research. Furthermore, most previous research settings were in countries where English is taught as a second language. The research setting for this study is different as it is in an EFL context, where language learners rarely have a chance to practice English with native speakers. Thus teachers are their primary source of English language exchange. Additionally, most of the studies were conducted in developed countries such as the U.S., Canada, or the UK where technologies such as computers are available. The research focus of this study is technology used in Vietnam, a developing country, where sometimes “computers are an object of curiosity” (Lam, 2000, p. 413), so the affecting factors may be different.

This study was therefore conducted to fill in the research gap, and it was aimed to 1) identify factors affecting novice EFL teachers’ adoption of ICT in classroom teaching from their own perspectives, and 2) seek ways to support teachers in their use of ICT for EFL teaching. Accordingly, the study was guided by the following questions:

Overall question:

In the view of the novice teachers, what are the factors that affect novice teachers’ adoption of ICT in their English classroom teaching?

Detailed questions:

1. What are the novice teachers’ pedagogical issues with English teaching using ICT?
2. What professional development in relation to technology have the teachers been provided?
3. What experience have the teachers had and what technical support have they been given in using ICT in English classroom teaching?

Method and research tools

This research was conducted as a qualitative study, using a questionnaire and a semi-structured individual interview. The questionnaire items are a combination of both close-ended and open-ended components. The questions were designed for teachers’ opinions about their beliefs in the benefits and the ease of use of technologies in classroom teaching, teachers’ self-efficacy, and technological

professional development and technical support that they have been provided. However, “respondents’ attitudes, beliefs, opinions...often seem to be unstable” (Foody, 1993, p. 7), so the interviews were used to mainly triangulate the data collected from the questionnaire, which could help ensure the credibility of this research.

Research participants

Research was carried out with permanent novice teachers of English in the English Department of Thai Ha University. Novice teachers are new graduates who have been teaching for less than six years and have not had a chance to obtain further qualifications. They thus need in-service professional development.

There were fifteen intended participants. Their email addresses were located through the mailing list of the English department. Before research was conducted in August, 2006, they were sent emails inviting them to participate in the study. Twelve of them agreed to take part in the study. After two weeks, questionnaires were disseminated in person. Interviews were conducted with four participants. The details of the questionnaires and interviews can be found in the appendices.

Findings

Analysis of the data revealed three main categories: pedagogical factors, professional factors, and technical factors.

Pedagogical factors

Adoption of ICT by novice teachers as both administration-driven and learning-driven

The information obtained from the questionnaires and interviews consistently suggests that the adoption of ICT by novice EFL teachers was driven by both the administrators and student learning. The findings reflect a “top-down approach” [where] “administrative mandate introduces the technology and administrative perceptions, decisions and strategies drive [the success of] adoption and diffusion” (Carr, 1999, p. 39), as well as the existence of conflicts between the administrators and the novice teachers.

On the one hand, the teachers’ adoption of ICT was governed by the administrators through a prescribed syllabus, the selection of which teachers to teach with ICT, and the determination of which language skills teachers could teach with ICT components.

Firstly, the teachers had to adopt ICT in their classroom teaching as required by the department’s administrators. The majority of novice teachers (eight questionnaire respondents) reported their use of ICT began when they were “assigned by the department.” Specifically, the use of such technologies as cassette players and tapes was a mandate for the teachers in the syllabus.

... From the syllabus, I believe we cannot survive without the cassette players and the tape... (Mary, interview)

... It is the task that the English department asked all teachers to do. It is compulsory... (Daisy, interview)

Secondly, the department’s administrators selected specific teachers to teach with such packages as *English Discovery* and *English Discovery Online*. Only two teachers, Ben and Daisy, were selected to teach students in the computer labs with these packages, while two others, Mary and Eryn, were not.

Finally, the administrators imposed which language skills were to be taught with each software package.

... Although I know that the courseware English Discovery offers them [students] reading and writing skills as well, the English Department decided that they [students] will focus on listening and speaking...(Daisy)

On the other hand, teachers used ICT to teach because they saw student learning as the driving force. Eight questionnaire respondents reported that they used ICT when they “felt the need to.” The teachers expressed the benefits that technologies offered to their students’ learning when adopting technologies in their practice, saying that ICT made the lessons “more vivid, more interesting,” so the students were more willing to study, and would “remember the lessons longer” (Daisy).

Accordingly, one of the teachers claimed "... I think I need to do it. Students need some extra activities besides paper-based activities..." (Daisy).

Although some novice teachers were not required by the administrators to teach English with technologies, they adopted sophisticated technology such as computers and laptops in their own teaching because they wanted their students to have more learning motivation:

... I bring the laptop to the class when I think that my students need to see a film just to motivate them... (Eryn, interview)

This seems to indicate the existence of some conflicts between the administrators and the novice teachers. For some reason (no interviews were conducted with administrators, so the reason is unclear), some novice teachers (i.e. Eryn) were excluded from the list of those who could teach English with technologies. However, these teachers were the ones who tried to adopt technologies with their own resources.

Perceived teaching pedagogy with ICT

Findings for this subcategory mainly emerged from the interviews. Information given by the participants shows that in teaching English with ICT, the novice teachers perceived a number of principles, such as learning experience provision to students and the learner-centered approach. First, the novice teachers perceived that it was important to provide students with learning experiences with technology. They claimed that the focus of teaching research essay writing was not only to teach the skills of writing an essay, but to develop their students' "researching skills for the information on the Internet" (Ben, interview). Accordingly, they tried to create opportunities for students to do "peer editing or making a draft" of their research essays and exchanging ideas with their classmates and teachers through emails (Ben and Eryn).

Secondly, the consideration of students as the centre of the instructional process is reflected in teachers' views that ICT could be used as a way of bringing more excitement to students, and that teachers were

both students' collaborators and facilitators in teaching English with technology.

When it comes to using ICT equipment in classes, the novice teachers perceived that simply the use of laptops in their classes would bring more excitement for their students in the learning process.

... Sometimes students come from the rural or remote areas and they see technologies as something new, they want to see the laptop, they want to see the so-called technology... (Ben)

Moreover, the novice teachers regarded themselves as their students' collaborators when technologies were used in classroom instruction.

... Knowledge shared, knowledge doubled... Teachers and students are helping each other and improving their relationship to a higher level of cooperation. (Daisy)

Therefore, the teachers actively sought assistance from their students with technical matters. In case they did not know something, "students would be willing to help" (Eryn), for example in setting up technical equipment for the lesson.

Once I had a video lesson, I was in a completely new room, I did not know how to plug the video player ...one of the students said to me "Don't worry. I will help you." I was amazed to see him plug everything perfectly and then everything ran well... (Daisy)

In return, the students also viewed the teachers as their real collaborators, thus they actively assisted both the teachers and other classmates in technology use. This also suggests that the students started developing autonomy in constructing their own knowledge.

One student, a technical guru, designed the website, and asked me to put the exercises, upload the learning materials [onto that website], and then all other students could

download that kind of materials [to study]...
(Ben)

Obviously, the novice teachers were not only students' collaborators but also their facilitators when technology was used in their classes.

We think that without teachers' supervision or control or guidance, students cannot do it [using technologies] themselves, or it will not be as effective. (Mary)

ICT applications adopted by the novice teachers in classes

The most commonly reported application of ICT in classes by the novice teachers was the use of video players in speaking lessons to develop presentation skills for students (six questionnaire responses). Specifically, the teachers used "video players to show students how to give a proper presentation" (questionnaire responses).

Additionally, the novice teachers used overhead projectors (OHPs) to illustrate difficult teaching points in their writing classes:

.... When I teach in the writing class with Cause and Effect essays, I use OHPs and we post the format [of the essay]... and the theory can be done very quickly [which] makes a good impression on the students.
(Mary)

Furthermore, the novice teachers seemed to be unaware of or to overlook useful computer applications in English teaching such as teaching reading and writing through the LAN and the Internet, developing the four skills for students, and providing the students with learning experiences.

Of the 12 respondents, only five listed computer applications such as "I use my laptop in Listening class using software support to make the sound better," "I use computers in listening and discussion" and "I use laptop in presentation and teaching interpretation" while four did not give any responses at all. The remaining three gave irrelevant answers such as "I use my own laptop."

Professional factors

Teachers' beliefs in ICT effectiveness

It seems that the majority of teachers believed that the use of ICT was effective for their classroom language instruction (11 out of 12 respondents). They further detailed this point by choosing such responses as "ICT can attract students' attention" (ten responses), "ICT can provide students with authentic tasks" (nine responses), and "ICT can provide various modes of presentation" (seven responses).

The novice teachers appear to see the effectiveness of ICT in language teaching based on their own learning experiences in high school:

I think ICT plays a leading role in both teaching and learning a foreign language. I think that without it, we only learn to swim with a book. When I was at high school, we did not have ICT... so the first day I entered the uni, I could not speak a word.... So I encourage my students to watch cable TV and DVD with subtitles ...or to listen to the news on radio on BBC, CNN or VOA. (Daisy)

Moreover, the teachers saw the effectiveness of ICT as stemming from its responsiveness to their students' learning needs. They believed ICT could provide students with authentic language in an authentic learning environment.

I think they [students] prefer the ICT to teachers, I mean the human. Because they do not live in the English speaking environment, the tape is something that can provide us with authentic English and ... when we watch video, we can see with our own eyes how people use English in the English speaking environment. (Mary)

Teachers' beliefs in the ease of use of ICT

There was no consistency in the novice teachers' views of how easy it was to teach English with ICT. Nonetheless, all responses were especially informative.

The level of ease or difficulty seemed to depend on the type of technologies adopted and their availability at the university. Audio cassette players were the easiest means of ICT to be adopted, thanks to their availability and mobility for classroom use. Responses in support of this point include: audio cassette players are “easy to teach [with],” “easy to use, available,” “[an] always available and essential tool in teaching,” “easy to use in most situations ...” and “very easy to use, mobile and flexible.”

The most difficult ICT applications to be adopted by the novice teachers were the Internet and websites, mostly because of the poor information technology infrastructure. Participants reported the difficulties they had in adopting the Internet and websites in their teaching, which were caused by “slow Internet speed,” “no wifi,” “network failure,” the unreliable network at the university, and the fact that “... Internet is only available in some function rooms or buildings.”

Teachers’ confidence in using ICT

The majority of novice teachers (nine participants) claimed that they were confident enough to use ICT in their classroom practice. Although they saw the truth that their students, being a younger generation, had better access to new technologies and were more technically competent than the teachers (Daisy), the novice teachers reported that they were never afraid of losing face before their students (Ben, Mary, Eryn).

Firstly, the teachers claimed that their technical capacity could be improved over time. “In the first lesson, if I am not competent enough, I think I can improve in the next ones” (Eryn). Even those who did express concerns about their technical competence did not try to avoid the use of technology in their classroom. They, in contrast, felt the need to study whichever technologies they had to use in their classroom teaching (Mary, Daisy).

Moreover, they considered their students’ better technical competence an impetus for them to learn more about technologies. “I should learn more to be as good as my students so that I will not get backward in the whole process” (Daisy).

Accordingly, the novice teachers still chose to adopt technologies and were very open with their students about their technical competence. “Honesty is the best policy. If I don’t know something, I tell my students that I know very little” (Ben). “I am not the know-all. If you [students] know something, please share with me and with others” (Daisy).

Formal technological professional development provided to novice teacher

Formal technological professional development was provided to novice teachers by the university in two main ways: regular training courses and short courses when some software packages were about to be integrated into the curriculum. All 12 participants reported they had attended these types of courses. However, it seems that these training courses did not have a major impact on teacher use of ICT in the classroom because they focused on providing teachers with more theoretical aspects of ICT than teaching pedagogy and how to apply technologies in EFL classroom practice.

In terms of regular training courses, the novice teachers reported attending three workshops jointly organized by the university and the University of Hawaii on teaching English with technologies. These workshops only aimed at “updating teachers with new ICT trends in teaching,” so the novice teachers did not gain enough knowledge about how to apply technologies into English teaching (Ben). Additionally, the educators of these workshops just provided novice teachers with “books and new ideas in teaching with ICT” and modeled this themselves by using PowerPoint in delivering lectures (Daisy), rather than giving the teachers chances to practice teaching with technologies.

The short courses were mostly run by the programmers from the software providers, thus teachers were provided with the functions of the package, rather than teaching pedagogies with technology. Furthermore, not all the related technical problems were addressed in those workshops. Accordingly, even the teacher-in-chief of the learning project had so many questions that he “continued to ask and ask” (Mary). The novice teachers also “discussed round and round” (Mary) about the problems associated with the package

without coming up with any possible solutions. They, therefore, had to “live with the technical problems...” (Mary). If they could not overcome the problems, they would have to choose “to go without technologies” (Eryn).

Because of the issues with professional training courses, the teachers seemed to turn to other types of informal professional development with technology.

Informal professional development novice teachers actively sought

The majority of novice teachers (11 participants) reported that they learned how to use technologies mostly by consulting colleagues who were technically competent, and learned how to apply technology into classroom teaching by exchanging ideas with their peer colleagues.

Teachers have group discussion about the problems ... and how to get over them... We often have the mailing list, for example when we work with video; we talk about the problems. (Mary)

The participants also reported that they sought technical assistance from their own friends.

Most of the time, 80% [of the time] I go to my friends ... (Daisy)

[I sought technical support] from friends around, acquaintances from social contact, for example, from people who work with IT a lot from Hanoi University of Technology... (Mary)

Technical factors

Equipment availability for teachers

Data for this subcategory was obtained from the questionnaire. Figure 1 and Figure 2 detail the findings.

Figure 1 shows that novice teachers were able to get access to audio players whenever they needed them. Video players and OHPs were accessible when teachers needed them, booked them or when they were allocated by the department. Computers and projectors could not be used by the teachers when they needed the technologies. The majority of teachers had to book both types of equipment well in advance or wait for the department to allocate the equipment to their classes.

Figure 2 presents the findings on computer use by teachers in their practice. Fifty percent of the respondents used their own laptops, 17% of them did not use computers at all, while only 33% used computers available at the university.

There seems to be a link between the availability of equipment and teacher use of computers. Because of the unavailability of equipment for teachers, most novice teachers turned to their own equipment or decided not to go with technology.

Figure 1. Equipment availability for teachers

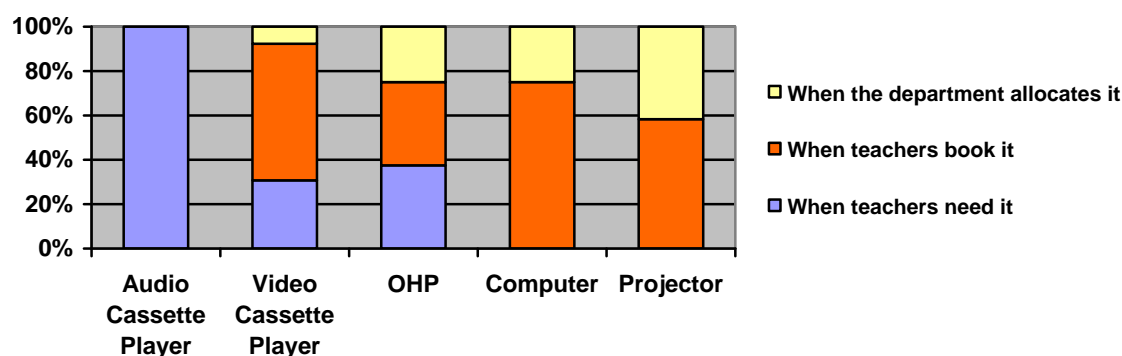
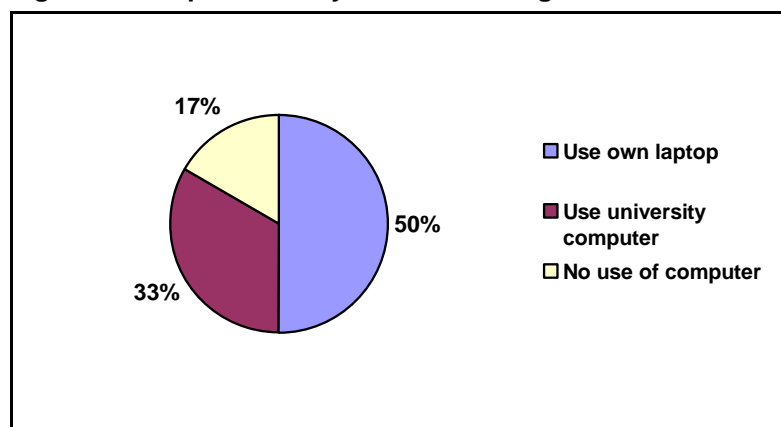


Figure 2. Computer use by teachers during classroom teaching



Technical support for teachers during classroom lessons

Technical support for teachers while they were teaching did not seem adequate because technicians were available only in certain buildings and in the computer lab. Therefore, the majority of novice teachers (11 respondents) reported that they had experienced technical problems during their lessons. While audio and video players were the most frequently used by teachers, they had to fix the problems associated with the equipment themselves. When teachers could not fix the problems, they had to improvise during the lessons and totally relied on their creativity and quick-mindedness: “The DVD recorder did not work, so I changed into another activity like acting in a play with the same subject...” (Ben).

Another way the teachers chose when having technical problems that technicians were not available to solve was to seek help from their colleagues: “... We [teachers] help ourselves... during the lesson” (Mary).

The lack of timely technical support for the teachers resulted in teachers anticipating problems, possible solutions, and back-up learning materials for their students. “... I think of technical problems before I go to the classroom” (Ben). “... Not only me... I think other teachers have to prepare something supplementary just in case” (Daisy).

Discussion

It appears that during their adoption of ICT in classroom teaching, the novice teachers were very receptive, which was reflected in:

1. their positive beliefs in the values that technologies brought to their students,
2. the absence of any fear of losing face when they were not technically competent as their students,
3. their consideration of students as ‘collaborators,’ which are in line with constructivism, the most appropriate language teaching pedagogy with technologies, and
4. their activeness in seeking informal professional development for and by themselves.

However, the inappropriate professional development, the limited access to technical equipment, and untimely technical support provided by the university and the department appear to be hindering teacher use of technologies in classes. This fact can explain why the novice teachers had their “small dreams” that they could borrow a laptop from the department, and could have someone to stand by their side during their class hours (Daisy, Ben, and Mary).

Furthermore, although the focus of this study was not on the university’s politics, the information given by the novice teachers implies the critical role of the senior administrators at the university and the department. The administrators had a decisive role

in nearly every aspect of teacher adoption of ICT. The administrators decided the syllabus with fixed technological components in each lesson, they chose which teachers to teach with ICT and which not, they restricted which language skills to teach with ICT, and they allocated technical equipment for the novice teachers to use in classes.

The findings above imply that the “high power distance, the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 46) in the Vietnamese culture was reflected in the unequal relationship between the university’s administrators and the novice teachers in terms of power and technology allocation.

Finally, the findings indicate that technology diffusion at the university was conducted following the top-down approach. However, this top-down approach was not accompanied by comprehensive support. Specifically, only the use of traditional ICT applications in English teaching such as audio and video players was facilitated for the teachers. With regard to computer adoption, the teachers had some knowledge about computers, so they formed a favorable attitude towards computers in English teaching and started adopting computers in classroom teaching. However, as they did not actually have enough technical and professional development support to use major computer applications such as teaching using the LAN, websites, and the Internet, it could not be determined whether they would reject or affirm the consistent use of computer applications in their classes. Consequently, there is no guarantee that they will decide to use computers in future classes.

Conclusion

This study has established that support for teachers to use technologies in their practice is essential. This support can first be provided through formal training courses to provide teachers with hands-on experience in technological applications in classroom practice. The teachers should be equipped with teaching pedagogies with technology and should develop basic technical competencies. Thus, they could develop general teaching

principles to work with technology and have more positive beliefs and attitudes in adopting technologies in teaching. Technologies should also be infused into these training programs. By creating as many opportunities as possible for teachers to practice teaching English with technologies, positive teacher attitudes toward technology use can be further enhanced. Next, more technical personnel are required, and short seminars to train novice teachers to fix simple and common technical problems should be organized. In addition, an online discussion forum for teachers, administrators, and technical personnel to interact and exchange ideas on different aspects of instructional technologies is suggested. It is hoped that with this forum, administrators could have “open meta discourses” (Toll, 2001) with teachers, so that any conflicts of interests among administrators, teachers, technical personnel, and other parties involved can be resolved.

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Appendix 1

A sample of the questionnaire

Please answer the questions by putting a tick into the appropriate box(es) and/or writing your explanation. "I" refers to yourself as a novice teacher of English at the English Department, Hanoi University of Foreign Studies. "ICT" refers to any communication or information technology such as audio, video, computers, CD ROMs, Internet, World Wide Webs, etc. that a teacher of English uses in her/his teaching.

Please tick the appropriate box(es) (*You can tick more than one box, as long as it is relevant*):

1. I think ICT is effective in EFL teaching
 1. Yes ☐
 - (If Yes, proceed to question 2)
 2. No ☐
 - (If No, proceed to question 3)

2. ICT is effective in EFL teaching because :
1. it provides various modes of presentation ☐
 2. it attracts students' attention ☐
 3. it provides authentic language ☐
 4. I can design more flexible lessons ☐
 5. Other (please specify) ☐
-

3. ICT is ineffective in EFL teaching because:
1. it distracts my students' attention from my explanation ☐
 2. it requires a lot of time to set up ☐
 3. technical breakdowns destroy the interest of students ☐
 4. Other (please specify) ☐
-

4. I feel confident using ICT in my classroom teaching
1. Yes ☐
 2. No ☐

Please give reasons for your answer

5. In my classroom teaching, I use
1. audio players ☐
 2. video recorders ☐
 3. computers ☐
 4. CD ROMs ☐
 5. educational software ☐
 6. websites ☐
 7. Internet/LAN communication ☐
 8. none of the above ☐

6. I use ICT in my teaching when
1. I feel the need to ☐
 2. I am assigned by the department ☐
 3. Other (please specify) ☐
-

7. I use ICT mostly in teaching
1. listening ☐
 2. speaking ☐
 3. reading ☐
 4. writing ☐
 5. Other (please specify) ☐
-

8. I use ICT

1. to provide authentic materials to my students ☐
 2. to provide exposure to cultural concepts to my students ☐
 3. to train my students to self-develop their skills such as
searching for information for speaking presentations ☐
 4. Other (please specify) ☐
-

9. I think integrating ICT in classroom teaching is easy

1. Yes ☐
2. No ☐

10. What type of ICT do you find the easiest to integrate in your classroom teaching? Why?

11. What type of ICT do you find the most difficult to adopt in your teaching? Why?

12. I can get access to an audio/video cassette player

1. when I need it ☐
 2. when I book it ☐
 3. after my department allocates it for me ☐
 4. Other (please specify) ☐
-

13. I can get access to an OHP

1. when I need it ☐
 2. when I book it ☐
 3. after my department allocates it for me ☐
 4. Other (please specify) ☐
-

14. I can get access to a computer

1. when I need it ☐
 2. when I book it ☐
 3. after my department allocates it for me ☐
 4. Other (please specify) ☐
-

15. I can get access to a projector

1. when I need it ☐
 2. when I book it ☐
 3. after my department allocates it for me ☐
 4. not at all ☐
 5. Other (please specify) ☐
-

16. I have experienced technical difficulties during my lesson

- 1. Yes ☐
- 2. No ☐

17. When I have a technical problem during the lesson, I call the technician

- 1. Yes ☐
- 2. No ☐

Please give reasons for your choice

18. When I have a technical problem during the lesson, I try to fix the problem myself

- 1. Yes ☐
- 2. No ☐

Please give reasons for your choice

19. Technically speaking, I have some difficulties in using ICT in my classroom teaching because:

- 1. I don't know how to use the machine ☐
 - 2. I lack confidence to use the machine ☐
 - 3. I don't have timely technical support ☐
 - 4. Other (please specify) ☐
-

20. Pedagogically speaking, I have some difficulties in using ICT because:

- 1. I don't know how to integrate ICT in teaching ☐
 - 2. I don't see the difference between conventional teaching and teaching with ICT ☐
 - 3. I don't know the teaching methods ☐
 - 4. Other (please specify) ☐
-

21. I get to know how to use ICT by

- 1. attending technical coursework outside of the university ☐
 - 2. attending technical coursework offered by the university ☐
 - 3. consulting my personal circle of friends who know ICT ☐
 - 4. consulting the technical personnel at the university ☐
 - 5. Other (please specify) ☐
-

22. I get to know the pedagogy of teaching English with ICT by
1. attending coursework outside of the university ☐
 2. attending coursework offered by the university ☐
 3. attending short workshops, seminars provided by the university ☐
 4. attending short workshops, seminars outside of the university ☐
 5. exchanging ideas with peer colleagues ☐
 6. searching information on the Internet ☐
 7. Other (please specify) ☐
-

23. I get the training on how to use certain types of ICT by the university
1. very often ☐
 2. rarely ☐
 3. on and off ☐
 4. when there are new packages/facilities ☐
 5. Other (please specify) ☐
-

24. I would need further support from the university in
1. more regular professional training (*suggest frequency*) ☐
 2. more access to facilities during the lessons (*suggest frequency*) ☐
 3. more access to facilities to prepare lessons (*suggest frequency*) ☐
 4. Other (please specify) ☐
-

Appendix 2

Interview questions

1. Do you use technologies in your English teaching? Why?
2. In what ways do you use ICT in your teaching?
3. Do you think it is easy to teach English with ICT? Why / Why not?
4. How does using ICT influence the way you teach English in your classroom?
5. As a teacher of English, do you feel threatened by advancements in educational technologies or do you welcome them? Why?
6. What role do you think ICT plays in your English language teaching?
7. Have you experienced any difficulties in using technologies in your teaching (for example, technological breakdowns)? What are the possible reasons for this?
8. How do you get to know how to use ICT in your teaching?
9. Is there any support for you to use ICT in your teaching that the university and the department provide to you? What type of support is it?

Students' expectations and the language learning context

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Abstract

Students and teachers enter educational contexts with expectations regarding educational outcomes, assessment procedures, participation levels, and class activities. As educators, we must work with students and their predetermined expectations from the first day they come into our classrooms. Student performance, as well as persistence with language study, may be determined by whether student expectations are met. Both students and educators may base their views on divergent educational philosophies and cultural contexts, as well as vastly different past experiences. This paper will report on current findings of an investigation into student expectations at a Japanese university, whether student expectations run contrary to those of teachers, and for teachers, whether the expectations of students are reflected in what we do in our classes.

Introduction

As teachers, we are highly sensitive to the negative consequences that may result when affective variables, such as language anxiety, motivation, and attitude, are unattended or ignored. Brown emphasizes this point, stating, “to ignore the attitudes and opinions of any group in a program is at best an act of arrogance, and at worst, political suicide” (1995, pg. 44). Many researchers have considered the relative impact of affective variables on language learning. To date however, with the notable exception of Bordia et al. (2008; 2006a, 2006b), the affect of student expectations has not been extensively considered. Expectations refer to those activities, behaviors, or achievements which students (or teachers) anticipate will occur based on past experiences and circumstances (Berman & Haug, 1975; Finn, 1972), whereas student goals may be broad, long-term, and at times undefined, expressing what students may like to achieve over time (Berman & Haug, 1975; Nunan, 1999; Volet & Renshaw, 1995). Student expectations, attitudes, and motivation can be related to language learning goals and experience, financial investment, age, gender, social and parental pressures, and professional and academic objectives, among others (Bordia et al., 2006a; McGroarty, 1996). Whether student expectations are met and to what extent they are in line with teacher expectations can have a significant impact on the outcomes of educational programs (Alsop, 1979; Antier, 1976; Bordia et al., 2008, 2006b; Curtin, 1979; Gardner et al., 1978).

To ensure the quality of educational programs and remain competitive in the education marketplace, understanding and meeting student expectations is becoming increasingly important. This dynamic is true throughout Asia, in developing as well as more developed countries (Doyon, 2001; Keuk, 2008; Keuk & Tith, 2006; Li, 1998; Long & Russell, 1999; Savingnon & Wang, 2003; Sonita, Theara, & Visal, 2007; Teichler, 1997). Students and their parents, the consumers of educational services, harbor high expectations concerning their investment in education. Whether or not these expectations are realistic and accurate, they are important at the tertiary level (Tan & Kek, 2004), and if not met, can lead to detrimental results in the learning environment (Bordia et al., 2006b).

Additionally, in an increasingly competitive global market for higher education, considering student expectations at the tertiary level (Tan & Kek, 2004) and addressing discrepancies between unrealistic expectations and actual curricula and pedagogy is gaining significance. This study presents preliminary findings of a student expectation survey administered at a Japanese university, focusing on differences between student expectations of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes and teacher expectations of students in the same courses. The conclusion considers the implications of these findings for English language education programs in Japanese universities specifically, and more generally, the relevance of the findings to other educational contexts.

Educational expectations in the Japanese social context

In Japan, a number of factors influence educational expectations. For the consumer, monetary commitments are particularly important. The proportion of household income devoted to higher education is substantial in nations in which the completion of higher education is an expected goal for the majority of students. This financial commitment begins quite early in Japan, as more than half of junior high school and high school age students attend preparatory schools (*juku*) in the evening and on weekends to prepare for high school or university entrance examinations. On average, 7-8% of household income in Japan is devoted to education (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology [MEXT], 2005a). Another significant factor is parental pressure. Mothers in particular are devoted to advancing their children’s education (Simons, 1989). This increases pressure on educational institutions to please parents, specifically mothers, who are quite astute at determining the relative value of educational opportunities. Clearly, the economic and social commitment to education in Japan is considerable.

Moreover, the status of English as a global language also elevates expectations for English language instruction (Stroupe, 2009). For many parents and students, fluency in English symbolizes a key to professional success. Given the global business and

political environment, English skills are perceived as necessary not only for communication with the English-speaking world, but also with citizens of other non-native English-speaking countries (Yashima, 2002). To fulfill these expectations, English is taught for six years in 99% of Japan's public junior and senior high schools (Hoshiyama, as cited in Kitao et al., 1985). Furthermore, beginning in 2011, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has mandated English language instruction in elementary schools for 5th and 6th graders (Kato, 2009). Curriculum guidelines from MEXT have consistently stressed the importance of communicative skills, encouraging teachers to foster a positive attitude towards communicating through foreign languages (MEXT, 2005b). However, in the Japanese educational context, high expectations for English language education have remained unfulfilled. As an indication, Japanese students have performed far below their peers on international English language assessments. For example, the results of the TOEFL iBT gathered between September and December 2006 reveal a composite score of 65 for Japan, compared to other northeast Asian countries such as Korea (72) and China (75) (Education Testing Service, 2007). As a result, many students enter university without the sufficient skills necessary to successfully complete and reap the full benefits of communicative courses.

Student expectations in second language acquisition

Japanese university students enter English classes with varying motivations and attitudes based on six years or more of studying English. These impact their course expectations (Long & Russell, 1999; McGroarty, 1996). The expectations that students have of a course or an entire language program and whether or not those expectations are met will have a substantive impact on affective variables such as attitude and motivation (Alsop, 1979; Antier, 1976; Bordia et al., 2008, 2006b; Curtin, 1979; Gardner, 1978; Li, 1998). Students have tangible goals, and even if they may be unable to clearly articulate them, they nonetheless have clear expectations for their English language learning and are aware of the importance of education in attaining their goals

(Nunan, 1999). In regard to English language competence, multiple goals are inevitable and may include studying abroad, acquiring the ability to communicate with others via increasing opportunities provided by telecommunications, or more practically, finding gainful employment (Keuk, 2008; McGroarty, 1996). A study by Yashima (2002) classified affective behaviors displayed by Japanese learners towards English as "international posture" (p. 57) which included interest in foreign affairs, willingness to go overseas, readiness to interact with international partners, etc. In these educational, social, and business contexts, the role of English is perceived to be important. Therefore, students can and do base their expectations on attaining the skills needed to succeed in these contexts.

Fulfilled expectations most often lead to enhanced motivation, increased attendance and participation, growing confidence with the language, a positive learning experience, and positive feedback about the course and the institution's English language program. Conversely, if expectations are unfulfilled, students may demonstrate unproductive behavior in and out of class and neglect to participate in group activities or complete homework (Bordia et al., 2008, 2006b). Ultimately, they may disengage from the learning process, at least concerning the English language, and learn to hate English, a phenomenon so common in Japan that it has a term: *eigogirai*, meaning "hate English."

From the perspective of English program administrators and/or teachers, not meeting the expectations of even one student in a class can negatively affect the entire classroom environment. Clearly, many Japanese students have failed in their attempts to learn and enjoy English and manifest a negative tendency of the affective variables towards English language classes. It is apparent that educators need to consider ways to help students overcome this psychological barrier. Being aware of student expectations is the first step to overcoming these negative affective variables.

Methodology

A questionnaire based on areas or expectations relevant to language learning was developed (Appendix 1) based on a number of studies related to student and teacher expectations (Bordia et al, 2006a, 2006b; Borg, 1998; Burden, 1999; Dissosway, 1989; Plakans, 1997; Ferris, 1998; Ferris & Tagg, 1996a, 1996b; Li, 1998; Long & Russell, 1999; Ryan, 1989; Shortall, 1999). The questionnaire was translated from English to Japanese and checked for consistency, particularly between the translations involving the concept of “expectations” in English and of *kitai* in Japanese.

In order to obtain a broad and accurate reflection of student expectations before they were influenced by the teacher or content of a particular course, the questionnaire was distributed in multiple courses (e.g., English for Academic Purposes [EAP], English for Specific Purposes [ESP], Business English, TOEFL, TOEIC, Academic Writing and other communicative courses) within the World Language Center (WLC) and filled out during the first class meeting of the first semester for students, before the teacher introduced him/herself or the syllabus for the course. The WLC provides communicative language instruction to the university student body (as compared to literature and linguistics courses which are offered through Japanese-medium courses in the Department of Humanities). The WLC offers elective courses (general education courses, minimum credits required for graduation) and courses developed collaboratively and offered through various departments on campus (some are electives, others are required).

The participants included 1,538 Japanese students and 60 English-language teachers (55 native speakers, 5 non-native speakers). Student age ranged from 18-22; year of study extended from freshman to senior, although the majority were freshmen. Students were enrolled in various university departments, including Education, Economics, Business, Law, Engineering, and Letters. Based on their scores on the Institutional TOEFL Placement Test, they selected level-appropriate English language courses offered by the WLC. The faculty participants were full-time, either

at the university where the questionnaire was distributed or at another university (in Japan, faculty members often teach full-time at one university while teaching up to a full day of classes at a second university), or were employed under multiple part-time contracts at different institutions, most often resulting in a full-time equivalent schedule or more.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections; students circled or wrote in their responses. Throughout the questionnaire, the option of circling “other” and writing in additional items was available for each item. The first section gathered data on the students’ background, including student identification (ID) number, major, high school, study abroad experience, and educational history. Student ID numbers were included in the questionnaires to track student expectations over time through multiple administrations of the questionnaire over the course of the academic year (the current paper focuses on the initial administration only).

The second section asked students to indicate their attitude towards studying English, expectations of university English courses, and expectations related to class instruction (homework, attendance at self-access centers, teacher/student-centered approaches, amount and importance of grammar, etc.). In this section, students were allowed to circle only one answer for each question. The final question in this section was open-ended and asked students when they thought it was acceptable for (native and non-native English) teachers to use Japanese in an English language class.

The third section collected data on additional student expectations related to what students hoped to gain from the course, including ways in which they expected to improve through taking this course. They were also asked about their expectations of the teacher. Students were allowed to circle as many responses as they wished.

Lastly, a teachers’ version of the questionnaire was constructed, keeping the items and directions consistent between the two. The form of the questions was changed from “What do you expect to gain from this class?” on the student

questionnaire to “What do you think your students expect to gain from this class?” on the teacher questionnaire. This questionnaire was administered in English.

All responses and comments were assigned numerical codes for data entry. Excel was used to calculate the frequency of responses and comparisons were made among and between teacher and student responses. Statistical significance was not determined in the current study. In addition, comparisons of responses within groups (comparisons of responses made by students from different majors, comparison of responses made by native and non-native speaking teachers, etc.) were not conducted in the current study.

Results and discussion

The basis of the comparison between teachers and students was related to four broad categories: 1) student attitudes towards enrolling in English courses, 2) how students make choices about which English course in which to enroll, 3) expectations of classroom practice, and 4) expectations regarding the use of English after graduation. Overall frequencies of responses are presented in Tables 1-16 (Appendix 2). Of the 1,538 student respondents, this was the first university English course for 34% (Table 1). There was such variation in high schools attended that the results were not meaningful. Of the 60 teachers who responded, 38 (63%) were full-time, either at the university where the questionnaire was distributed or at another university.

Students' attitudes towards enrolling in English courses

Table 2 illustrates self-reported student attitudes towards taking English classes and the attitudes teachers believe students have about those classes. Far more students than were estimated by teachers reported taking English as being “necessary.” A full 68% of teachers judged the majority of their students felt studying English could be called either “interesting” or “enjoyable”; only 49% of students responded so. Additionally, while only 25% of teachers said they believed students felt learning English was “necessary,” 45% of students indicated it was so. The data demonstrate an appreciable

discrepancy in student attitude toward studying English and teacher perception of such. However, none of the teachers responded that they felt the majority of their students “dislike” studying English, and only 4% of the students selected this category.

Making choices about English classes

Table 3 shows data collected to determine methods through which students learn about classes (i.e. what input they use when making their decisions) and which method they value most highly. Teachers were asked how they believed students learn about classes and which sources of information the teachers felt were the most reliable (valuable). When making decisions about which classes to take, students receive advice given during guidance sessions (33%), yet only 8% valued the sessions. The input of senior students (28%) and the course teacher (28%) are more valued. Revealingly, while course information from the course teacher is considered as valuable as that from seniors, only 2% report obtaining information from a teacher. We speculate that students either have few opportunities to confer with teachers regarding the course or that they find the proposition intimidating.

When asked about the same methods, 30% of teachers felt students mostly learned about courses from friends. No teachers, however, reported feeling that this source was valuable. The online catalog (38%) and guidance meetings (20%) were chosen as the most appropriate sources of information for students, though teachers felt both sources were probably underused – only 22% of teachers thought students used the online catalog, and 10% supposed students used guidance meetings. Teachers also responded that the course teacher was the least used source of information (8% of teachers report believing their students used this source), but in contrast to the student responses about the value of teacher input, only 18% of teachers felt they were the most appropriate source of information to rely on (compared with online catalogs and guidance meetings). In sum, most students reported using guidance meetings to make decisions, but few reported valuing them, while a highly-esteemed source of information, the course teacher, may be underutilized. Additionally, while students feel that

friends are a valuable source of information, teachers seem to disagree.

Expectations of classroom practice

How and when learning should occur

Several data disparities in Table 6 may illustrate differing opinions regarding when and how learning should be conducted. When asked about what was most important in a class, 68% of students selected “students learning independently in class.” Only 27% of teachers concurred, the majority (45%) instead choosing “students learning independently outside of class.” It is possible that these discrepancies betray an underlying assumption about the locus of learning. The majority of teachers may feel it is more student-centered and independent of class, while the majority of students feel that it is situated in a classroom setting.

Similarly, differences in expectations about how classes would be conducted surfaced in other items (Table 7). Overall, students believed that the teacher would be speaking at least half of the time during instruction (75%), with 52% responding that they expected that teachers and students would speak about an equal amount of time during class and 23% expecting either only moderate amounts of student practice balanced mainly with teacher-centered lessons (18%). Many teachers (68%), however, responded that they conducted their classes in a more student-oriented fashion, giving minimal guidance and allowing students to practice. Conversely, only about a fifth of students polled (21%) predicted this would be the form their English class took. Even before the first day of class, it is clear that students and teachers have divergent ideas about how classes will be taught.

Use of English in the classroom

Table 10 shows the differences in expectations between students and teachers with regard to teacher use of Japanese in the classroom. Students on average expected to hear much more Japanese during instruction. While comments ranged from students desiring the instructor to refrain from using Japanese completely to allowing the use of Japanese in specific situations, almost half (44%) of students reported expecting to hear extensive use of Japanese for explanation. No teachers reported using

Japanese to this degree in their classes. An additional 23% of students expected to hear one or two words of Japanese in class, a practice reported by 40% of teachers. A similar number of student respondents expected to hear only English, a much smaller percentage than the 58% of teachers who declared this to be standard practice. As a follow up question, students were asked to reply (to an open-ended question) when they felt it was appropriate for teachers to use Japanese. Thirty percent of students did not respond to the question. The largest single category aside this lack of response was “when students do not understand” at 25% of respondents. Ten percent of teacher respondents wrote that using Japanese was “not necessary” and 7% responded that it was appropriate for the purpose of injecting humor into a class. What seems to be clear is that there is an inverse relationship between when teachers expect to use Japanese in the classroom, and when students expect teachers to do so. This is not surprising, considering that most of these students are just coming into the university after graduating from high school, where it is the norm for English courses to be taught in Japanese. In contrast, at the tertiary level, there are many more faculty members (both Japanese and foreign) who take a more communicative approach to their mode of instruction. Helping students adjust to this transition in the early stages of their university life is time-consuming. This process would be made easier if teachers at the high school level 1) taught English courses in English, and/or 2) better informed students about what to expect once they enter university.

Learning study skills

Students were also asked about their expectations of what study skills would be included in instruction. Teachers were asked what skills they thought students expected to improve. The results are outlined in Table 13. Students expected to improve their ability to pronounce English well (55%), to think critically (38%), to take part in discussions with classmates (36%), to read effectively (35%), and to participate in class (28%). The top five responses for teachers were taking part in discussion with classmates (83%), participating in class (77%), thinking critically (60%), summarizing (48%) and doing presentations (42%). Interestingly, aside from

the expectation that pronunciation would be on the agenda in class, no single category was represented with more than approximately 40% of the student respondents' choices. This may mean that there is a general lack of consensus as to which skills students expect to improve upon. Conversely, the top three most selected categories from the teachers had much higher rates of agreement (between 83% and 60% of teachers agreeing about discussion building, participating in class and critical thinking). Finally, it is of further note that though 55% of students expect pronunciation skills to be included in class, teachers did not respond proportionately that they thought students expected to improve this skill.

Class activities

Students were also asked what activities they expected from class and what expectations they had of the teacher, while teachers were asked what they thought their students expected to do in class and what expectations they thought the students had of them regarding homework. Results showed that students and teachers had very different attitudes about pair work and group work: for teachers, these two skills were almost universally chosen as a top priority while far fewer students expected it. These results are outlined in Tables 15 and 16. Examining student responses, both group work and listening activities (38%) were the most selected, followed closely by pair work (32%), reading activities (30%), and games (28%). Almost all teachers reported using group work and pair work (93% and 92%), followed by tests and quizzes (73%), reading activities (62%), and presentations (55%). Thus it can be seen that while only about two-fifths of students expected to encounter group work, almost all teachers reported using this activity. Also of note was that just under a third of students expected games during instruction, but no teachers reported using games in the classroom. Echoing similar findings in Table 13, no single category selected by students was particularly strong, perhaps reflecting an inconsistency regarding what to expect in their university English classes based on their experiences in junior and senior high school English classes.

Student expectations of teachers

Regarding what they expect from the course teacher, the strongest student response was that they anticipated written feedback on homework or assignments (49%). They also thought that teachers would answer questions in (34%) or after (26%) class. A little over half of the teachers responding (53%) reported giving written feedback on homework or assignments. Ninety percent responded that they think students expect to have questions answered in class. Further, while 62% of teachers planned to give spoken feedback in class, students generally did not predict this as an activity which teachers would undertake. Finally, while only 24% of students expected homework to be assigned, 70% of teachers reported assigning it.

Expectations of English language use after graduation

When asked about student use of English after graduation, teachers were either unable to predict the amount of English students would use or did not expect that students would use English often. Most students, however, were fairly confident that they would use English after graduation (Table 9). Of the students polled, 57% felt they would use English often in their careers. Another 14% anticipated using English in a study abroad context, while a further 10% responded that they did not know how they would be using English after graduation. When teachers were asked their opinion on how often students would use English after they graduated, 28% responded that they did not know how students would be using English, and 24% did not expect students to use English after graduation or in their jobs. However, 20% thought students might use English in a study abroad context. Only 12% of teachers felt that their students would be using English often in their jobs. Thus we can see that while students felt fairly confident that they would be using English in employment situations after graduating, teachers, as a group, had a lower rate of expectation.

Summary and Conclusions

In a globally competitive marketplace for higher education, regardless of region or country, understanding, addressing, and where possible, meeting students' expectations is becoming

increasingly important. While the data from this study suggests there is some agreement between teachers and students, it also points to major inconsistencies between student and teacher expectations (Appendix 3). These results seem to point to a need to communicate student expectations more clearly to both teachers and university administrations, and for institutions and teachers to better inform students about what to expect in university-level language courses. While the current research was conducted in Japan, the importance of student expectations can be seen throughout educational systems globally. Whereas the current research highlighted some key areas of interest, how expectations change over time and analyses to determine possible affects of academic year (freshman, sophomore, etc.) and major field of study will be further investigated by the authors in the future. Nevertheless, the current study has been useful in highlighting differences which could significantly affect the learning context at the tertiary level. Regardless of the level of development of a particular country, and there are clearly stark differences in this regard when comparing Cambodia and Japan, what is of more importance is that student expectations and the success or failure on the part of teachers, curricula or institutions to meet those expectations have significant impacts on the success individual students may realize, and similarly, on the success an educational institution or its teachers may be able to achieve. To help teachers and students understand the nature, purpose, and importance of language instruction, student needs should continue to be considered, educational rationales should be made explicit, and regular feedback should be exchanged among both teachers and students. This increased flow of information will be one way to fill the gap between teacher and student expectation.

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Appendix 1

Student questionnaire

Student Expectations Questionnaire												
<p>Dear Students,</p> <p>Some of the teachers in the World Language Center are interested in learning about what you expect from classes taught in English. We know that you have just started this class, and may not be sure what the class will be like, but we're interested in seeing what you EXPECT the class to be like. So there are no right or wrong answers, we'd just like to hear your ideas.</p> <p>Thank you for your help!</p>												
<p>PLEASE FILL IN THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION</p>												
Your student number				<input style="width: 20px; height: 20px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 20px; height: 20px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 20px; height: 20px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 20px; height: 20px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 20px; height: 20px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 20px; height: 20px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>			Major Department		_____			
Course Name				_____			Is this course required or an elective?		<input type="checkbox"/> Required <input type="checkbox"/> Elective			
What high school did you go to?				_____			Your high school was located in what city?		_____			
Have you ever studied abroad?		Yes No		If yes, in what country?			_____			For how long?		
Is this your first English class at Soka University?		Yes No		If no, what other courses have you taken?			1. _____		2. _____		3. _____	
<p>FOR THIS SECTION, PLEASE CIRCLE THE ONE BEST ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION:</p>												
<p>1. How would you describe your attitude about studying English?</p> <p>Enjoyable Interesting Necessary Don't like Other: _____</p>												
<p>2. How did you learn about this course?</p> <p>The teacher of this course A teacher in your department Another teacher Friends</p> <p>A guidance meeting in your department Online course catalogue Senior student Other: _____</p>												
<p>3. Of the ways to learn about courses listed below, which one is most important for you?</p> <p>The teacher of this course A teacher in your department Another teacher Friends</p> <p>A guidance meeting in your department Other: _____ Senior student Online course catalogue</p>												
<p>4. How much homework do you expect to do per week outside of class?</p>												

None	Less than 30 minutes	30 minutes to 1 hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	More than 3 hours	Other: _____
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5. Do you expect to go to one of the self access centers at the WLC?

None	Chit Chat Club	AV Library	English Forum	Writing Center	Other: _____
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6. Which is most important in class?

Students learning independently in class	Students learning independently outside of class	Teachers explaining everything clearly to students in class	Other: _____
--	--	---	--------------

7. How do you expect the class to be conducted?

Lecture style	Teachers explain in detail, students practice a little	Teachers and students are speaking about half the time in class	Teacher explains a little, and students mostly practice	Students are speaking most of the time during class	Other: _____
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8. How do you expect grammar to be taught in this class?

No grammar	Grammar will be the basis of the class	Grammar will be explained and then students will practice the grammar by speaking	Students will practice speaking and learn grammar at the same time	Students will practice speaking first, and then the teacher will explain the grammar	Other: _____
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9. After you graduate, how do you expect to use English?

I don't expect to use English after I graduate	Often in my job	To study abroad	Just to get a job, but not when I start working	Never	Don't know	Other: _____
--	-----------------	-----------------	---	-------	------------	--------------

10. What expectations do you have about the teacher's use of Japanese in class?

Use only English	Only use one or two words in Japanese	Sometimes use Japanese for explanation	Often use Japanese	Mainly use Japanese in explanation, then practice speaking in English	Use mostly Japanese in class	Other: _____
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10.a. When do you think it is ok for a native-speaking teacher to use Japanese in an English class?

FOR THIS SECTION, PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THE BEST ANSWERS FOR EACH QUESTION:

1. What do you expect of the teacher?

Enthusiastic	Knowledgeable	Teach grammar effectively	Encourage participation	Make class enjoyable	Lecture	Other: _____
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2. What do you expect to gain from taking this class?

Opportunity to practice speaking English	Higher TOEIC score	Higher TOEFL / ITP score	Prepare to get a job	Understand other cultures
Improve your understanding of grammar	Improve your ability to translate	Prepare to study abroad	Prepare to travel abroad	
Improve your speaking skills	Improve your listening skills	Improve your writing skills	Improve your reading skills	Other: _____

3. Which of these study skills do you expect to improve during this class?

Summarizing	Notetaking	Pronunciation	Discussion with classmates	Doing presentations	Reading more effectively
Outlining	Thinking critically	Writing academic papers	Participating in class	Managing my time	Nothing
Other: _____					

4. What do you expect to be included in the grading of this class?

Attendance Homework Final exam Participation in class Mid-Term exam Presentation
 Class discussions Written assignments Small tests / quizzes Book reports Attending Chit Chat Club / English Forum Homework in the AV Library Other: _____

5. What activities do you expect to do in this class?

Pair work Games Translation Role Plays Reading activities Listening activities
 Presentations Group work Written papers / reports Tests / quizzes Mid-Term exam Final Exam Other: _____

6. What expectations do you have of the teacher of this course?

Not assign homework / assignments Not return homework / assignments Assign homework / assignments Check homework / assignments Give written feedback on homework / assignments Give spoken feedback in class
 Answer questions before class for individual students Answer questions in class Answer questions after class Be available during office hours Communicate with students via email Other: _____

7. Would you be willing to talk to a WLC teacher about the expectations you have for our classes? Yes, I would! No, thank you!

Thank you very much for answering these questions.

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR CLASSES THIS SEMESTER!

Appendix 2

Summary of questionnaire data

Table 1. General information

	Total	First English class				
Students	1538	527 (34%)				
	Total	Full ¹ / Part-time	Less than 5 years experience	6-10 years experience	11-20 years experience	20 years experience
Teachers	60	38 / 22 (63% / 37%)	7 (12%)	11 (18%)	20 (33%)	22 (37%)

¹ Full-time at other institutions included

Table 2. Attitude towards studying English

Students: How would you describe your attitude about studying English?					
Teachers: How would you describe the majority of your students' attitude towards studying English?					
		Necessary	Interesting	Enjoyable	Don't like
Students	N (%)	699 (45%)	491 (32%)	260 (17%)	65 (4%)
Teachers	N (%)	15 (25%)	24 (40%)	17 (28%)	0 (0%)

Table 3. How students learn about English courses

Students: How did you learn about this course?						
Teachers: How do you think students learn about your courses?						
		Guidance meeting	Online catalogue	Senior student	Friends	Teacher of the course
Students	N (%)	501 (33%)	266 (17%)	264 (17%)	179 (12%)	35 (2%)
Teachers	N (%)	6 (10%)	13 (22%)	5 (8%)	18 (30%)	5 (8%)
Students: Of the ways to learn about courses listed below, which one is most important for you?						
Teachers: Of the ways to learn about courses listed below, which one do you think is most appropriate for students to rely on?						
		Senior student	Teacher of the course	Online catalog	Guidance meeting	
Students	N (%)	443 (28%)	433 (28%)	289 (19%)	121 (8%)	
Teachers	N (%)	3 (5%)	11 (18%)	23 (38%)	12 (20%)	

Table 4. Expectations of time spent on homework per khoma¹

Students: How much homework do you expect to do per week outside of class?					
Teachers: How much homework do you expect to assign for students per khoma per week outside of class?					
		Less than 30 minutes	30 minutes to 1 hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours
Students	N (%)	178 (12%)	805 (52%)	323 (21%)	105 (7%)
Teachers	N (%)	3 (8%)	23 (38%)	26 (43%)	5 (8%)

¹ khoma is a Japanese designation for a class period, typically 90 minutes

Table 5. Expectations of time spent at self-access centers

Students: Do you expect to go to one of the self-access centers at the WLC?					
Teachers: Do you expect your students to go to one of the self-access centers at the WLC?					
		Chit Chat Club	AV Library	English Forum	None
Students	N (%)	508 (33%)	254 (17%)	184 (12%)	459 (30%)
Teachers	N (%)	15 (25%)	1 (.1%)	24 (40%)	4 (7%)

Table 6. Teaching methodology

Students: Which is most important in class?		Teachers: As a teacher, which do you think is most important in class?		
		Teachers explaining everything clearly to students in class	Students learning independently in class	Students learning independently outside of class
Students	N (%)	94 (6%)	1039 (68%)	342 (22%)
Teachers	N (%)	0 (0%)	16 (27%)	27 (45%)

Table 7. Expectations as to how class will be conducted

Students: How do you expect the class to be conducted?		Teachers: How do you typically conduct your classes?			
		Lecture style	Teachers explain in detail, students practice a little	Teachers and students are speaking about half the time in class	Teacher explains a little, and students mostly practice
Students	N (%)	80 (5%)	277 (18%)	798 (52%)	330 (21%)
Teachers	N (%)	0 (0%)	2 (3%)	13 (22%)	38 (63%)

Table 8. Expectations as to how grammar will be taught

Students: How do you expect grammar to be taught in this class?		Teachers: How do you integrate grammar into your classes?				
		Grammar will be the basis of the class	Grammar will be explained and then students will practice the grammar by speaking	Students will practice speaking and learn grammar at the same time	Students will practice speaking first, and then the teacher will explain the grammar	Grammar will be discussed in response to students' questions
Students	N (%)	141 (9%)	430 (28%)	851 (55%)	68 (4%)	NA
Teachers	N (%)	0 (0%)	18 (30%)	17 (28%)	7 (11%)	4 (7%)

Table 9. Plans for using English in the future

Students: After you graduate, how do you expect to use English?						
Teachers: In your opinion, after they graduate, how often do you think the majority of your students will use English?						
		Often in my job	To study abroad	Just to get a job, but not when I start working	I don't expect to use English after I graduate	Don't know
Students	N (%)	871 (57%)	211 (14%)	90 (6%)	20 (1%)	159 (10%)
Teachers	N (%)	7 (12%)	12 (20%)	7 (12%)	7 (12%)	17 (28%)

Table 10. Teacher use of Japanese in class

Students: What expectations do you have about the teacher's use of Japanese in class?					
Teachers: When do you use Japanese in class?					
		Sometimes use Japanese for explanation	Only use one or two words in Japanese	Use only English	
Students	N (%)	672 (44%)	357 (23%)	381 (25%)	
Teachers	N (%)	0 (0%)	24 (40%)	35 (58%)	
Students: When do you think it is ok for a native-speaking teacher to use Japanese in an English class? (Open ended question)					
Teachers: When do you think it is ok for a native-speaking teacher to use Japanese in an English class? (Open ended question)					
Students	N (%)	(No response)	When students don't understand	When explaining	After many attempts, when students don't understand
		457 (30%)	380 (25%)	71 (5%)	46 (3%)
Teachers	N (%)	Japanese is not necessary	For humor	To explain difficult points	
		6 (10%)	4 (7%)	4 (7%)	

Table 11. Student expectations of the teacher

Students: What do you expect of the teacher?						
Teachers: Which of the following are appropriate expectations of a teacher in an EFL class?						
		Make class enjoyable	Encourage participation	Teach grammar effectively	Knowledgeable	Enthusiastic
Students	N (%)	1104 (72%)	831 (54%)	544 (35%)	398 (26%)	221 (14%)
Teachers	N (%)	54 (90%)	56 (93%)	36 (60%)	51 (85%)	52 (87%)

Table 12. Student expectations of the class

Students: What do you expect to gain from taking this class?						
Teachers: What do you believe the majority of your students expect to gain from taking your class?						
		Prepare to travel abroad	Improve your speaking skills	Opportunity to practice speaking English	Higher TOEFL / ITP score	Improve your listening skills
Students	N (%)	945 (61%)	808 (53%)	683 (44%)	682 (44%)	411 (27%)
					Understand other cultures	Prepare to study abroad
Teachers	N (%)	39 (65%)	32 (53%)	48 (80%)	26 (43%)	25 (42%)

Table 13. Student expectations of the class: Skills / Study skills

Students: Which of these skills / study skills do you expect to improve during this class?						
Teachers: Which of these study skills do you think students expect to improve during your class?						
		Thinking critically	Discussion with classmates	Participating in class	Reading more effectively	Pronunciation
Students	N (%)	589 (38%)	556 (36%)	411 (28%)	545 (35%)	851 (55%)
					Summarizing	Doing presentations
Teachers	N (%)	36 (60%)	50 (83%)	46 (77%)	29 (48%)	25 (42%)

Table 14. Expectations of the class: Grading

Students: What do you expect to be included in the grading of this class?						
Teachers: What do you expect to include in the grading of your class?						
		Attendance	Participation in class	Homework	Written assignments	Final exam
Students	N (%)	1019 (66%)	451 (29%)	711 (46%)	577 (38%)	551 (36%)
					Small tests / quizzes	Attending Chit Chat Club / English Forum
Teachers	N (%)	47 (78%)	43 (72%)	57 (95%)	42 (70%)	40 (67%)

Table 15. Expectations of the class: Class activities

Students: What activities do you expect to do in this class?						
Teachers: What activities do you expect to have students do in your class?						
		Group work	Pair work	Reading activities	Listening activities	Games
Students	N (%)	591 (38%)	476 (32%)	458 (30%)	585 (38%)	431 (28%)
					Tests / quizzes	Presentations
Teachers	N (%)	56 (93%)	55 (92%)	37 (62%)	44 (73%)	33 (55%)

Table 16. Student expectations of the class: Teacher

Students: What expectations do you have of the teacher of this course?						
Teachers: What expectations do you think the students have of you related to homework in your course?						
		Give written feedback on homework / assignments	Answer questions in class	Assign homework / assignments	Check homework / assignments	Answer questions after class
Students	N (%)	757 (49%)	517 (34%)	372 (24%)	285 (19%)	394 (26%)
						Give spoken feedback in class
Teachers	N (%)	32 (53%)	54 (90%)	42 (70%)	44 (73%)	37 (62%)

Appendix 3

Major inconsistencies between student and teacher expectations

- Two-thirds of teachers indicated that they believed that students found English study interesting or enjoyable whereas only half of the students agreed.
- Almost half of the students reported that their English class was required for credit compared to only one quarter of teachers who thought their students enrolled because of a requirement.
- Departmental guidance meetings were used by the highest number of students to make decisions as to which English classes to choose, although these meetings were not valued. Most students valued the guidance of the teacher of the course and their senior classmates. A higher percentage of teachers, on the other hand, placed value on online course descriptions and departmental guidance meetings. Few teachers valued the advice of students' seniors as a being an appropriate way to learn about courses.
- There seemed to be disagreement between students and teachers regarding "students learning independently." Most teachers indicated that independent learning should occur outside of class; students believed independent learning should occur during class instruction.
- Regarding teacher- and student-centered approaches, 75% of students anticipated that the teacher would be speaking at least half of the time, compared to the comments which indicated that almost the same percentage of teachers followed a more student-centered approach where students talked during the majority of the class time.
- Whereas 44% of students expect the teacher to use extensive Japanese during the class,

no teachers reported using Japanese to this degree in their classes.

- Some students expected to be involved in group work, listening, pair work, and reading activities during their classes (38-30%). Almost all teachers reported using group work and pair work (93% and 92%),
- tests and quizzes (73%), reading activities (62%) and presentations (55%).
- Few students (24%) expected homework to be assigned during their English classes; the majority of teachers (70%) assigned homework.

Promoting discovery learning through implicit grammar instruction: A measure to increase learner acquisition of English tenses

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Abstract

The objective of the study is to investigate to what extent discovery learning through implicit grammar instruction enhanced (1) student acquisition of English tenses, and (2) student motivation in regard to learning grammar. The subjects were 133 non-English major, intermediate-level students at the Center of Foreign Languages, Can Tho University, Can Tho City, Vietnam. The study was conducted during nine consecutive weeks. The subjects were pre- and post-tested on their grammatical competence in using English verb tenses; they also answered a questionnaire on motivation after the nine weeks. Analyses of the data included descriptive statistics tests, paired sample t-tests, and Pearson's correlations to answer the research questions. The results suggest that after the discovery-based approach course, student scores on acquisition of English tenses on the post-test were significantly higher than on the pre-test. Their motivation to learn grammar through implicit grammar instruction was high.

Introduction

In intermediate-level grammar classes at the Center of Foreign Languages (CFL), Can Tho University (CTU), Can Tho City, Vietnam, most of the target structures are recycled with an appropriate increase from simple to complex, compared with elementary and pre-intermediate level classes. The course book delivers direct instruction on grammar. Therefore, the teaching method is explicit grammar instruction (EGI), providing students with supplied explicit descriptions, and of course, the presentation is product-oriented. From our empirical knowledge and observations, we may say that the students feel bored with the EGI teaching style. They participate in the course rather passively, especially during the presentation stage. Moreover, there are no tasks that explore previous knowledge that students have of grammar.

Recent literature from linguists and researchers has placed increased emphasis on grammar instruction when teaching grammar in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. It especially encourages teaching grammar implicitly. Arguments for implicit grammar instruction (IGI) are based on theories and experiments of linguists and researchers. More focus has now shifted towards IGI because of its appreciable effects in second language acquisition (SLA). The discovery learning model examined in this study seems to be the key element in its effectiveness.

IGI in Chaudron's (1988) definition is inductive grammar instruction. In classes where grammar is implicitly taught, learners are frequently exposed to the target language in meaningful and authentic contexts (Stern, 1992; Lynch, 2005). According to

DeCarrico and Larsen-Freeman (2002), implicit teaching can be presented through input enhancement (Smith, as cited in DeCarrico and Larsen-Freeman, 2002) and input-processing tasks (VanPattern, as cited in DeCarrico and Larsen-Freeman, 2002). With appropriate input, learners can identify the grammar rule for themselves and progress through the stages of rule acquisition (Brown, 1999).

Teaching grammar implicitly presents more benefits than teaching grammar explicitly. IGI:

- Suits the natural language acquisition process (Brown, 1999).
- Helps learners have opportunities to come across, perceive, and use the structures in form-meaning relationships (Nassaji and Fotos, 2004).
- Leads learners to discover rules by themselves (Brown, 1999) and fosters discovery learning (Cross, 1992; Stern, 1992; Tennant, 2005).
- Creates mental effort and actively plays a part in learners' reasoning learning process, which produces cognitive depth, great motivation, and self-reliance (Harmer, 1991; Thornbury, 1999; Shortall, 2002; Mackey & Gass, 2005).
- Fits the cognitive development of language learners (Cross, 1992). (It will engage learners, avoid metalinguistic discussion, and minimize any interruption to the communication of meaning [Doughty & Williams, 1998].)
- Offers teachers opportunities to understand what students can do and what they need to explore further (Tennant, 2005).
- Creates more motivating learning, which makes students think, form, and test their assumptions about the new knowledge, leading to powerful insight about the target structures.
- Fosters learner autonomy in learning language (Carter, Hughes & McCarthy, 2000).

These useful effects of IGI have been shown in numerous studies carried out in different contexts to

evaluate the effectiveness of IGI in acquiring an L2. First, Wilson's (2005) pilot study shows the effectiveness of "covert grammar," which is defined as "teaching a communicative syllabus but dealing with grammar questions that arise in the course of doing communicative activities" (Thornbury, 1999, p. 23) in promoting acquisition on the present progressive and the use of "will." In the Vietnamese context, Vo (2005) carried out a study about teaching and learning grammar in context. She found that this teaching approach helped students achieve good results in written communication. Furthermore, in Fukai's (2004) review of grammar instruction, some researchers (Hammond as cited in Fukai, 2004; Winitz as cited in Fukai, 2004; Lally, as cited in Fukai, 2004) implemented IGI in their studies and reported many significant findings about the role of teaching implicitly in developing acquisition, especially in regard to grammatical forms. Erlam (2003) also reported on the superiority of IGI in learning morphological aspects of language. The outcome of IGI has been expressed more clearly in research on tense-aspect systems by Cadierno (as cited in Bardovi-Harlig, 2000), Bardovi-Harlig and Reynolds (as cited in Bardovi-Harlig, 2000), Doughty and Varela (as cited in Bardovi-Harlig, 2000) and Kanda and Beglar (2004).

Based on the theoretical and empirical background, grammar lessons with IGI consist of three task stages:

- *Setting the Context* presents a brief passage that highlights specific structures.
- *Thinking about Meaning and Use* serves not only as language input for students to be exposed to but also as opportunities for them to activate their own grammatical knowledge of language.
- *Practicing, Using What You've Learned, and Taking a Step Beyond* are production tasks that move from controlled to free language activities.

In conclusion, teaching grammar implicitly with the discovery learning technique promises to bring good outcomes in the CFL context. Thus, in regard to non-English majors, the current research

examines the influence of discovery learning in IGI on learner acquisition of English tenses and on learner motivation to learn grammar implicitly. The long-term aim of the study is to develop learner autonomy in studying grammar, encouraging learners to be more independent and explore the English language by themselves.

The present research attempts to answer these two questions:

1. To what extent does discovery learning through implicit grammar instruction promote learner acquisition of English tenses?
2. To what extent does discovery learning through implicit grammar instruction motivate students in learning grammar, especially English tenses?

Research Method

Research Design

This study was carried out with a one-group pre-test and post-test design. The implementation of discovery learning through IGI (independent variable) was monitored, and acquisition of English tenses and learner motivation (dependent variables) was measured. The grammar points in this research are English tenses. The pre- and post-test were designed to be the same. A questionnaire on motivation was given after the treatment instruction; students were able to respond anonymously.

Participants

The researcher and teacher carried out the study on six intermediate-level classes at the CFL, CTU in 2006. The total number of students was 227, but the authentic number of participants for the present study was 133 because some students did not satisfy all of the conditions of data analysis (participating in at least seven class meetings, taking pre- and post-tests, and answering the questionnaire). The participants were from 14 to 26 years old, including 71 female and 62 male non-English majors. Most of them were undergraduate students of Can Tho University; some were high school and junior high school students in Can Tho City.

Research Instruments

Two research instruments, the pre- and the post-test and a questionnaire, measured learner acquisition of English tenses and explored learner motivation in regard to learning grammar after IGI with the implementation of the discovery learning technique. The achievement test on English tenses (see Appendix 1) consists of recognition and judgment tasks to measure learner acquisition of English tenses. The questionnaire on grammar learning motivation is adapted from Watanabe's (2000) motivation questionnaire focusing on value and expectancy components (see Appendix 2). The two instruments have been piloted.

Procedures

The first main work of the researcher was to prepare the material for the treatment. The materials were collected from several grammar books:

1. *Mosaic One: A Content-Based Grammar* (Werner, 1996)
2. *Grammar Practice for Upper Intermediate Students* (Walker & Elsworth, 2000)
3. *Grammar Sense 3* (Bland, 2003)
4. *Grammar Sense 3 – Workbook* (Blackwell & Davy, 2003)
5. *Nitty Gritty Grammar – Sentence Essentials for Writers* (Young & Strauch, 1998)
6. *Oxford Practice Grammar* (Eastwood, 1999)
7. *The Anti-Grammar Grammar Book - A Teacher's Resource Book of Discovery Activities for Grammar Teaching* (Hall & Shephard, 1991)
8. *Understanding and Using English Grammar – Workbook* (Azar & Azar, 1990)

The grammar points about English verb tenses were adapted to highlight IGI through discovery learning. The grammar lessons have three main parts (see Appendix 3):

- *Setting the Context* introduces a short reading with specific grammatical structures. This part provides a context to raise awareness of the language form, and a tool for students to discover the underlying "rules" (Harmer, 1987).

- *Thinking about Meaning and Use* encourages students to analyze how to use the target structure and to consolidate their understanding of all aspects of the structure. Students are helped in using their reasoning processes to discuss the target structure in order to find out rules. This part is “a good reinforcement to what the students have been learning” (Harmer, 1987, p. 37) and encourages them to be actively involved in the acquisition of grammatical knowledge of the targeted verb tenses.
- *Practicing, Using What You’ve Learned, and Taking a Step Beyond* are practice stages. *Practicing* includes controlled practice of the target structures. *Using What You’ve Learned* activities are designed with realistic and motivating contexts, offering students more time and more opportunities to use target structures in more natural, personalized communication. These activities engage students in active learning and appeal to a wide range of student abilities and interests, allowing them to adjust their perceptions of the language input. *Taking a Step Beyond* provides students with suggestions about looking for the target structures in authentic materials from magazines, newspapers, the Internet, or other sources. Sharing and discussing these materials with other students will help to reinforce and contextualize the linguistic items covered. This stage is a bridge between the controlled, structured language of the classroom and real-life language outside the classroom through promoting learner autonomy in language learning.

The lessons for the treatment of the study were piloted in a 36-student class at the CFL. All of the texts were appropriate to the students’ level, fully comprehensive for the learners, and suitable to the current study.

With the materials, the study was conducted over nine weeks. Each meeting per week lasted for 135 minutes. The participants completed a pre-test at the beginning of the course. Then all students

received an equal amount of IGI on English verb tenses from the same instructor, the researcher. During the treatment, the teacher only took part in the discussion whenever the students asked for an explanation or when they could not come to a final conclusion. Post-testing occurred after the instructional treatment. The questionnaire was administered to students after the post-test.

Results

Learner acquisition of English tenses in discovery learning through implicit grammar instruction

The internal consistency (α) of the pre-test, .73, and the post-test, $\alpha = .61$, are considered acceptable. The Paired Sample T-Test was performed; the correlation between the pre-test and the post-test score values r is 0.59. The associated p value (Sig.) is very small (0.000). This absolute value of the correlation coefficient indicates a rather strong linear relationship between the pre-test and the post-test. The result shows that students seem to have changed position in rank order.

The Means of the Paired Differences between the pre-test and the post-test scores shows that student score gain after the post-test is 1.64 (SD = 1.1). The p value (Sig. (2-tailed)) associated with the t statistic of -17.00 (df = 132) is very small (0.000). Thus, there is a significant difference in student scores of the pre-test ($M = 6.38$, $SD = 1.36$) and the post-test ($M = 8.02$, $SD = 0.97$). The mean scores in the treatment do tend to increase, suggesting that the students performed much better and made significant improvement after the treatment.

To gain insight into student acquisition of English tenses within each group of students, the Paired Samples T-Test was run again to see which group gained the most. The grouping is based on the scores of the pre-test.

Weak and medium students had the highest increase (2.90 and 2.17, respectively) in mean scores with the p value = .000 (Table 1). This increase value is statistically significant. Significant results were also seen with the good and fair student groups

although the mean score gains were not as high as those of the other groups.

Table 1. Mean score comparison between acquisition of English tenses in the pre-test and the post-test among student groups

Student groups	N		Mean	SD	Sig. (2-tailed)
Excellent (10-9.0)	2	Pre-test	9.00	.00	.500
		Post-test	8.75	.25	
		Loss	.25	.35	
Good (8.5-8.0)	22	Pre-test	8.21	.25	.001
		Post-test	8.78	.67	
		Gain	.57	.71	
Fair (7.5-6.5)	52	Pre-test	6.90	.41	.000
		Post-test	8.29	.69	
		Gain	1.39	.69	
Medium (6.0-5.0)	43	Pre-test	5.48	.42	.000
		Post-test	7.65	.91	
		Gain	2.17	.98	
Weak (< 5.0)	14	Pre-test	3.96	.84	.000
		Post-test	6.86	1.00	
		Gain	2.90	1.16	

Grammar learning motivation in discovery learning through implicit grammar instruction

The internal consistency of the questionnaire is $\alpha = .74$ showing that the data collected is reliable. The descriptive statistics test shows the mean score of all learner motivation is 3.71 (SD = .36). The value is slightly above the average in the 5-point scale. We can say that the overall level of student motivation is high. The components of value and expectancy in learner motivation are shown in the Table 2.

Task value has the highest mean (M = 4.06, SD = .45). Learner attitudes to tasks in the treatment are rather favorable. The results show that the participants like the discovery learning based activities in the treatment instruction. However, the descriptive statistics test results show that student

language aptitude is not very high, a little above average (M = 2.96, SD = .81). The mean score displays the fact that learners are not confident in their ability to discover language rules. To express this another way, this technique may be not familiar to students. They may not be accustomed to IGI. To measure the linear association between variables, 1) learner achievement and motivation, and 2) the two main factors of learner motivation - the value components and expectancy components, Bivariate Correlations Tests were performed. The results $r = 0.06$ and $p = 0.49$ show that there is an insignificant correlation between the motivation and the achievement of the participants, whereas the value and expectancy components are rather significantly correlated ($r = 0.49$, $p = 0.000$). This value of the correlation coefficient indicates a rather strong relationship of value and expectancy components in learner motivation.

Table 2. Mean scores of sub-clusters of value and expectancy

Clusters	Sub-Clusters	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Value	Intrinsic motivation	133	1.00	5.00	3.98	.53
	Task value	133	1.40	5.00	4.06	.45
Expectancy	Expectancy	133	1.33	4.67	3.19	.56
	Language aptitude	133	1.00	5.00	2.96	.81

Discussion

The overall findings show that teaching grammar implicitly can be a significant component in grammar acquisition and learner motivation. The first research question asked to what extent non-English major learners at CFL had significantly improved their acquisition of L2, especially on English tenses after receiving IGI encouraging discovery learning. The findings showing the positive effects of IGI are supported by several previous research studies. As expected, discovery learning focused activities that encouraged deeper processing of the target structure resulted in better acquisition of the verb forms, tense meanings, and uses. There were statistically significant gains in mean scores on tense acquisition in the post-test when compared to the pre-test. Similar results were found in different student groups. With all of these findings, it might be argued that student improvement in the post-test was the result of promoting discovery learning through IGI in the learning situation. Learner language development benefited from the treatment. However, the weak and the medium students seemed to benefit more than the others.

The second research question asked to what extent discovery learning through IGI enhances student motivation in learning grammar, especially English tenses. The experiment found that the overall level of learner motivation is rather high. The participants in this study had positive attitudes to task value. The activities in the instruction treatment promoting discovery learning really created learner interest. They enjoy these activities, understand better, and improve their grammatical knowledge. This outcome verifies a positive view of discovery learning supported by many researchers (i.e., Wilson, 2005; Vo, 2005; Erlam, 2003; Kanda & Beglar, 2004). Nevertheless, learner language aptitude for discovering the

meanings and uses of English tenses is not very high. This indicates that learners are not very familiar with the discovery learning technique. They are accustomed to learning grammar explicitly. The result seems to fit the researcher's previous remark about the frequency of EGI in grammar classes at the CFL.

With the high correlation coefficient between value and expectancy components, it can be concluded that the perceptions about the value of the activities in the experiment may help with increasing learner expectancy in achievement. The expectancy in learning success may "foster an integrative motive to learn the language" (Clément, as cited in Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant, & Mihic, 2004) and have a great influence on learner motivation (Dörnyei, cited in Kang, 2000). Most of the students agreed that the usefulness of the tasks might affect learner success in the learning language. In short, the participants in the present study are motivated in regard to learning grammar after the treatment course. The discovery-based approach through IGI motivates learners in grammar classes.

However, grammatical acquisition scores were not significant predictors of the overall mean score of student motivation and vice versa. The two factors were not significantly related in this study. Acquisition of English tenses is not significantly related to student motivation in learning grammar. In some aspects, this result is consistent with the studies mentioned in Song's (2002) and Masgoret & Gardner's (2003) reviews. These researchers did not support the relation between L2 learner motivation and achievement. These were not correlated due to different learning styles, backgrounds, ages, levels, and so on. Song (2002) concluded, "Causal relationships between motivation and language success need to be tested

in a variety of contexts and among different groups and different languages.”

Although there is no relation between motivation and language achievement, the findings still show that learners have significant success in their acquisition of English tenses and high motivation in learning grammar, especially with discovery learning activities through IGI.

Limitations and further research directions

The study has shown the effectiveness of discovery learning in an IGI course, although there are two limitations. The first limitation is related to the test design. The tests were focused on recognition knowledge through multiple choice and judgment for error analysis. Thus, there is unavoidable guessing in this kind of grammar test. This undoubtedly affects the results of the test scores. In future research about IGI, productive skills must be thought over in the test design to determine a more overall influence of grammar instruction on language acquisition, both in competence and performance.

The second limitation concerns the research findings of this study. They generalize only for intermediate-level non-English major students at the CFL and do not fully address the role of IGI over EGI because they only show the effects of IGI without comparison to EGI. Because of the variety of CFL learner levels, the study could not compare the two kinds of instruction. For future research, a two-group design must be considered in order to provide more findings about the effectiveness of discovery learning in grammar courses.

Conclusions and suggestions

The present study aimed to apply IGI in the specific context of the CFL with non-English major learners in an intermediate-level grammar course. The target grammar points were English tenses. The subjects were 133 non-English major students in six classes at the CFL, CTU. The research design was one experimental group. The model of IGI represented in the treatment materials is characterized by a number of features: (1) tenses presented in a passage with meaningful and

interesting topics, (2) many discovery learning based activities focused on meaning and use, (3) reinforcement exercises for consolidation and practice, (4) communicative activities to provide opportunities to use the target language in real situations, and (5) one-step-beyond activities aimed at real-life language outside the classroom. The measuring instruments consisted of a pre-test and a post-test as well as a questionnaire on motivation in relation to learning grammar through IGI.

The overall test results show that the treatment group displayed more acquisition on English tenses in the post-test than in the pre-test. The overall level of student motivation was rather high. The findings of the present study are congruent with some other researchers supporting IGI. It is apparent that IGI in an ESL program plays a significant role in facilitating the L2 learner acquisition of English tenses. Learners with different English levels may show significant improvement after the treatment with IGI. Furthermore, the discovery learning based approach encourages them to actively learn grammar, especially English tenses.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that the discovery learning technique is effective in grammar instruction because it provides interactive, communicative activities that allow students to simultaneously process grammatical form, meaning, and use, and also addresses the development of their implicit knowledge. In addition, this kind of grammar delivery can help learners study more actively in grammar classes. Thus, using the discovery learning technique in the presentation stage may explore previous learner knowledge of grammar and give more opportunities to practice what was studied. In addition, the long-term aim of the research is to develop learner autonomy in studying language, especially grammar, encouraging students to be more independent in exploring the language by themselves. The findings will encourage the teaching of grammar implicitly as well as a proposal to develop a more effective grammar curriculum.

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Appendix 1

POST-TEST

ENGLISH VERB TENSES

LEVEL 7

Time allotted: 60 minutes

Test date:
Test taker's name:
Class:
Marks:

Part 1: Read each numbered sentence. Write T (true) or F (false) for the statement that follows.

1. At 5:00, they were drinking hot chocolate by the fire.
___ We don't know when they started drinking hot chocolate.
2. At 10:00, he drank a cup of coffee.
___ He finished the coffee.
3. It was snowing while she was taking the photograph.
___ First she took the photograph. Then it started to snow.
4. When our friend arrived, we ate lunch.
___ Our friends arrived before lunch.
5. When Joe got to school, his class was taking a test.
___ Joe was late to class.
6. Professor Owen has been reading a book about elephants.
___ She finished the book.

7. Professor Owen has written a magazine article about the rain forest.
___ She finished the article.
8. Oprah's guest had lost 50 kilograms when she interviewed him.
___ The guest lost the weight before the interview.
9. Denzell won't quit until he finds another job.
___ Denzell will find another job. Then he'll quit.
10. We'll have already finished the grocery shopping by the time you get home.
___ You will get home while we are shopping.

Part 2: Read each numbered sentence. Then circle the letter of the sentence (a) or (b) that best describes the information in the statement.

11. Gina has been collecting stamps since high school.
 - a. Gina stopped collecting stamps.
 - b. Gina still collects stamps.

12. Enrico has been writing an article about toys.
 - a. The article is finished.
 - b. The article isn't finished yet.
13. Enrico looked out the window and said, "It's been raining."
 - a. It's definitely still raining.
 - b. It's possible that it stopped raining a little while ago.
14. I had an invitation to the party, but I'd arranged a trip to London.
 - a. The invitation came first.
 - b. The arrangements for the trip came first.
15. David and Tom were talking together when a young woman spoke to them.
 - a. What David and Tom said took more time than what the woman said.
 - b. What the woman said took more time than what David and Tom said.
16. Mark went home and switched off the computer.
 - a. He went home first.
 - b. He switched off the computer first.
17. When Claire arrived, Henry was walking up and down.
 - a. Claire's arrival started earlier than Henry's walk.
 - b. Henry's walk started earlier than Claire's arrival.
18. Vicky is watching the weather forecast.
 - a. The weather forecast hasn't started yet.
 - b. The weather forecast has started but not finished.
19. We had already traveled some distance when the sun rose.
 - a. Our journey started before sunrise.
 - b. Our journey started after sunrise.
20. I'm going to work by bus this week.
 - a. I always go to work by bus.
 - b. My routine is different for this week.
21. She ___ here since she was eight years old.
 - a. lives
 - b. has living
 - c. has lived
 - d. has live
22. By the time Mary gets home next Friday, her uncle ___ for Paris.
 - a. will leave
 - b. left
 - c. will have left
 - d. leaves
23. A cold wind ___ for the last three days.
 - a. has been blowing
 - b. blows
 - c. is blowing
 - d. blew
24. My family loves this house. It ___ the family home ever since my grandfather built it 60 years ago.
 - a. was
 - b. has been
 - c. is
 - d. will be
25. After ten unhappy years, Janice finally quit her job. She ___ along with her boss for a long time before she finally decided to look for a new position.
 - a. hadn't been getting
 - b. isn't getting
 - c. didn't get
 - d. hasn't been getting
26. John ___ quite ill in the past few days.
 - a. had became
 - b. had become
 - c. has became
 - d. has become
27. According to research reports, people usually ___ in the sleep 25 to 30 times each night.
 - a. turn
 - b. are turning
 - c. have turned
 - d. turned
28. While I ___ TV last night, a mouse ran across the floor.
 - a. watch
 - b. watched
 - c. was watching
 - d. am watching

Part 3: Circle the correct letter (a, b, c, or d) to complete each sentence.

29. I don't feel good. I ____ home from work tomorrow.
a. am staying
b. stay
c. will have stayed
d. stayed
30. As soon as I ____ home, it started to rain heavily.
a. get
b. got
c. was getting
d. is getting
31. Most major surveys in recent years ____ that Americans are satisfied with their family life.
a. have find
b. find
c. has found
d. have found
32. Next month we ____ our 5th wedding anniversary.
a. will be celebrated
b. will have been celebrating
c. will be celebrating
d. will have celebrated
33. He ____ to class this morning because he was sick.
a. didn't come
b. hadn't come
c. hasn't come
d. wasn't coming
34. They ____ together for five years when they decided to get married.
a. had been
b. have been
c. were
d. had been being
35. No, I ____ a good time at this party. Let's leave!
a. am not having
b. don't have
c. won't be having
d. didn't have
36. The new research park being developed here ____ to a consortium of inventors.
a. is belonging
b. belonging
c. is belong
d. belongs
37. Alex did not come to see the film last night because he ____ it before.
a. saw
b. had seen
c. has seen
d. was seen
38. I ____ this letter around for days and haven't even looked at it!
a. carry
b. have been carrying
c. am carrying
d. was carrying
39. I ____ to be home early tonight.
a. will try
b. will be trying
c. will have been trying
d. will have tried
40. With your help, I ____ by 5:00. Then we can go out for dinner.
a. will be finishing
b. will finish
c. have finished
d. have been finished
41. Dust devils spin like tornadoes but ____ more than two or three hundred feet in the air.
a. rarely reaches
b. reaches rarely
c. reach rarely
d. rarely reach
42. Before I graduate next September, I ____ at Can Tho University for more than 4 years.
a. will be studying
b. am going to study
c. will have been studying
d. will study
43. Last Tet holidays, my family ____ to Dalat, but my wife was not well. Thus, we all stayed at home.
a. was going to travel
b. was traveling
c. had traveled
d. traveled
44. When Mary was younger, she ____ tennis much more than now.
a. used to like
b. would like
c. was liking
d. like

45. I ____ something outside. Are the doors locked?
a. am hearing
b. hear
c. hearing
d. hears
46. I ____ at the office no later than 2:00 this afternoon, so we can discuss the problem at 3:00.
a. have been
b. had been
c. am going to be
d. will have been

Part 4: Correct the use of verb tenses in the following sentences. Underline the errors and write the correct words above them.

47. Long before the Prime Minister left for Canada, she had discussing the issue in depth with the entire cabinet.
48. While she lived in Toronto, she was working on her master's degree.
49. By the time that the report is finished, the committee will have spending over two months working on it.
50. Since she finished her degree, she travels around the country.
51. We took the bus downtown, did a few errands, and had gone to lunch.
52. Since the Depression of the 1930s, the farm production in the United States have dropped from around 30 percent to less than 4 percent.
53. The actress who plays this role will receive an award when the critics will see her performance.
54. He has been the first violist with the band Spot before he retired 10 years ago.
55. Doctors has discovered that chronic pain can have a strong psychological component.
56. Coal and oil were formed when plants become buried in marches or swamps and then decayed.

Part 5: Circle the correct letter (a, b, c, or d) to complete the passage.

AMERICAN EATING HABITS

In recent years, many changes ⁵⁷____ place in the American diet. Traditional meals ⁵⁸____ less common. Today, Americans ⁵⁹____ meals "from scratch" as often as they ⁶⁰____ in the past. More and more Americans ⁶¹____ microwavable and other fast foods to heat at home.

Eating at home ⁶²____ less common, and restaurants ⁶³____ a major part of Americans lives. Today, Americans ⁶⁴____ 43 cents of every food dollar on meals that they ⁶⁵____ away from home. In 1980, Americans ⁶⁶____ 36 cents on meals away from home. In 1955, the amount ⁶⁷____ only 25 cents.

Over the years, these changes in eating habits ⁶⁸____ jobs nationwide. Since the 1970s, the restaurant industry ⁶⁹____ tremendously in the United States. Today, approximately 9 million people ⁷⁰____ in food service industries.

57. a. have taken
b. take
c. will take
d. will be taking
58. a. become
b. have become
c. will become
d. will be becoming
59. a. will not make
b. do not make
c. didn't make
d. wasn't making
60. a. had done
b. had been doing
c. did
d. was doing
61. a. bought
b. will buy
c. will be buying
d. buy
62. a. also became
b. was also becoming
c. also has become
d. has also become

- | | |
|---|--|
| 63. a. have become
b. became
c. was becoming
d. had become | 67. a. had been
b. had been being
c. was
d. was being |
| 64. a. will spend
b. will be spending
c. spent
d. spend | 68. a. have affected
b. affected
c. was affecting
d. had affected |
| 65. a. eat
b. ate
c. will eat
d. will be eating | 69. a. grew
b. was growing
c. had grown
d. has been growing |
| 66. a. had spent
b. had been spending
c. spent
d. was spending | 70. a. work
b. will work
c. will be working
d. worked |

Appendix 2

Questionnaire

Please tick (✓) the box which best describes your point of view towards each item below.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I enjoy learning grammar.					
2	The course materials in this class are necessary for me to learn English tenses.					
3	I can master the knowledge of tenses being taught in this class.					
4	Understanding grammatical rules well is helpful to support my speaking and writing skills.					
5	I like the exercises and activities in this class.					
6	I'm worried about my ability to do well in this class.					
7	I enjoy learning grammar outside of the class whenever I have a chance.					
8	What I learn in this class will help me in other classes.					
9	Activities of discovering the meanings and uses of English tenses help me understand tenses better.					
10	I will receive a good grade in this class.					
11	I don't like learning grammar.					
12	I work hard in this class even when I don't like what we are doing.					
13	I'm good at discovering grammar rules (e.g. the meanings and uses of English tenses).					

14	I often feel bored when I study grammar in this class.					
15	Activities of discovering the meanings and uses of English tenses help me understand tenses better and do exercises on tenses more effectively.					

Clusters	Sub-Clusters	Items
Value	Intrinsic motivation	1, 4, 7, 11 (R), 12, 14 (R)
	Task value	2, 5, 8, 9, 15
Expectancy	Expectancy	3, 6 (R), 10
	Language aptitude	13

Appendix 3

Handout for students

Topic 7: The Past Perfect (Continuous) versus the Simple Past

Setting the Context

Previewing the passage: Look at the cartoon. Can you guess what happened? Discuss in small groups and create the story according to the cartoon.



Now read the true story and see what really happens.

Penalty Shot

Goalkeeper Pierre Vannier was sure that he would not be re-selected for his local football team in Ferney, near the French-Swiss border. He had made only one successful save that season. However, this was soon to change.

Pierre had left home for a stroll at three in the afternoon on January 5th 1984. He had been out for only five minutes, when the opportunity for him to make the save of his life presented itself. He had rounded the corner into the Avenue des Alpes when he heard a child's screams. Looking up, he was just in time to see five-year-old Marie-Jeanne Musi falling down from a fifth floor window. Instinctively, he threw out his arms and caught her.

“It was like saving a hard penalty shot,” said M. Vannier. “It was a shot I couldn’t afford to miss,” he added modestly.

For further news, Pierre and the young girl’s shocked parents had to wait until the ambulance arrived and took her to the hospital. Marie-Jeanne had nothing worse than a broken arm! For news of his place in the team, Pierre had to wait for a week until his team manager and trainer had discussed his selection. To his delight, his place in the team was assured!

The Book of Narrow Escapes

Discussing ideas: Do you see any differences between the cartoon and the story? Discuss the differences with your friends.

Thinking about Meaning and Use

Exercise 1: Individually, reread the story “Penalty Shot.” Underline the past perfect tense.

Now discuss these questions with your partner.

1. a. Do we know exactly when Pierre made his one successful save?
b. Did he make the save before or after the events in this story?
2. Do we know exactly when he left home for a walk?
3. How long after the start of his walk did he have the chance to save the girl?
4. Did he hear the child’s screams before or after he turned the corner?

Exercise 2: Here are some statements in the simple past about the story “Penalty Shot.” Are they True, False, or is there No Information given in the story?

- ___ Pierre saved only one goal in the 1983-1984 football season.
- ___ Pierre went out for a walk at 3 pm on January 5th 1984.
- ___ Pierre strolled about for five minutes when he heard the girl’s screams.
- ___ Pierre turned the corner when he heard the screams.

Exercise 3: Read each sentence and the statements that follow. Write T if the statement is true, F if it is false, or “?” if you do not have enough information to decide. Then discuss your answers in small groups.

1. After he had eaten a sandwich, he ate a salad.
___ a. He ate the salad first. Then he ate the sandwich.
___ b. He ate the salad and sandwich together.
2. He had left before the play ended.
___ a. The play ended. Then he left.
___ b. He has gone by the end of the play.
3. He had known her for many years when they started to work together.
___ a. He met her at work at the first time.
___ b. He knew her for a long time.
4. Tom didn’t lose weight until he went on a diet.
___ a. Tom didn’t lose weight.
___ b. Tom went on a diet.
5. It was lunchtime. I looked out the window, and I saw that it had rained.
___ a. It had rained just before I looked out the window.
___ b. I looked out the window after the rain stopped.
6. He left his job because he had found a better one.
___ a. He left his job. Then he looked for a better job.
___ b. He left his job after he found another job.
7. The hospital didn’t lose power although there had been a power failure in the city.
___ a. The hospital had a power failure.
___ b. The city lost power.
8. The two men had been working on a project together when I met them.
___ a. They worked together before I met them.
___ b. They finished the project.

Exercise 4: Choose two possible endings to each sentence.

1. We didn’t see Bill at the party because
 - a. he’d left before we arrived.
 - b. he left after we got there.
 - c. he got there after we’d left.
 - d. we arrived before he went home.

2. Maria got a terrible sunburn
 - a. because she had used plenty of sunscreen.
 - b. even though she had stayed in the shade.
 - c. although she hadn't used sunscreen.
 - d. because she'd spent the day at the beach.
3. I'd been driving for hours,
 - a. but I'm not ready to stop.
 - b. and I'd never felt so tired.
 - c. and I was starting to feel sleepy.
 - d. so the car has run out of gas.
4. By the time the police came,
 - a. an ambulance took the man to the hospital.
 - b. a large crowd of people had gathered.
 - c. the firefighters have put out the fire.
 - d. we'd all managed to get out of the car.
5. Eric had been sleeping late
 - a. before he got this job.
 - b. after he got this job.
 - c. because he was tired from work.
 - d. although he was tired from work.
6. Rachel had never seen a live tiger
 - a. after she went to the zoo.
 - b. before she went to India.
 - c. until she traveled to Africa.
 - d. when she'd gone on safari.

Practicing

Exercise 5: Complete the following sentences by using either the simple past or the past perfect tense of the verbs in parentheses.

1. Until the automobile, the Depression, and the world wars (bring) _____ changes in US society, American lifestyles (remain) _____ constant for a century.
2. American society (begin/already) _____ to change when World War II (break) _____ out.
3. After rural families (move) _____ to the cities in search of work, they (create) _____ new lives there instead of returning to their farms.
4. Women (work/rarely) _____ outside the home before World War II (produce) _____ a labor shortage.
5. After women (experience) _____ the world of work, many

(find) _____ it difficult to return to their traditional roles.

6. By the time that World War II (come) _____ to an end, the American way of life (change) _____ tremendously.
7. It (be) _____ a beautiful morning. It (rain) _____ in the night and so the ground (be) _____ fresh and clean and it (smell) _____ wonderful. None of the Taylor family (be) _____ awake though. They (all/go) _____ to bed very late the night before. Their Australian cousin (arrive) _____ unexpectedly that evening and they (sit up) _____ talking most of the night, although it (be) _____ now 8:00 in the morning, they (only/be) _____ in bed for about two hours.

Exercise 6: Error Analysis. In pairs, find the errors in these paragraphs and correct them.

In 1953, Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norkay had been the first climbers to reach the top of Mount Everest. Since then, many people had climbed Mount Everest, especially in recent years. Before 1953, no human had ever stood on the top of the world's highest peak although some had tried. George Mallory and Sandy Irvine, for example, had died almost 30 years earlier on a perilous path along the North Ridge.

Since 1953, many more people had set world records. In 1975, Junko Tabe of Japan had become the first woman on a mountaineering team to reach the top. In 1980, Reinhold Messner of Italy had become the first person to make the climb to the top alone, without other people and without oxygen. In 1996, Alison Hargreaves of Scotland had duplicated Messner's triumph. She became the first woman to climb Mount Everest solo and without oxygen.

Each climber faces frigid winds, storms, avalanches, and most dangerous of all, the serious effects of the high altitude on the heart, lungs, and brain. So why had many hundreds of people tried to climb Mount Everest in recent years? In 1998, for example, 650

people had tried to reach the top, and on one single day, 12 people actually succeeded. The only way to explain these numbers is to understand that the climb up Mount Everest represents the ultimate challenge of reaching the “top of the world.”

Using What You’ve Learned

Activity: The twenty-first century has been a period of tremendous change worldwide: in work and careers, family life, education, medical care, transportation, eating habits, shopping, and entertainment, to name only a few areas. Choose one area of change as the topic for a short composition. First, describe the situation in your

culture 25, 50, 75, or 100 years ago. Then describe the situation today, making comparisons between the past and present. Finally, use your composition as the basis for a three-minute presentation to the class.

A Step Beyond

Activity: Look in newspapers or on the Internet for some examples of the two tenses in everyday life. Then share and discuss your findings with your friends.

Integrating English, science and liberal studies across the curriculum

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Abstract

This presentation critically evaluates a 3-year collaborative project involving the training of secondary school content teachers and English teachers to develop 'Language Across the Curriculum' (LAC) learning materials for S1-S3 students. It was found after a needs analysis and a training program to learn about functional grammar that teachers expressed strong resistance to the LAC project. To find the cause of the resistance and ways to further develop LAC, a questionnaire was sent to all content teachers to find their genuine needs regarding LAC. Using the results of the questionnaire as the starting point, the LAC project takes a new perspective by adopting a genre-based approach. By identifying the genres and their unique requirements, the English teachers were then able to map out LAC teaching in the curriculum.

Background: 'Language across the curriculum' in Hong Kong secondary schools

Instruction at secondary schools in Hong Kong is conducted in either Chinese or English. In English-medium schools, all teachers, including non-language teachers, are required to attain a level of English proficiency so that they are able to communicate intelligibly and provide a good model for student language acquisition. Within such language empowerment, it is assumed that students will learn effectively in various disciplines. Along this line, both Halliday (1975) and Painter (1984) emphasize the importance of language in the learning process as knowledge of the world is acquired not simply by observing, but instead by the language itself, which provides the means for going

beyond immediate tangible meanings and comprehending abstract meanings. To put it another way, to thrive in school, students need to understand increasingly technical and abstract meanings through the necessary linguistic resources (Painter, 1996). In view of this, it is particularly important for Hong Kong students who study in English-medium schools to master the English language in order to do well in their schooling.

In order to promote both the content and language teachers' understanding of the role of language in learning, training workshops on Language Across the Curriculum (LAC) have been regularly conducted by the Education Bureau in Hong Kong secondary schools. These included large-scale training courses such as *Developing Language*

Across the Curriculum for English-Medium Education in 2003 and *Improving Language and Learning in Public-Sector Schools* in 2005. A total of more than thirty English-medium schools in Hong Kong participated. Both projects have adopted the concepts of Halliday's Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL).

Halliday's SFL (Halliday, 1975; Halliday & Hasan, 1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) sees language as a meaning-making system and notes that language use varies across disciplines or situational contexts. Naturally, LAC projects aim to investigate how language is required and applied in different school subject disciplines. Therefore, the classroom applications of functional grammar, the introduction of genre teaching, and an exploration of the connection between text and context are the core elements of the Hong Kong Schools' LAC projects (Groves, 2004; Polias, 2005).

Agreeing to the basic concepts of LAC projects held by the Education Bureau and with a view to enhancing the school-based curriculum, our school, Law Ting Pong Secondary School (LTPSS), applied for and received funding from the Quality Education Fund for an LAC project envisaged as a two-year plan. The project for the first year was *Writing Across the Curriculum: The Development of Common Assessment Targets*. The second year project was *Aligning Curriculum and Assessment Across Key Learning Areas: Preparing Students and Teachers to Meet the Challenge of New Senior Secondary*. Both phases involved extensive cross-departmental collaboration on devising LAC learning materials and regular training workshops for 30 English, liberal studies (LS) and integrated science (IS) teachers on learning SFL. At present, in Phase 3, *Connecting the Contents and English Usage*, the LAC project is exploring a new approach to LAC by identifying genres related to different content subjects and their unique features.

This paper will be divided into three sections. The first section will describe Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the project with specific reference to the effectiveness of genre-awareness training workshops, cross-curricular tasks, and the development of common assessment targets. The second section will give a

critical evaluation of work done in Phases 1 and 2. Finally, the paper will end with a discussion on future directions of the LAC project.

Phase 1

Writing across the curriculum: The development of common assessment targets

Since language is embedded in and shaped by context, successful language-awareness content teaching requires students to develop control of language across all contexts as well as a mastery of genres and their respective language features. A pre-project questionnaire was issued to all teachers to examine teacher perception of the importance of language in their teaching. The questionnaire was divided into five parts: writing tasks, writing instructions & language support, marking & feedback, writing habits, and cross-departmental collaboration. Twenty-eight questionnaires were filled in anonymously by teachers of English, LS, and IS at LTPSS.

Despite the importance of language in learning, content teachers were not convinced of the need to be language conscious, as revealed by the findings of a pre-project questionnaire which aimed to investigate teacher attitudes and perceptions regarding writing and the development of common assessment rubrics. The findings from the survey indicate that, in terms of language support provided to students, English teachers adopted various writing strategies regarding brainstorming, spelling, word formation, sentence types, dictionary use, paraphrasing, formal and informal register, and phrases, with scores averaging at 4.1 out of 5. In contrast, LS teachers were comparatively less aware of these writing elements in their subject disciplines, scoring 3.64 out of 5. In particular, science teachers generally scored the lowest amongst all areas, at only 3.4 out of 5.0 (see Appendix 1, Figures 1-9).

However, it is interesting to note that among various writing strategies, the LS department prioritizes setting demanding writing tasks and note-taking strategies (refer to Appendix 1, Figures 10-11) as their core writing requirements. Due to the subject nature, student writing may be concentrated in the

argumentative and discussion genres. For example, in writing a critique of a historical account, higher orders of thinking such as synthesis and analysis of information, interpretation, and drawing implications are required.

As for IS, writing strategies such as defining technical terms (3.85 out of 4) and cloze exercises (3.2 out of 4) are stressed (see Appendix 1), perhaps because the science discipline involves many technical terms such as photosynthesis or experimental processes such as crystallization and distillation. However, generally speaking, the science department scored the lowest in most of the areas in providing language support. This may be because non-linguistic support such as visual (diagrams, graphs, cross-sections, flow-charts) and symbolic (equations and formulae) modes predominate in science (Polias, 2005, p. 14). Below are some of the illustrations of cross-curricular learning materials adopted in Form 1 - Form 3 of the junior form curriculum.

Subject-Specific genres

In the junior science curriculum, students were required to write scientific reports with proper schemata structures (objective, apparatus and materials, procedure, and observation and discussion) and also the appropriate language

features. For example, to-infinitives and process verbs are used in the objectives and the imperative mood is deployed in the procedure. Technical terms are used throughout the scientific report (Figure 1).

In addition to the schematic structure and language features specific to scientific reports, students were also provided with language support at the lexical level, such as common scientific prefixes (e.g. mono-, bi-, hydra-, hyper-, micro-) and suffixes (e.g. -graphy, -ation).

As for LS, predominant genres such as discursive, argumentative, and compare and contrast were reinforced in the curriculum. Examples are 'Investigate the effect of MSN Language on Standard English,' 'Is capitalism or socialism suitable in modern China?' and 'Investigate the impact of the pollution problems of Shenzhen on Hong Kong,' where topic sentences, elaboration of ideas, information flow, discourse markers, hyper- and macro-themes, and counter-argument were taught.

Apart from the textual devices, vocabulary support on describing graphs, tables, and charts was also developed with the mathematics department (Figure 2).

Figure 1. An example handout

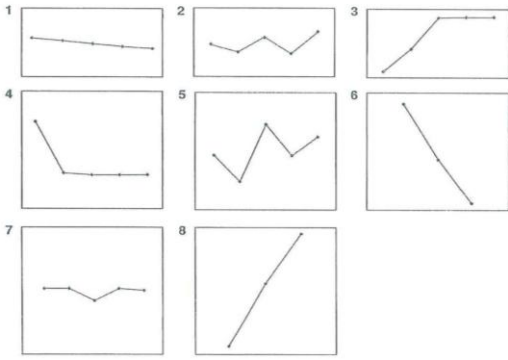
- | |
|--|
| <p>a. Use to-infinitives and process verbs to state the objective.</p> <p>e.g. <u>To identify</u> oxygen, carbon dioxide, and nitrogen in the three test tubes.</p> <p><u>To demonstrate</u> the properties of halogen gas.</p> <p><u>To compare</u> the water vapor content and temperature of breathed air and unbreathed air.</p> <p><u>To investigate</u> the temperature effect on the rate of photosynthesis.</p> <p>b. Start the procedure with an action verb in the imperative mood (e.g. <i>cut, put, grind, squeeze, filter, remove, decolorize, repeat, record</i>).</p> <p>c. Use technical terms for the apparatus and materials and state accurate measurements (e.g. <i>3 test tubes, 0.02% DCPIP solution, 5 drops of lemon juice</i>).</p> |
|--|

Figure 2. An exercise: Language describing graphs, tables and charts

C. Exercise
 1. Describe the graphs below with suitable noun or verb phrases.

- There was a _____ (adj) _____ (n) in the number of children visiting the zoo.
- There were _____ (adj) _____ (n) in sales, but the trend was _____ (upward/ downward).
- There was a _____ (adj) _____ (n) in the amount of coal used, followed by a period of _____ (n).
- Share prices _____ (v), but then _____ (v).
- The increase of Chinese immigrants in Hong Kong is unstable, hitting a _____ (n) in the middle of the period.
- The number of Chinese White Dolphin _____ (v) _____ (adv).
- The number of houses sold _____ (v) _____ (adv).
- The sale of fish products _____ (v) _____ (adv).

Graphs



(Adapted from IELTS Testbuilders, Macmillan)

Standards-Referenced genre rubrics

To ensure standardized feedback to student writing across the curriculum, task-specific assessment rubrics that address both content and language were used. For example, content teachers marked the content of an essay in such areas as the synthesis of information or the elaboration and explanation of ideas, whereas language teachers assessed language aspects like grammar, spelling, register, and information flow. Therefore, a double-marking system was adopted for cross-curricular projects between language and content subject disciplines.

Phase 2

Aligning curriculum and assessment across key learning areas: Preparing students and teachers to meet the challenge of new senior secondary

Since the first-year LAC project successfully enhanced cross-departmental collaboration in setting up cross-curricular tasks and devising genre-based assessment rubrics, it was decided that the key objective of the second year would be to put more emphasis on writing pedagogy in which SFL was adopted. Thus, the LAC teachers were asked to attend the training course *Language and Literacy: Classroom Applications of Functional Grammar* provided by the Education Manpower Bureau (EMB). As a course requirement and under the supervision of the EMB, teacher trainees had to further develop LAC in schools through delivering SFL workshops to content teachers.

Thirty English, LS and IS teachers attended 30-hour SFL workshops; these were conducted based on the course book *Language & Literacy: Classroom Applications of Functional Grammar* (see Appendix 2 for a brief summary of the SFL concepts covered in the workshops).

Evaluation of work done in phase 1 & phase 2

Generally speaking, the most positive impact of the project was strengthening linkages and creating extensive collaboration across English, LS and IS departments as evidenced in frequent co-planning, co-teaching, curriculum mapping and the development of genre-based assessment rubrics. The functional grammar training workshops were able to sensitize content teachers to a certain extent to the writing genres and linguistic features required in their own subject disciplines. In turn, the writing descriptors of the assessment rubrics were made explicit to the junior form students, who began to show awareness of the notion of genre in their writing.

During Phase 1, an LAC Committee was also set up, comprising the panel heads of the English, LS and IS departments. An LAC lesson was conducted once a week by trained English teachers,

specifically providing language support in the junior form. Indeed, it was encouraging to see that the students – although they initially found LAC lessons strange – gradually developed a better understanding of the role of language in the process of the content subjects. More importantly, LTPSS, via the LAC project, was able to clearly spell out the message that language learning is not confined only to English language education, but can be spread as broad as across the curriculum.

It is, however, worth mentioning that while students were supposed to have a better understanding of the writing genres introduced, the ad hoc arrangement of the LAC teaching materials served as a limitation. The materials often did not tie in well with either the English curriculum or the LS and IS curricula. Some students were confused whether the LAC materials were about learning English or learning content.

The junior form English curriculum (2006 - 2008) during Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the LAC project was mainly school-based language-art modules which took students through a series of literary skills. A typical LAC unit may require students to read a short literary text; the teacher would ask some comprehension questions and teach some vocabulary and the related grammatical items as appeared in the reading text. It seems that the most innovative element introduced by the LAC project was highlighting the connection between the learning of English and the learning of another content subject. Before the LAC collaboration, learning English was not always perceived as an essential tool for studying other content subjects.

In Phases 1 and 2, the collaboration of English and content teachers brought about several theme-based modules. The outcomes of the LAC units are often the proposal of a project or reporting the proposal of a project. While it is not uncommon in tertiary sectors that the outcomes of English learning stem from a process of problem-solving or a series of interdisciplinary tasks, it is still taken as something quite innovative and challenging in the secondary sectors of Hong Kong. LTPSS was not an exception – the prototype LAC modules were taken as something quite exciting. This also relates to the

tradition of the LTPSS's English department: seeing the teaching of literary and aesthetic elements as the core part of the curriculum. The shift of learning foci and outcomes from language-art items to non-language art or content-related items has enabled the English teachers to come across fresh perspectives and new themes in the teaching of English. This change is definitely meaningful and influential.

The double-marking system and the development of assessment rubrics were very much favored by the LS teachers as they felt it would help them assess student outcomes more effectively. While the activity of double marking is certainly an innovative one, it reveals a very interesting thought about teacher understanding of LAC: while the content teachers were receiving knowledge about the genres of their fields and became more sensitive to the language usage of the subjects they were teaching, the double marking activity did not require them to assess the language aspects. The same critique also applies to the English teachers: the double marking exercise did not require them to assess the content areas or scrutinize the differences of genres employed in LS and science subjects. Asking an English teacher to assess the English usage of a text and a content teacher to assess the content seems to imply that in order to complete a writing text or an oral activity, the language and content parts are not highly interconnected. Indeed, the language usage and the presentation or the structure of any genre are complicatedly connected, and the connection should be critically assessed. To conclude, while the double-marking exercise was certainly taken as something innovative and challenging for LTPSS English and content teachers, this way of co-assessing has been critically examined.

If we really take each of the genres as “a staged, goal oriented purposeful social activity” (Martin, 1986), it would be impossible to have a clear distinction between the language and content aspects. The employment of language use such as formality, style, and register is also very closely related to the purpose of the task itself. In addition, the power struggle of different content should be taken into consideration. For example, the same genre employed in different content subjects may

receive different attention from students. This is because school writing genres are always situated in school communities, so each genre carries a different institutional power. For example, the procedure genre will be treated differently by science teachers and English teachers. A careful analysis of LAC elements should take this phenomenon into consideration to understand why particular genres are better performed by some students in certain subjects. Knowing the underlying reasons will help teachers design tailor-made materials to fit student needs.

Phase 3

Connecting the contents and English usage

A critical analysis of what has been successful and what has met resistance in Phase 1 and Phase 2 has set the ground for a new phase of the LAC project. In Phase 3, the main focus is steering the focus of the LAC project back to basics – stressing the original function of LAC as proposed in the early '70s in Britain: "learning to listen, speak, read and write is not an end in itself, but rather a means to make sense of the world" (McKay, 1994). The students' worlds are naturally their school studies as well as the society in which they are living. Therefore, the aim of the LAC project should eventually help students make and share new meanings about the world through the talking, reading, and writing they do to foster the growth of their language abilities and subject knowledge. In Phase 3, the focus is not so much about training the content teachers but about finding out what LAC elements the students need and how these elements can be systematically and effectively learned in the English curriculum.

In this phase, the project coordinators ensure that the learning of LAC elements is meaningful. What does this mean? It means we are not teaching certain grammatical items or writing genres on science topics or LS topics in an ad hoc manner. Since the English curricula of S1, S2, and S3 for the school year 2008 - 2009 are task-based and theme-based, the incorporation of LAC elements into the English curriculum is feasible. Themes which are related to LS or IS subject teaching are chosen and turned into modules. The importance of meaningful outcomes for each of the modules is stressed. As the

English modules are closely connected to either the LS or IS themes, the students can be engaged in meaningful speaking, writing, and reading that encourages thinking in relation to the content of subject learning. It has been observed via teaching the theme-based English modules that the students are more motivated and the content teachers are more interested in participating in the LAC movement.

Another important measure in Phase 3 is that, apart from a thorough analysis of the genres and language skills required for IS and LS subjects and appropriate themes adopted for the English modules, we make sure that we teach different kinds of thinking skills in the process of the learning. While there is no one right way to think, limiting the students to think from one single perspective is definitely detrimental to them. Therefore, the tasks in the new English learning materials require the students to examine issues from different perspectives. Learning literacy involves practicing "the using of any kind of sign system to make sense and share meaning" (Monson & Monson, 1994, p. 519). Taking this definition as a starting point, the texts of different disciplines can be perceived as different forms of literacy. This concept is important because it has given language learning an important stance and, perhaps, a license – from learning language the students can learn all other forms of literacy. This has also given the English curriculum a wide range of themes to choose from for writing learning materials.

To tie in closely with the learning of LTPSS's new LS curriculum, the English learning materials also stress the importance of the students' own experiences. For example, students learn the research method of a scientific experiment and see if it is possible to transfer the skills to conducting a social science LS project. The stress here is the understanding of the research genres and the thinking processes. Language skills are used as a tool to arrive at the learning destination. While the outcomes are definitely similar to the outcomes as required by LS, the course materials are strictly English learning. There are no more separate LAC lessons – the LAC elements are now systematically

integrated in the non-language arts modules of the English curriculum.

In Phase 3, we have also explored how the incorporation of LAC elements in the teaching of English can be done effectively for the students to improve their abilities to learn in English and other subject lessons. A round of preliminary and informal interviews with some of the content teachers who had participated in Phase 1 and 2 training indicated that, in general, they did not find the training very useful or applicable to their teaching. The English department therefore decided that it would be best for the English teachers to become the main agents to bring about the change in Phase 3. Skills appropriate to the genres required by the content teachers were situated in the English curriculum and themes related to the LS and IS curricula were adopted.

Another change is a modification in how the double marking exercise is done. To further enhance the sensitivity of the English and the content teachers to each others' areas, they assess *both* the content and the language areas and discuss the final marks together. This kind of collaboration is perceived as a much more meaningful activity than learning a new approach of grammar, but not applying the learning in the teaching.

Conclusion: Looking ahead

One school year has passed since we started Phase 3. English teachers observe that the incorporation of LAC elements is welcomed both by the students and the content teachers. We have already sent out a survey questionnaire asking the content teachers to inform the LAC team about the genres and language skills required in their curricula. It was followed by discussions between the English and subject LAC coordinators to find the importance of the skills. There will be follow-up interviews with some of the content teachers. We also plan to do a systematic collection and analysis of all the skills required by the subject teachers following the new Secondary School Curriculum starting year 2009 for all Hong Kong schools. Deriving a curricular LAC map is a top priority job in Phase 3 so English teachers can

include and recycle these language skills in the vertical English curriculum.

We understand that it is extremely important for the English teachers to have a good understanding of the LAC mapping so when we plan the English modules we know where to place the LAC elements meaningfully to ensure a smooth progression in the vertical and horizontal curricula. This way, the students would feel that they are learning the English language and this knowledge can help them study other subjects better. It is not even necessary to use the term LAC with students. Telling the students that they are learning LAC items confuses rather than helps in the learning process.

Starting the first term of the school year 2008 - 2009, the English department has adopted the task-based learning approach for all the language modules. Roughly 50% of the curriculum is language arts lessons while the rest is non-language arts lessons. It is expected that the LAC language items will be taught and recycled in the non-language arts modules.

The LAC project, though only in its beginning stages, has somehow become a special feature of LTPSS. Teachers in general agree to collaborate to enhance the students' language proficiency. Content teachers are gradually learning the linguistic features of the essential genres of their content areas. The English teachers, who in general have become quite familiar with the features of a number of genres, agree that they need to strengthen their skills in assessment design to help content teachers evaluate student learning of particular LAC linguistic features. In Phase 3, the English teachers will be offered in-house training to become familiar with issues such as genre features, genre assessment, and rubric writing. It is stressed that in Phase 3, we have to ensure that there is no more ad-hoc collaboration between English and content teachers to avoid confusing the students and aggravating resistance from content teachers. Continuous evaluation will be conducted throughout Phase 3 to ensure the smooth continuation of the LAC project to enable students to survive well in school by being able to manage and master the diverse genres involved in school studies.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire survey findings

The following figures compare the perceptions of English, liberal studies, and integrated science teachers toward the importance of language support and language strategies in their teaching.

Eng = English subject
Libs = Liberal Studies
Sci = Integrated Science

Figure 1. Language support on brainstorming ideas before writing

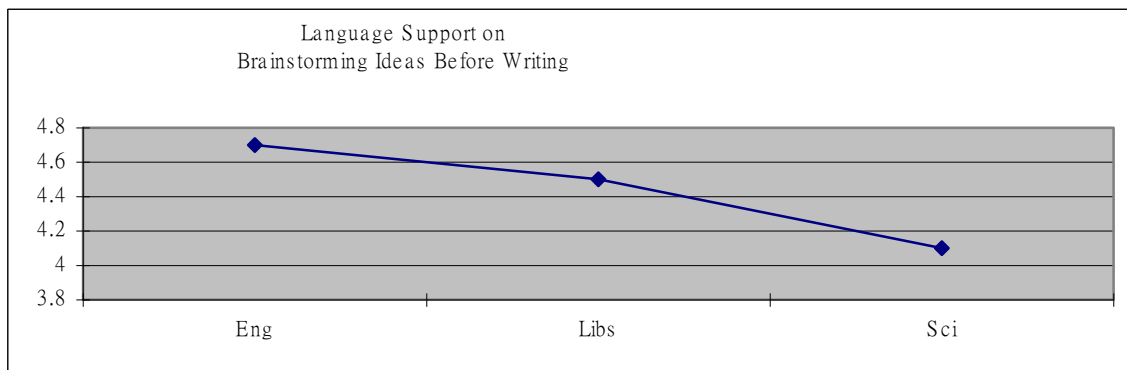


Figure 2. Language support on spelling strategies

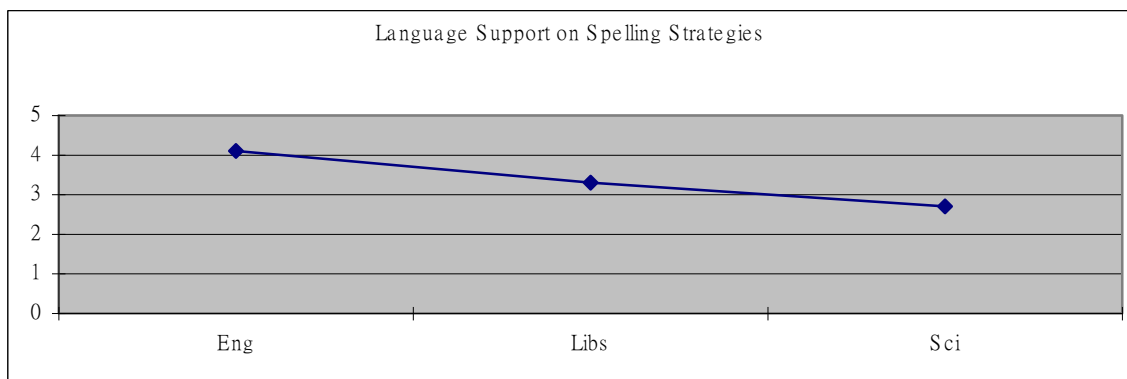


Figure 3. Language support on word formation

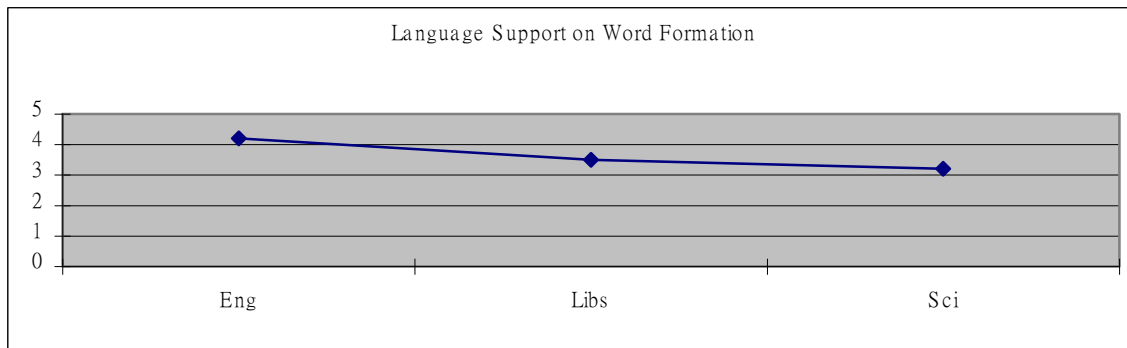


Figure 4. Language support on sentence types

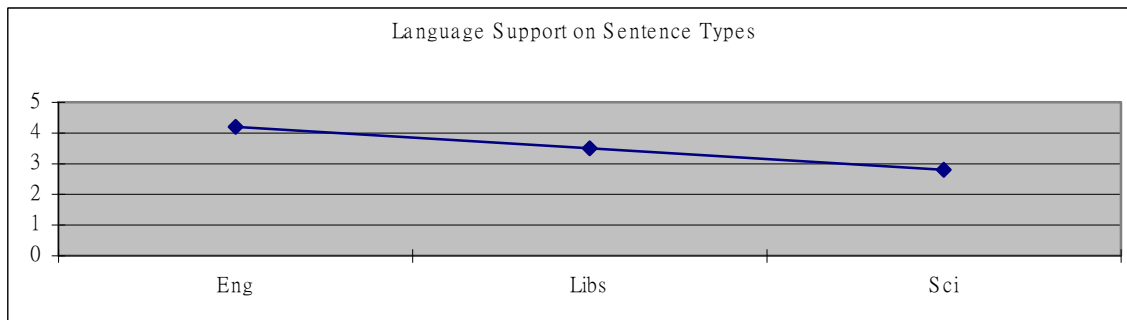


Figure 5. Language support on paraphrasing

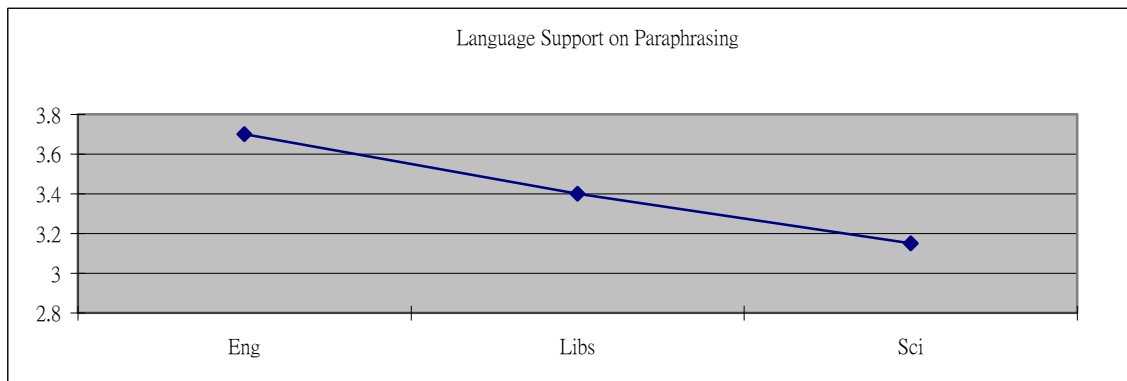


Figure 6. Language support on formal and informal register

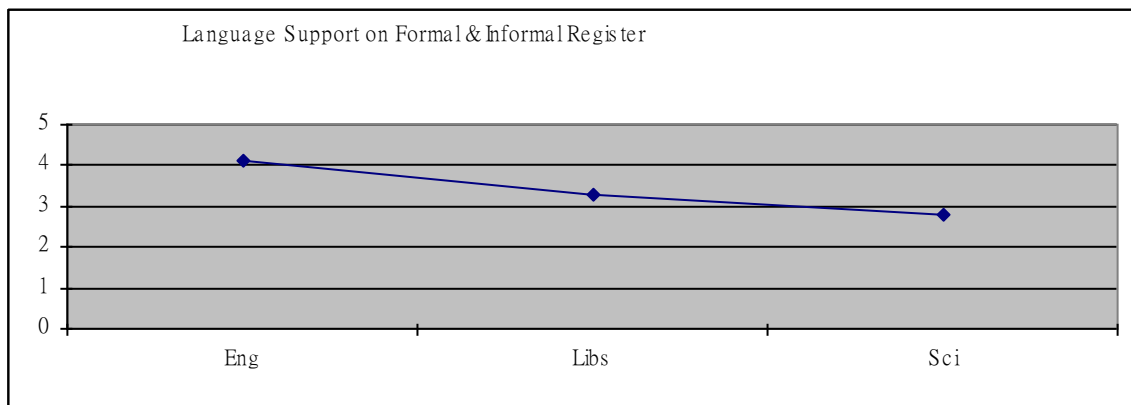


Figure 7. Language support on phrases

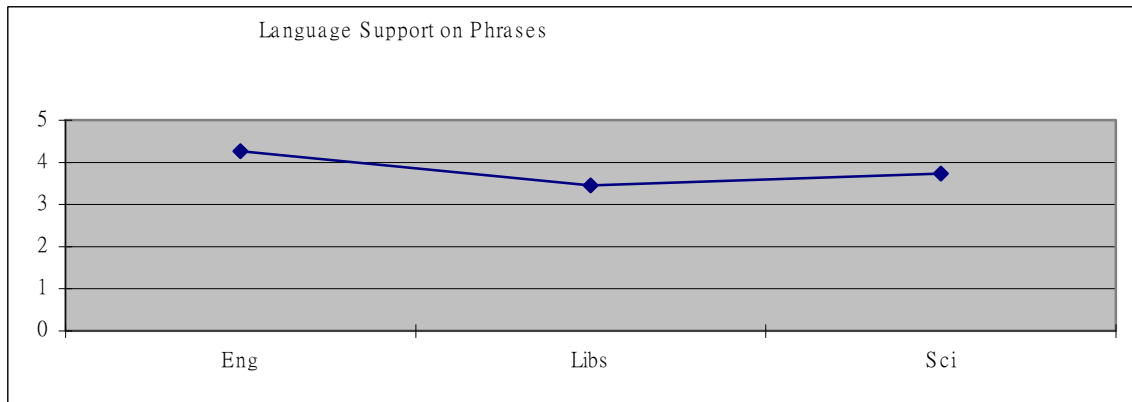


Figure 8. Language support on setting demanding writing tasks

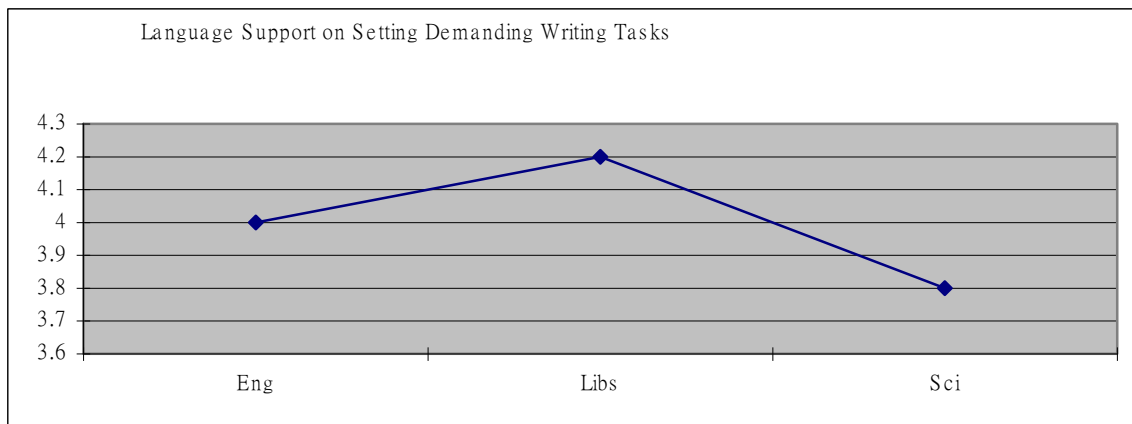


Figure 9. Language support on note-taking strategies

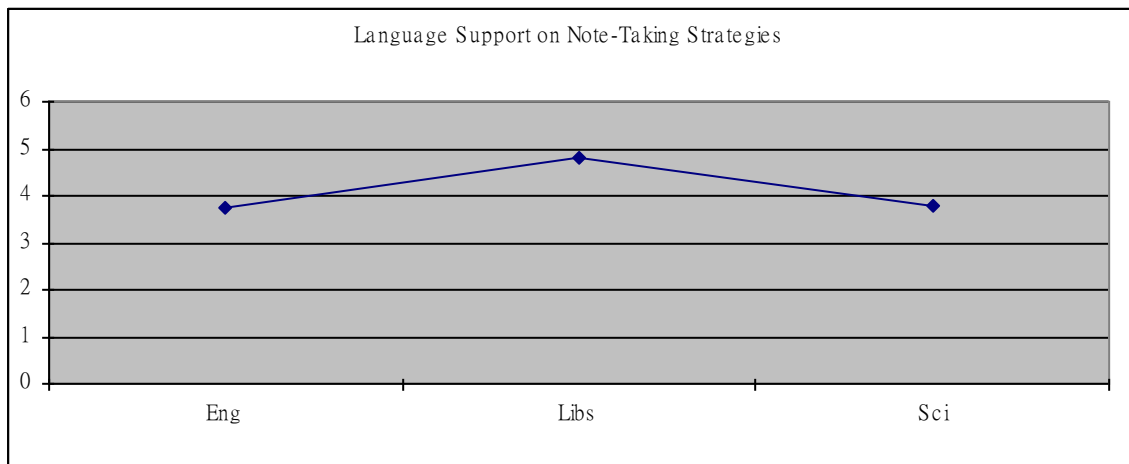


Figure 10. Language support on definition of technical terms

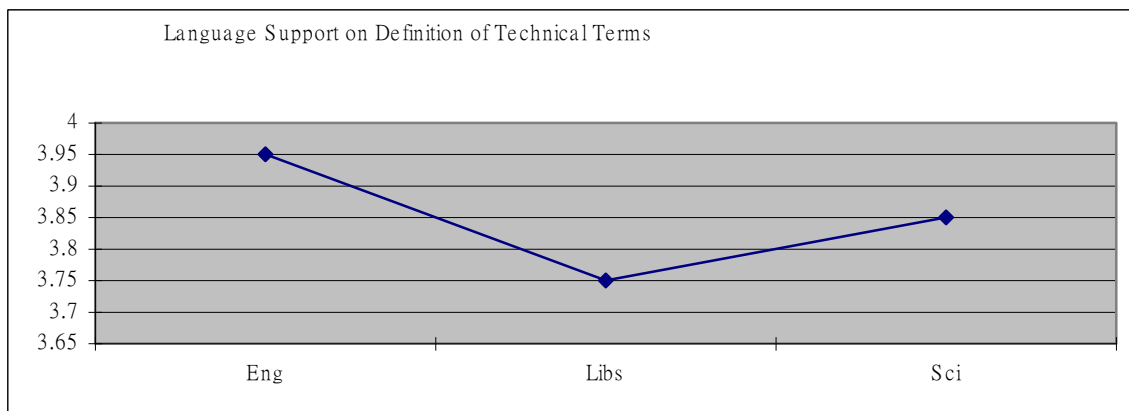
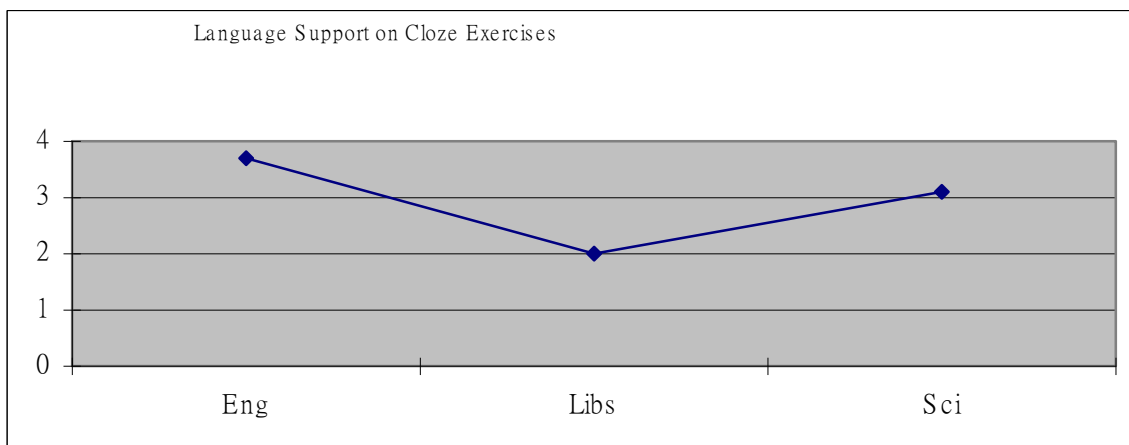


Figure 11. Language support on cloze exercises



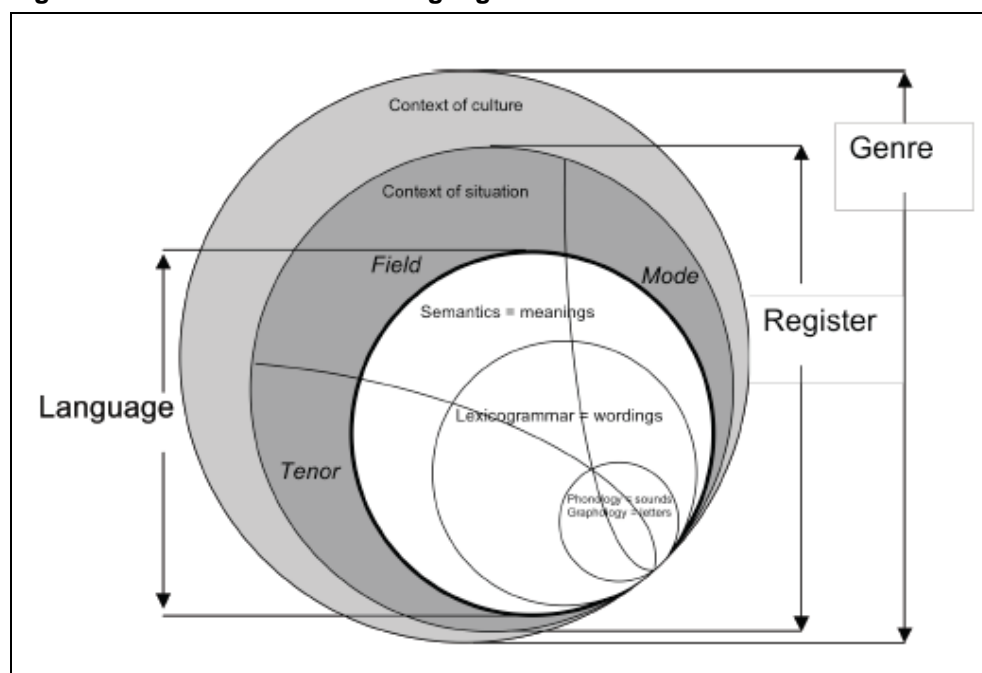
Appendix 2

Halliday's Systemic-Functional Linguistics: A brief review

According to Halliday and Martin (1993), Systemic Functional Linguistics explores how language varies according to the socio-cultural contexts in

which it is used. It deals with whole texts and focuses on the authentic use of languages. From a functional perspective, language is a meaning-making system, where the text is situated in the contexts of situation and culture:

Figure 1. Functional model of language



Language, context and text: aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective, Halliday & Hasan, 1985.

The context of a situation has three variables: field, tenor, and mode.

- Field: what is taking place - the participants, processes and circumstances
- Tenor: who is involved - the participants: their status, roles, relationships, and attitudes
- Mode: through which medium the meaning is conveyed - e.g. spoken/written

Here, the configuration of these three variables makes up a register that shapes the language used in

Example:

	<i>I</i>	<i>ate</i>	<i>an apple</i>	<i>quickly.</i>
Functional grammar	participant	process	participant	circumstance
Traditional grammar:	Nominal group	verbal group	nominal group	adverbial group

a specific situational context. Learning can then be seen as using appropriate register and mastery of language across all contexts.

a. Field

Field, the first register variable, is concerned with the expression of experiential meanings, that is, the topic or 'what is happening in the world.' It is categorized into functional groupings of participants (what/who is involved?), processes (what is going on?) and circumstances (where, when, how, why?), which are realized by nominal, verbal and adverbial groups.

b. Tenor

While the experiential meaning is realized in field, interpersonal meaning is expressed in tenor and its lexico-grammatical resources are mood, modality, and attitudinal lexis. Mood types such as interrogative, declarative, and imperative are employed, implicitly or explicitly, to realize different speech functions such as statement, questions, offers, and commands. Also, modality (modal finites *will, must, could, may*; modal adjuncts *perhaps, maybe, possibly, definitely*; mental and saying processes *I know, It indicates that, Scientists claim that*) is used to temper or reinforce the meaning expressed, and also indicates certainty, usuality, obligation, and inclination. Attitudinal lexis expresses some kind of personal judgment or emotional involvement of the writer or speaker (e.g. *kill* vs. *murder, slaughter*). Here, the interpersonal meanings expressed are determined by the tenor variables: participant status, roles, relationships, and frequency of contact.

c. Mode

Mode deals with the textual meaning which explores how meanings are arranged in a text. Linguistic resources like cohesion, coherence, old and new information, theme-rheme pattern, unmarked and marked theme, linking and binding conjunctions, dependent and independent clauses ensure smooth information flow at clause, sentence, paragraph, and, finally, discoursal levels.

Here, the contextualized language use of functional grammar has pedagogical implications that different writing genres and language features are required in different subject disciplines, as illustrated in the table below.

A genre, according to Martin (1986), is defined as “a staged, goal oriented, purposeful social activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture.” Therefore, factual genres such as procedures, taxonomic or descriptive information reports, sequential or casual explanations are common in science subjects; whereas interpretation, review, critique, and expository genres like

analytical or hortatory arguments dominate in LS. As in English subjects, story genres like narrative and recount are common (Groves, 2004; Polias, 2005). Here, different subjects have their predominant genres which in turn have their “predictable, identifiable patterns” (Martin, 1986).

Figure 2. Writing genres in different subject disciplines

	Genre	Purpose
Story genres	Narrative and traditional stories	To entertain as well as to instruct the reader about cultural values.
	Personal recount	To record chronologically a series of past personal events in order to entertain, and to form and build on relationships.
Factual genres	Description	To describe some of the features of particular people, places or things.
	Information report -taxonomic -descriptive	To provide accurate and relevant information about our living and non-living world. Reports often include visual texts.
	Practical report	To provide a recount of the method undertaken in a practical, as well as the results and the conclusions.
	Recount -factual -biographical -historical	To relate chronologically a series of past events in order to inform.
	Explanation -sequential - causal	To explain how and why processes occur in our social and physical worlds.
	Expository genres -argument -analytical -hortatory - discussion	To present arguments on an issue. An analytical argument attempts to persuade readers to agree on a particular point of view. An hortatory argument presents arguments and also tries to persuade the readers to take some actions. Discussions present the case for more than one point of view about an issue.
	Procedure	To instruct someone to make or do things.
Response genres	Personal response	To respond personally to a work.
	Review	To assess the appeal and value of a work.
	Interpretation	To interpret what a work is trying to say.

Source: *Language and Literacy: Classroom Applications of Functional Grammar* (Groves, 2004, p.27)

Using Skype® to connect a classroom to the world: Providing students an authentic language experience within the classroom

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Abstract

Most students in Japan have few opportunities to speak English outside their classrooms. Motivating those students to speak English inside the classroom is often difficult as well. English teachers have tried many things to provide students the opportunity to speak English in their class. The authors began having web conferences with a high school in the United States four years ago and they have found that these web conferences encouraged students to play more active roles in the classroom. Students began speaking more English during conference calls and preparing more eagerly for their lessons. Most importantly, the students clearly enjoyed speaking with American students through the Skype conferences. In this paper, the authors will discuss the students' enjoyment of the web conferences and learning English. They also will explore technical issues involved in setting up web conferences in a classroom.

Introduction

In Japan, the need for communicative competence in English has been increasing; citizens expect schools to produce more competent speakers of English. The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has changed the national course of study several times to emphasize communicative language teaching in order to fulfill these expectations. However, it has not been easy to introduce communicative language teaching in Japan. Even

though teachers of English in Japan have tried a variety of approaches and activities, students have remained reluctant to speak out in class.

In 2005, we began web conferences using Skype®, a social networking software, to connect our classroom with a high school in the United States for discussions of environmental issues. We found that our students spoke more English during the web conferences than usual; we noticed that the students also began playing more active roles in

normal classes after the introduction of the web conference lessons. Due to the success of these lessons and the enthusiastic response of our students, we have continued and expanded the program. To date, we have talked with American high school students, Korean junior high school students, an American teacher living in another part of Japan, and foreign students at an American university.

We will begin this paper by exploring the situation that English teachers in Japan face so readers can understand what is unique about this setting and what aspects may be similar to other circumstances; then we will discuss similar studies involving the use of computer-mediated communication (CMC). Finally, we will give details of our experiences using Skype and offer some practical advice for teachers interested in starting web conferences in their own classes.

We would like to add a note about the terms used in our paper. While the authors used the free Skype software (<http://www.skype.com/intl/en/>), we are in no way endorsing this particular company or promoting their software as the best available option for conducting web conferences. Other programs, such as Yahoo Messenger, MSN Messenger, and iChat, offer similar functions and we expect these would work equally as well in an educational setting. We will use the terms Skype, CMC, and web conferences throughout our paper; Skype in a generic sense that includes other software programs with similar functions, CMC to refer to a broad range of activities that includes but is not limited to programs such as Skype, and web conferences to indicate the type of interaction our students experienced in these lessons.

English language education in Japan

According to the Japanese Ministry of Justice (2008), more than 17,000,000 Japanese, approximately one in six, went abroad in 2007. The number of foreigners who visit Japan is also rapidly increasing; in 2007, over 9,000,000 visited Japan. Internationalization is continuing to progress in Japan. Recently more and more parents send their children to English conversation schools. The need for competence in speaking English is increasingly

apparent; people hope that schools produce competent speakers of English.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has tried to introduce communicative language teaching in Japanese schools in order to produce more competent speakers of English. However, by most accounts, they have largely not been successful. Many teachers in Japan have found it difficult to teach English in a communicative way. Motivating students to speak in the classroom is especially challenging. LoCastro (1996) explains this situation within the socio-cultural context of Japan, referring to three aspects of Japanese classrooms. Firstly, English is a de facto requirement for almost all entrance examinations of senior high schools and universities. The entrance examinations, mainly consisting of vocabulary, grammar, and translation questions, have been one of the biggest motivators for the students to study English. Students hope to speak English; however, they must study vocabulary and grammar, instead of listening and speaking, to obtain high marks on the entrance exams. Secondly, in most English classes, Japanese is the language of instruction in teacher-fronted classes. This style is suitable for the grammar-translation approach however it does not facilitate communication in the classroom. Thirdly, most class time is composed of teacher talk. That is, the teachers mainly speak in the classroom in order to convey information to students. Japanese students are accustomed to teacher-allocated turns because most of the subjects are taught in such a way. In such situations, it is hard to practice communicative language teaching. It can be said that traditional classroom behaviors in Japan are obstacles which prevent communicative language teaching from being more successful.

The Central Education Council (2006) reported that one of the biggest issues in Japan is to improve English language education. Social and economic globalization is rapidly progressing in Japan; international cooperation for the co-existence of diverse cultures and sustainable development will be expected in the future. Japan must produce competent English speakers to meet the need for stronger international competitiveness. As

recommended by the council, English curriculum in Japan will be changed soon and there will be a stronger emphasis on communicative competence. For elementary schools, English language teaching will start in 2011 and students of Grade 5, who are ten or eleven years old, will start studying English once a week (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2008a). The ministry believes that it is more suitable to learn basic items such as greetings and self introductions in elementary school than in junior high school. Students in junior high school will have an additional weekly English class from 2012 (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2008b); currently they have three English classes a week. Students will also learn more vocabulary while they are in junior high; the number of words will increase from 900 to 1200. The ministry expects junior high school students will be able to communicate more in English about their immediate surroundings. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (2009) announced a new course of study for senior high schools which emphasizes improving communicative competence of the students. Teachers are expected to teach English through English from 2013. Included in that amendment, teachers are expected to provide the students with more opportunities to use English in the classroom by introducing pair and group work, using audio-visual aids, and incorporating information and telecommunication networks. However, it is difficult for English teachers in Japan to introduce communicative language teaching into their classes. Oral Communication I classes, for first year senior high school students, are a good example of the problems involved in translating policy into reality. These compulsory classes emphasize communicative competence more than any other subject in the English curriculum, yet in only 53.5 percent of high schools do teachers use English for more than half of the class period (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2006). Therefore, it is necessary to introduce something new to English lessons in Japan. One promising approach is to incorporate web conferences with foreign people into English lessons.

Studies involving computer-mediated communication (CMC)

Computer communications make it possible to open a window of the classroom to the wider world. We will now turn to some studies which deal with the use of this type of technology. These studies can help us to understand how web conferences fit into the larger experience of learning English as a foreign language (EFL). Comparisons can also tell us what we might reasonably expect to gain from using CMC in our own classes.

Young (2003)

Not all efforts to incorporate technology into the process of language learning have been as successful as one would hope them to be. Young (2003) reported on an attempt to integrate computer-assisted language learning into a vocational high school in Taiwan. The proposed hypothesis was that CMC would make learning English more socially interactive and reduce students' affective filters. Twenty-nine third-year students used chat rooms, email, websites and online discussions groups to complete assignments and interact with their classmates and teacher (p.450). The use of the internet did appear to motivate students and reduce their anxiety over language production, but it did not produce the linguistic improvements that were expected. No gain could be found in either the students' writing proficiency or grammatical accuracy.

Young warns that although the use of CMC is the current vogue in language education, schools shouldn't jump on the bandwagon without proper preparation and pedagogical consideration: "The integration of the Internet could provide an exciting and significant alternative teaching and learning approach to enhance language acquisition, but the Internet itself is not necessarily a substitute for ESL education" (2003, p. 460). Simply plugging students into the internet isn't enough. We have to carefully consider how and why we use CMC in the EFL classroom.

Xiao & Yang (2005)

Xiao and Yang point out an inherent problem in teaching EFL: "Students in an EFL setting, such as,

China, never have enough English native speakers to practice their English” (2005, p. 882). Their solution was the use of web conferences which can offer EFL students the chance for interaction with native speakers of English. This quantitative study is interesting because it compares CMC to face-to-face interaction. Their experimental group was composed of 10 pairs of Chinese and American students who used the web conferencing program Yahoo Messenger to complete assigned tasks online. The control group consisted of 10 pairs of Chinese and Chinese students who attempted the same tasks face-to-face in China. This study tested options open to most EFL students: oral interaction with their peers or the use of CMC to connect with native speakers of English.

The results of this study, found in Xiao’s doctoral dissertation (2007), are that CMC involving native speaking students was superior to face-to-face interaction with nonnative peers in two regards: significantly improved fluency for the experimental group, and, to a lesser degree, improved accuracy. No statistically significant improvement in complexity was observed between the two groups. This study demonstrates that CMC offers superior chances for interaction and improvement to students in an EFL setting where native speakers are few and far between.

Yang & Chang (2008)

Yang and Chang (2008) studied college students who used Skype to interact with peers in Taiwan. The research focused on differences between free, unstructured interaction using CMC, and structured CMC focusing on language use. Students in the structured group, the experimental group, used the internet telephone service to talk with their classmates, do role-plays, and discuss topics related to their class. Students in the unstructured, or control group, talked with their classmates online but without any special language focus. After a semester of the extra, focused oral practice, no difference in oral skills was observed between the two groups. The authors attribute this to the students’ similar abilities and the lack of native speaker or highly proficient Chinese interlocutors (p.4). Peer-work using Skype, whether structured or

unstructured, didn’t appear to be highly effective for improving oral skills.

Implications for teaching using CMC

The strengths of CMC seem to lie in that it helps EFL students to overcome a dearth of English input. Though communicating with peers or members of their own class using the internet did not appear to be a very effective way to improve language skills, CMC with native English speakers offered more chances for improvement. This may call into question the use of pair work in EFL classes, a technique that is often employed in attempts to make language classes more communicative. Anecdotal evidence has repeatedly supported the use of web conferences to increase student motivation to study and use English; CMC provides an interesting and engaging purpose for the study of English for EFL students who otherwise have little chance to use English for authentic communication.

Web conferences at Hibiki High School

Hibiki High School, a public senior high school in Japan, joined the Master Teacher Program organized by Fulbright Japan in 2005. During that year, 30 Japanese and 30 American schools participated. The program paired each Japanese school with an American school; Hibiki was paired with a senior high school in Missouri. The following year, a senior high school in Wyoming became our partner and since that time we have a web conference with that school about once a month. As a part of the program each pair of schools was required to do research on environmental issues. We each grew the same plants and observed them; we collected samples from rivers and fields around our schools; then we reported the results in a web conference once a month.

Teachers noticed that Hibiki students began to speak more English during the web conference lessons than in their ordinary lessons. The students also prepared for the lessons more positively than was usual. We attributed this improvement to the fact that the web conferences involved real communication; the students had information which they wanted to pass on to their partners. In addition to the environmental research reports, our students

also taught Japanese to the American students during the web conferences. Hibiki High students often stayed after classes had ended for the day and came to school before classes started in the morning in order to make teaching plans and materials for their Japanese lessons. The students were in charge of teaching during these lessons and they took the added responsibility very seriously.

Many positive changes in our students and classes were attributed to the inclusion of CMC in our English program. The students spoke more English and played a more active role in all their classes, not just the web conferences. They learned new vocabulary, English idioms, and how to manage conversations through authentic communication with American students. The Americans acted as age-appropriate model English speakers; we noticed our students repeating things they had heard their American peers say. Due to the positive student response, we expanded the web conferences to include a junior high school in Korea, a graduate student and a university student in the United States, and an American teacher of English residing elsewhere in Japan. With each of these partners our students had a different and unique interaction.

The time difference between Japan and the United States sometimes made it difficult for us to have a web conference during our regular class period, so we tried having a web conference with a high school in Korea, where there is no time difference. During the lesson, both Japanese and Korean students introduced themselves in English and talked about their school lives. We observed two good benefits in this lesson. Japanese and Korean students both learned that English is a global language which is often used between non native speakers. They could not speak each other's native language but they learned through this experience that they could communicate with each other in English. The second benefit was that both groups could be model English learners for the other. Some of our students said that they should study English harder because their Korean counterparts spoke more English than they did.

Some students at Hibiki High School have dreams of studying abroad in the future. In response to this

interest, we arranged to have web conferences with a former colleague now studying at a graduate school in San Francisco, USA. We asked her to tell our students about her life in San Francisco. She invited one of her friends, an undergraduate student, to join the web conference and the two of them talked with our students about San Francisco and their life at an American university. Hibiki students were interested in these topics and did their best to understand them. After the web conference, we asked our students to write letters which we then sent to San Francisco. Many of the students wrote that they enjoyed the web conference and would like to do it again.

Not all students reacted the same way, however. During the web conference some of the students were quiet, didn't look happy, and seemed bored. We initially thought that they hated this lesson, but we found by reading their letters that this was not true. One of the students who did not speak during the web conference came and told her teacher, "I am sorry that I couldn't speak any words during the web conference. I didn't have courage to open my mouth, but I will speak at least one sentence during the next web conference." During the next web conference with the students studying in America, she in fact did say more than one sentence and even helped other students who had difficulty in speaking English.

Another colleague who teaches English at a university in Japan, far from Hibiki High School, had a web conference with our students and showed them his new house. It was a club activity and the students were very excited about participating in it even though it required them to stay after school. Before the web conference, the students prepared self-introductions and questions to ask. Though they have opportunities to speak English with a native speaker in their classes, we noticed that the students spoke significantly more during the web conference than in ordinary classes. After the web conference, students could not stop talking about it and maintained that they would study English more to become competent speakers. The next day they voluntarily wrote letters to the teacher to show their gratitude for this special lesson. This experience

was clearly enjoyable and motivating for the students.

Teachers often reported enjoying the web conferences as much as the students had. Unlike scripted, textbook style lessons the web conferences focus on authentic communication and therefore much of the information is new and interesting for the teacher as well. Such lessons can be less stressful since students speak a great deal without having to be prompted or forced to do so. The conferences have become so popular at our school that teachers of other subjects and even the vice principal sometimes participate. They study English with the students, provide additional motivation, and demonstrate the concept of life long learning. The English teachers consider the web conferences as a kind of professional development. They have to talk about a lesson plan with their foreign partners before and after the web conferences and through these communications they get more accustomed to using English. Non-native English speaking teachers, as well as their students, can learn a lot from the authentic communication with their counterparts on web conferences. In our setting, it has proven to be an enjoyable and educational experience for everyone involved.

The web conferences at our school have followed a variety of patterns. When we had a conference with students in the United States, we started at 8:30 in the morning, before our classes began, due to the time difference. The conferences we had with the university students in the United States were easier for us to schedule since they were able to talk to us from their home; we started at either 10:30 in the morning or 15:00 therefore we could have a web conference during the regular class periods. The conferences involved about twenty to thirty students which required us to prepare a large room and set up a camera on a tripod which could cover the whole class. Our students were able to see their partners in America on a large television screen at the front of the room and we prepared a microphone on a long cable that could easily be moved around the room. Before the web conferences we taught students phrases that might be of use and helped them prepare notes during their regular English classes. During the conferences, English teachers

walked around the room to facilitate communication and guide students. We would help if they were unable to catch what their counterpart said by repeating it in English, and if students lacked a vocabulary word we would translate it for them and review it in a later regular lesson. We also suggested ideas or questions in both English and Japanese when the conversation occasionally lagged.

What is necessary for having web conferences?

Over the few years we have been using CMC in our English lessons, it has become progressively easier. Many computers, including laptops and cheaper and smaller net books, already have cameras and microphones built in. Recently even some cell phones have video conference capabilities. The electric and communication infrastructure to conduct this type of lesson may not yet exist in remote, developing areas but the technology is progressing very quickly. For a basic setup all that is really needed is a single laptop computer and a high-speed internet connection; soon a new cell phone may be all that is required. Rural areas could have access to this type of lesson using an inexpensive laptop computer or cell phone running on battery power and with a wireless connection. The technological logistics may not be as easy in remote areas, but the opportunities CMC offers are even more powerful precisely because these places are so remote. The chances for interaction with native English speakers, the exposure to the wider world, and the possibilities for educational and economic development are too immense for schools and teachers not to consider the use of CMC.

Conclusion

There are many advantages to web conference lessons for both students and teachers. Students have more chances to use English for real communication and their motivation to study becomes stronger. They speak more English even though their teachers do not force them because web conferencing is enjoyable to them. Teachers can also learn a lot from authentic communications with native speakers of English. With an internet-connected computer, web conference lessons can be

introduced into most classroom settings. Second language learners and educators can talk to people all over the world even though they are sitting in their usual classroom.

Through our experience, we have found that web conference lessons significantly increase student motivation to study English. We would like to see more studies in the future, with larger numbers of students, so the benefits of CMC can be examined quantitatively. We expect that more research will be done on it in the future as more teachers incorporate CMC into their English language classes, connecting their classrooms to the world.

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Brian Nuspliger has lived, studied and worked in Asia for 17 years. He has taught EFL in Japanese high schools and is currently employed at Osaka City University and Shitennoji University, both in Osaka, Japan. His areas of interest include fluency, World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca.

Yusuke Senzaki has been employed by Osaka Prefecture, Japan, for 6 years as a high school teacher of English. He is also a member of e-dream-s, a non-profit organization for international educational cooperation which is currently seeking ways to contribute to English education in Cambodia.

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Teaching seminar skills in the Asian context

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Abstract

Seminars are organized by students, who make presentations and lead discussions. Teaching through the use of seminars is gaining in popularity in Asia because students can research and exchange ideas independently. This paper describes the challenges encountered when teaching seminar skills in a postgraduate EAP course in the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, the difficulties overcome based on the author's ongoing research, and suggestions for some guidelines for teachers with similar curricular goals. Because most Asian students are more inhibited and less confrontational compared with their Western counterparts, it is important for teachers to bring a radical change to the attitudes of seminar leaders towards controversy and challenging others in an academic setting. Teachers should also tactfully guide seminar leaders in the question setting and evaluation stages of seminars. The notion of giving total control to students in conducting seminars has to be redefined in the Asian context.

Introduction

A seminar takes place when a small group of university students present on a topic and lead a discussion afterwards. This learning mode is common in Europe and North America, where seminar skills, basically speaking and listening skills, have long been included in EAP courses at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels to prepare students to conduct seminars in their major field of study. An essential feature is that in asking students to run seminars, the teacher gives control over to students. As Asian professors begin to see the value of seminars, seminar skills are now utilized in many universities in this corner of the world as well, and can be considered part of the globalization of ELT. However, two questions arise: in teaching Asian students to conduct seminars, is it enough to teach them only speaking and listening skills? How much "control" should teachers give over to students in organizing seminars?

Review of the literature

Value of seminars

One of the reasons why seminars have become a popular learning tool in universities is that they can benefit students in many ways. For example, attending a seminar may help the participants to make a decision and/or solve a particular problem (Postgraduate English for academic purposes: Seminar and presentation skills, 2008, p. 2). Some outcomes include improving the English standard of the seminar leaders and participants (if the seminar is conducted in English), as well as increasing their confidence in speaking. However, it is generally agreed that the most important value of seminars lies in offering a chance for students to conduct seminars, with teachers giving total control over to students to explore their subject on their own, to exchange ideas with other students, and to perhaps thus "look at [their] own discipline in a new way" (Freeland, 2009).

Success of seminars

In previous literature, learner success in leading seminars is linked with success in grasping the necessary speaking and listening skills. For example, Lynes & Woods (1984) demonstrate how a series of courses offered by the Oxford University Language Teaching Centre improved the spoken English of overseas members of that university, hence enhancing their skills in organizing academic seminars. Another study conducted by Lynch (1998) gauged the success of second language learners' skills in holding seminars in an EAP course by analyzing their listening skills in discussions, making use of the Communicative Outcome System (Yule & Powers, 1994).

Seminar topics

According to Wallace (1988, p. 78), seminar topics may take different forms, namely, a statement/question of fact, personal feeling, opinion, or action. Only the latter two forms are conducive to a successful discussion. Statements of fact can only be verified, that is, shown to be true or false, thus leaving little space for discussion. Similarly, questions of fact are not useful tools, as suggested by McClurken (2009): "In order to elicit responses, pose questions that have multiple responses. Concentrate on ideas, not facts." Statements of personal feeling may be agreed or disagreed with, but this is too subjective in nature. Therefore, "a statement/question of personal feeling is not a good seminar topic, although it may make a good debating topic where the object may be to entertain the listeners, rather than come to useful conclusions" (Wallace, 1988, p. 81). In contrast, what makes a statement/question of opinion an ideal seminar topic is that the participants have to either support or challenge the opinion with evidence. A statement/question of action (for example, 'Should all major industries in a country be nationalized?') is also a good discussion tool as it contains an underlying opinion, with which participants have to first choose to agree or disagree. If the answer to the question of action is "yes," then they can proceed to discuss the practical problems involved, and how the problems can be solved.

Context of teaching seminar skills in HKUST

This researcher has been coordinating a team of colleagues in teaching the Postgraduate EAP course in the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) for more than ten years. At the beginning, when we taught seminar skills, which have been a major component of this course, much emphasis was put on giving students input in speaking and listening skills. Students were first given a chance to reflect on the values of seminars. After such reflection, they were taught skills such as verbalizing data, giving reasons, listening, and note-taking (Jordan, 1997, p. 7). The procedures of preparing for and leading seminars were also introduced. Preparation includes choosing and researching a topic, preparing PowerPoint slides and handouts, and setting discussion questions (Appendix 1). Leading a seminar includes giving an overview, making a presentation on the researched topic, leading discussions, and delivering a summary of what has been discussed (Appendix 2). After students were taught seminar skills and procedures, they formed pairs or small groups to practice leading a seminar for their fellow students. Most of these students, who were engineering majors from mainland China, had had few chances to discuss societal issues in an academic setting in the past, so they were encouraged to choose a controversial topic. Such topics are socially-oriented and allow in-depth analysis and discussion from different perspectives. After the seminar, the teacher and participants gave feedback to the leaders to help them make improvements in the future.

Despite the great efforts made throughout the first ten years of teaching the course, many students were able to only master speaking and listening skills. They were unable to lead seminars which were successful in the sense that the scene was well set and both sides of the issue were thoroughly explored in the presentation as well as in the discussion which followed. Two questions thus arose: apart from teaching different skills, what other measures could teachers take to help students conduct fruitful seminars? Should teachers give a completely free hand to students when they

organize seminars? These questions prompted the researcher to carry out a longitudinal investigation from 2005 to 2009, focusing on the procedures of teaching seminar skills and teaching students how to conduct seminars. To find the answers to the two research questions above, more than one hundred seminars organized by students in the postgraduate EAP course were observed, and approximately three hundred students (both seminar leaders and participants) were interviewed. The results of these observations and interviews have informed our teaching of seminar skills in the classroom as well as the explanations and recommendations included in this paper.

New directions in teaching seminar skills

It was found that the teaching of speaking and listening skills lays the ground for organizing seminars, especially in developing the confidence of the leaders, who had few chances to conduct such academic activities in China, especially in the medium of English. However, whether they are successful in running a seminar lies beyond the grasping of such skills. Successfully leading a seminar involves a drastic change of these students' deep-rooted attitude towards "controversy" in the seminar conceptualization stage: what constitutes controversy and how to take a stance and challenge others. The reason why this is a deciding factor is related to the background of these mainland Chinese students. They came from a culture which did not encourage confrontation, especially open confrontation, in the past. Although many changes have taken place in their areas of China during the last century, they still believe in being polite and respectful in an academic setting and are far from being ready to publicly challenge each other, let alone their teachers. In addition, many of these students do not understand what controversy constitutes and have mistaken statements/questions of fact for those of opinion. Therefore, it is of paramount importance for the teacher to guide the leaders in this initial stage of organizing a seminar, when consultation on the topic takes place between the teacher and the leaders. This can be clearly seen in the example which follows.

During one such consultation, the teacher received the following suggested topic from a group of students (referred to as "Group A" in this paper): "Underground popularity of American TV series in China." In giving feedback, the teacher first attempted to clarify with the students exactly what they wanted to discuss, since the meaning of "underground popularity" is not clear. Secondly, the suggested topic is in the form of a statement of *fact*, rather than a statement of *opinion*, so the teacher proposed that it be rewritten as "Should underground American TV series shown in China be censored?" This was rejected by the students, who suggested that they could look for a totally different topic. It was only after further consultations that they disclosed the reasons behind their intention of giving up the original topic. They admitted that such broadcasting "is illegal, but it is only in this way that more people in China can enjoy the American TV series. It has nothing to do with censor" (verbatim quotation from Group A's e-mail correspondence with the teacher). What was more, they thought that what they had originally proposed was a "taboo" topic: "I am sorry that we may have chosen a topic refer to the life of mainland China. If you think it is not fit for the presentation, we can choose another one" (verbatim quotation from Group A's e-mail). The teacher immediately clarified her stance, and explained why it was important to turn the suggested topic into a statement of opinion which is controversial in nature. The students finally understood the notion, and rephrased the topic as "Should underground broadcast of American TV series be banned in China?" Their new insight is also shown in the abstract they wrote: "Some people consider these videos as a new way of entertaining. Some argue that it breaks the law of copyright and does harm to legal TV network," as well as in the last question they set for discussion purposes: "What do you think will be the best way to enjoy American TV series while the copyright can be protected?" (verbatim quotations from the Seminar Plan of Group A).

However, one should not assume that every group of seminar leaders readily takes teacher advice. After China's recent successful launching of a space shuttle, some students (Group B) decided to lead a

seminar on “Is manned space exploration worth the cost?” This topic, which is a statement of opinion, is conducive to discussion. However, a careful look at their seminar plan revealed that these students had a “hidden agenda”: “We want our audience to agree with our conclusion that manned space exploration should be supported” (verbatim quotation from the Seminar Plan of Group B). This stands in strong contrast with the agenda written by a group (Group C) in another class who chose a similar topic, “Rethinking about China’s space program”:

Some supporting ideas will be given, and then we will introduce some views against the space exploration in China, and provide a comparison. Finally, we will discuss some relate questions, and listen to the views of the different camps before we reach a conclusion. (verbatim quotation from the Seminar Plan of Group C)

The teacher advised Group B not to impose their own views on the participants during the discussion, yet this group insisted on proceeding with its original plan. Their discussion turned out to be less successful than that led by Group C; it failed to elicit opinions of different perspectives since the discussion was not objective.

The next stage where teacher guidance plays a crucial role is question setting. Teachers support students through correcting the grammar of the draft questions, but more importantly, they should help students set questions which can lead to a fruitful discussion. For example, one group (Group D) decided to discuss “home schooling.” The original questions they drafted were too sweeping and too negative. All were related to the problems of this mode of education. For example, one of the questions was “If home schooling has been legalized in the world, including Hong Kong, what types of problems would happen and how could we solve them?” (verbatim quotation from the Seminar Plan of Group D). In giving this group of students advice, the teacher pointed out that some parents in Western countries, dissatisfied with the education system or living in isolated rural areas, choose homeschooling. Moreover, they are usually resourceful, with input from school authorities and

publishers. The seminar leaders should thus explain this background before contextualizing some questions in the particular setting of Hong Kong, where there is no problem of accessibility to schools. In addition, the Hong Kong government bans homeschooling for children under the age of fifteen. The teacher also pointed out that another draft question was too vague: “If you can return to the past, will you choose home schooling?” (verbatim quotation from the Seminar Plan of Group D). The seminar leaders were advised to make clear which era they had in mind. The students accepted the teacher’s suggestions and a more comprehensive discussion resulted.

Teacher guidance also plays an essential role in the last stage of a seminar, when the leaders’ performance is evaluated by the teacher and the other participants. Concrete comments and suggestions should be given to seminar leaders regarding their strengths and weaknesses. For example, in giving feedback to a group (Group E) after their seminar, the teacher remarked,

The topic is interesting and the examples are authentic. Your presentations were very clear and succinct. Well done! However, you have not allowed enough time for the audience to digest the information. There are also too many words on most slides. In terms of stress and intonation, please refer to p.62-63 of the text book and the following website: To be a leader, talk like one. [Online]. (verbatim quotation from the teacher’s e-mail to Group E)

Conclusion

Seminars are indeed a useful learning tool for students. Seminar formats present a combination of semi-formal presentations and open-ended discussions, as well as individual and group learning. As a result, such a teaching format is becoming increasingly popular in Asia. However, in order to ensure that seminars function as an effective learning medium in this part of the world, teaching students only speaking and listening skills is insufficient. Many students who originate from China or from other Asian communities share the similarity of being more inhibited and less

confrontational compared with their Western counterparts. "Seminars can often be rather stressful occasions ... for people who have not been brought up to contradict or question others." (McDonnell, 2008). Therefore, in teaching Asian students to conduct seminars, teachers should not focus only on imparting "skills." They should also tactfully guide the seminar leaders in the conceptualization stage, as well as in the question setting and evaluation stages. The most important guidance teachers can give is to help the leaders decide on a controversial topic which allows analysis from different perspectives and is thus conducive to an objective and fruitful discussion. In this way, both the leaders and participants can enjoy and benefit from the seminar, which is in fact the ultimate objective of organizing this type of advanced academic activity. The notion of teachers giving complete "control" over to students in running seminars has thus to be redefined in the Asian context.

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Appendix 1

Procedure of preparing for a seminar

Brainstorming

- Analyze your audience (their academic background, previous knowledge / attitude)
- Choose a controversial topic which allows analysis from different perspectives
- Define the title and aims of your seminar

↓

Literature review

- Read extensively on both sides of the issue
- Make notes for your PowerPoint slides
- Extract thought-provoking citations to give participants some food for thought
- Prepare a reference list for participants

↓

Preparation for the presentation

- Organize the ideas and prepare an outline of presentation
- Design discussion focus and questions
- Prepare PowerPoint slides and handouts
- Rehearse the presentation (e.g. video-tape your presentation and evaluate it)
- Pre-empt possible questions from the audience and find answers to these questions

Appendix 2

Procedure of leading a seminar

Give an overview of the topic (background, importance, results of past studies)

↓

Give a presentation: The 'Pros' and 'Cons' of the topic

↓

Lead group/class discussion

↓

Make a summary of the main points arising from the discussion

Objectivity, subjectivity, and getting the meaning in intensive English reading

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Abstract

Radical constructivist theory has had some influence in English teaching methodology, including the teaching of intensive reading. Unfortunately, its assumption that construal of textual meanings is a subjective process taking place entirely "in the learner's head" clashes with two important insights in the experience of learning intensive reading in English as a second or foreign language. The first insight is that to get meaning right in a foreign/second language text is to get it right correctly, from the point of view of the linguistic community to which a student seeks to gain admission, and that the language teacher is her first, authoritative point of contact. A second insight is that the textual meanings students learn are somehow objective, even if they do also vary through time and in accordance with authorial intention and context. This paper develops philosophical arguments to show that these insights are basically correct.

Introduction

This essay begins with an observation on a tension between English as a Foreign Language/English as a Second Language (EFL/ESL) intensive reading textbooks and radical constructivism, a learning theory that has influenced EFL/ESL teaching methods. Intensive reading textbooks typically come equipped with many kinds of questions accompanying their readings: questions on comprehension, vocabulary meanings, main ideas of paragraphs and passages, synonyms and antonyms, and prefixes and suffixes. With the exception of group discussion questions, these questions have correct answers, which are given in an accompanying teacher's guide. Yet for teachers who use radical or even moderate constructivist approaches to teaching, the meanings, ideas, and answers that students come up with in reading texts and in addressing textbook questions are just those that are subjectively viable for them, based on how they construe those texts within their subjective experience. The tension arises because constructivists reject the idea that there are correct meanings in the interpretation of intensive readings,

and correct answers for textbook questions about them - correct, that is, for everyone who uses those textbooks (see Brookes, 1993, p. 6-7 for a standard constructivist view of textbooks).

The radical constructivist teacher may be tempted to dump the teacher's guide and teach the textbook in accordance with her theories. Other teachers, including EFL teachers in developing countries where constructivist teaching approaches are still an exotic import, might think that having a grasp of correct textual meanings and correct answers to reading textbook answers are important for a number of reasons, including passing reading tests and exams critical to students' academic and career progression. This essay is sympathetic to the latter view.

It will be argued here that radical constructivist notions of meaning and of viability are implausible, and thus have no valid application to the learning experience of students undertaking intensive ESL/EFL reading studies. Two insights into students' intensive reading experience will then be

argued for. Firstly, to understand meanings in the foreign language readings in intensive reading textbooks is to comprehend them correctly, from the point of view of the language community to which a language student wishes to gain admittance, with the language teacher acting as an authoritative stand-in for that community. Secondly, the word, sentence, and discourse meanings students are trying (and are assessed for trying) to comprehend are objective to varying degrees. One consequence of this conclusion is that a teacher-centered conception of the teacher as an authority on textual meaning and interpretation should be a valued aspect of the intensive EFL/ESL reading classroom.

Radical constructivist approaches to meaning and their shortcomings

According to the pioneering thinker in radical constructivist theory, Ernst Von Glasersfeld, meaning is something created in our own subjective field of experience in response to constraints and patterns encountered in that experience (1983). It is therefore “subjective in origin and resides in the subject’s head” (1983). This stands in contrast to classic semantic theories of meaning, for which the sense of written and spoken words and propositions are objectively “out there” independently of the subjective construal of any individual. Given that some prominent constructivist theorists in English language education such as Marion Williams and Robert Burden have acknowledged the influence of Von Glasersfeld in their own thinking (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 49-53), it will be worthwhile to see how these two assumptions about meaning apply to studying reading in a foreign or second language.

Suppose that students are reading a textbook passage about Canadian writer Farley Mowat’s experience of living with wolves in the Canadian wilderness. One of their set comprehension questions is to use grammatical and context clues to guess the meaning of the word *Norseman* in the following sentence: “The *Norseman* came over at about 50 feet” (Mowat qtd. in Wegmann & Knezevic, 2007, p.40). Following Von Glasersfeld’s arguments, we can imagine students hypothesizing that a *Norseman* is a person and then feeling constrained by its predicate to infer that it is not.

They will identify patterns in the relations between this term and other nouns and pronouns in the accompanying passage and apply common-sense knowledge from their experience in order to identify a *Norseman* as a type of plane. But, in Von Glasersfeld’s view, none of these semantic, syntactical, or epistemic constraints on the meaning-making process exist outside of the learner’s subjective experience.

Now radical constructivists will allow that there are constructions of meanings that many people might hold in common because they respond to similar subjective constraints and patterns and discuss them with each other, for example in class group work exercises. We could imagine learners in a group work situation who are being induced in similar fashion from their reading to suspect that a *Norseman* is a type of plane. They can communicate with each other and with their teacher about the constraints they are encountering and help each other to confirm their answer.

But for Von Glasersfeld, teachers do not help students to construct *correct* meanings. There are only *viable* constructions of meaning, which result when learners engage in goal-oriented problem-solving activities, accommodating their respective experiential constraints in a coherent and non-contradictory manner (1983). The use of a term from evolutionary theory to replace traditional notions such as truth or correctness is no coincidence. Constructivists regard learning as a process in which learners adapt themselves to their environment. The goal here is not survival, but the achievement of meaningful coherence in their experience of that environment (Von Glasersfeld, 1998, p. 23-24).

Radical constructivist theory and other forms of constructivism associate themselves with a student-centered learning methodology. The subjective experience of the learner is the starting point of learning, and since meaning is created in the subjective experience of each person, the teacher is not a source of knowledge upon which students depend for learning to read an English language text. A text’s meanings are not objectively “out there” in the text or in the teacher’s mind prior to

the students' encounter with the text. So the teacher cannot impart those meanings to students, or demonstrate to them which attributed meanings are correct. The teacher is instead a stage manager who sets up the situations in which students solve problems that can help them arrive at a viable grasp of word, sentence and discourse meanings.

The radical constructivist understanding of the reading process seems intuitive at one level. It is common sense to assume that reading is a subjective experience. However, it does not follow from this assumption that the meanings construed in the reading process are therefore also always subjective. In any case, the radical constructivist conception of meaning is muddled. For radical constructivists, this conception is bound to a shopworn philosophical dualism, a dualism that pits an objective, unknowable reality beyond experience against our subjective realms of experience (Von Glasersfeld, 1991). Even social constructivist theorists in English language education such as Marion Williams and Robert Burden invoke this dualism as a common-sense platitude (1997, p.2, 96). A platitude it may be, but it is far from being common sense.

If we actually dwelled in our own realms of subjective experience, constructing knowledge and meanings that are shut off from a hypothesized objective world, how could we be confident of comprehending anyone else's meanings – let alone anyone else's existence? For we would be troubled all along by this possibility: that the *objective world* correlates of our subjective constructions of other persons and what those persons write or say to us never correspond to what we subjectively comprehend. Moreover, we will be troubled that there are objective world correlates of the syntactical, semantic, and epistemic constraints that we encounter in construing meaning, which we can never be sure correspond with our construals of those constraints. The better alternative to this muddled philosophy is just to say that we live in one world, a shared world of directly experienced (or experienceable) things and meanings, with no need for some unknowable objective world beyond it.

The radical constructivist will protest that we must be satisfied with what constructions are viable in our experience, comprehending meanings in ways that are coherent for us while refusing speculation about what goes on "outside." But viability is a concept better suited to biology or economics than to learning theory. It is quite possible for someone to have coherent conceptions of meanings in his environment which are satisfactory for him, but delusional from the point of view of his community – because they are false in light of scientific knowledge. The constructivist view clashes with the first insight described in our introduction. For when students work at understanding a foreign language text and work on answering the set questions that accompany it, there is a tacit understanding that they comprehend it in a way that is *correct* in the eyes of the linguistic community to which they seek admission, and not just subjectively viable for themselves.

This insight is deeply rooted in the educational traditions of a number of cultures, not only in the West, but also in the Confucian and Buddhist traditions of East and Southeast Asia. Thus Guangwei Hu argues regarding Chinese English language students and teachers, "the focus of teaching is not on how teachers and students can create, construct and apply knowledge in an experiential approach, but on how extant authoritative knowledge can be transmitted and internalized in a most effective and efficient way" (2002, p.99). These learner and teacher beliefs developed under the influence of Confucian philosophy and through a millennium of Chinese civil service exams, for which candidates had to study and correctly interpret classical Chinese literature. In Vietnam, which incorporated Confucian principles into its political and educational practices over nearly two thousand years (Nguyen 1998, p.91-105), these beliefs are also still prominent.

In other Southeast Asian countries, modern schooling developed against a background of monastic education in which authoritative understandings of Buddhist texts and moral precepts were passed down by monks to lay pupils and novices (Sopheak & Clayton, 2007, p.42). The

beliefs that knowledge is authoritative and that it is transmitted from teachers to students remain strong. A 2004 survey of Thai university student attitudes towards communicative English language teaching methods found that over half of the respondents rejected the notion that teachers are facilitators “helping students to generate information,” and over eighty percent stated that they preferred to “listen to (their) teacher and follow the textbook” rather than learn independently (Jarvis & Atsilirat, 2004).

A radical constructivist theory of learning is certainly in strong disagreement with the teaching and learning habits carried on from these old traditions. But given its philosophical incoherencies, it is hardly in a position to prove that they are mistaken. Moreover, the manner in which L2 intensive reading skills are internationally evaluated and tested, for example in TOEFL and IELTS reading tests, cannot help but reinforce in student minds the notion there are such things as *correct* readings of an intensive reading text and correct answers to questions about it. Students are very much aware that they need the skills to get these answers correctly and that getting them correctly in those tests is a key to their admission and progress in educational institutions or in careers.

Reading teachers do have legitimate worries if the emphasis on correctness obscures the creative, aesthetic aspects of the L2 reading experience, especially in poetry and literature, and if a focus on intensive reading is to the detriment of students’ development of independent reading skills in extensive reading. Students intent on getting the correct answers in a reading course may discount the value of reading for pleasure. This inclination has been noted in EFL students in developing countries such as Cambodia (Narith & Mab, 2006, p.4), where accredited English literacy is crucial to advancement into scarce, high status careers. It is a reality of the learning experience in English reading that students and teachers have to work hard at balancing its academic and aesthetic aspects.

Yet if the subjectivist teaching approach to intensive reading learning is untenable, how do things stand with an objectivist alternative? Semantic theories

associated with the 19th century German logician Gottlob Frege might seem to offer such an alternative. They uphold an objective conception of reference and meaning, where the most important component in meaning is the *sense* of a noun, predicate or proposition. For semantic theorists who follow Frege, sense is objective, and is *so* for everyone, independent of the subjective ideas *anyone* might have of particular words or propositions. Such theories would be consonant with a teacher-centered approach to intensive reading in EFL/ESL: the teacher models and imparts to students the reading skills for getting correct meanings, and sets up the conditions under which students make use of those skills to comprehend what the teacher already knows are the correct senses in texts.

Without going into the details of these theories, it is obvious that they have limited applications in teaching intensive reading in a second or foreign language. Frege intended his theory of meaning for a precise, logical sort of language use in the sciences, a language in which nouns have clear references, predicates are well defined, and the thoughts expressed by sentences are, in a given context, univocal. Such a strict conception of objectivity in meaning was not designed to cope with fictional or poetic texts where readers subjectively evoke ideas and “color” (Frege, 1980, p.40), with discourse analysis beyond the sentence level, with the pragmatics of everyday written and spoken communication, or with the sort of contextual, intended meaning that is not encoded in a piece of spoken or written discourse.

Subjectivism may be out, but a more moderate notion of objectivity in meaning is called for, one that renders such objectivity relative to the intentions and linguistic knowledge of particular communities of language users (see Grayling, 2007, p.80-82). I propose to explain this notion of moderated objectivity in meaning below, and then explain how it is authoritatively enforced by communities of language users, amongst whom the language teacher can be counted.

Meanings are objective – relative to a community of language users

Consider the following two traits as minimal conditions for any language to function well: it must be such that the community using it comprehends the same things by the same words or expressions, and those words or expressions must retain their meanings for a sufficient time for users not to be frequently “caught out” employing outdated or now incomprehensible usages. British philosopher A.C. Grayling refers to these traits respectively as the publicity and stability of meanings (Grayling, 2007, p.78). These traits apply to meanings held in common by a community. We can account for word meaning changes and diversity with these concepts of publicity and stability, noting that it is the community of users who develop and fix word meanings. Moreover, if we are careful to note that there are stronger as well as weaker forms of objectivity in meaning, we can use “objectivity” as a synonym for “publicity.”

Communities of language users may not be large or very rigid in their membership. A community can be as small as a group of teenagers with its distinctive argot. When persons in that same group address themselves to adults, adopting a more formal register in speech and writing and using lexis appropriate to that register, they reposition themselves as members of a much larger linguistic community, one comprising, say, all the speakers of an international language. It is members of these communities, large or small, who collectively determine whether originally idiosyncratic uses will become legitimate and when others have gone out of fashion. This of course takes place at a largely unspoken level, although naturally disagreements still break out from time to time.

Within such communities, syntactical and semantic norms evolve for putting words together into meaningful sentences and for organizing sentences into discourse. More specialized communities, such as those composed of educators, translators, and scholars, develop practices for recovering and fixing meanings for written and spoken discourse, discerning what they tacitly assume are the intentions or point of those who articulate them.

When disagreements break out, they are adjudicated through interpretative inquiry (whether the notion of authorial intention is a fiction or not is of no concern here; it is at least useful). In literature, settled interpretations of texts arise as the outcomes of such inquiry, although they are subject to change or rejection as interpretative traditions evolve. Teachers rely on these interpretations to limit and direct textual study in reading classes. Even in extensive reading experience, this background of settled interpretations can act as a brake on more *outré* judgments and meaning attributions.

For language to be public and stable, word meanings and the norms for combining them in meaningful sentences and discourse must be resistant to subjective fancy, but not so resistant that they are not adaptable to communication contexts and the intentions of authors or utterers. Spoken or written discourse must have its meanings fixed independently of subjective fancy if it is to be publicly understood, but must also be amenable at any one time to a tolerable range of plausible construals. What counts as a “tolerable range” varies according to genre, with the strictest limits applying in the interpretation of theoretical science texts and the broader limits applying in the study of literature and poetry, with the limits of objectivity breached by more obscure or nonsensical poetic constructions. We can say then that meanings have varying degrees of objectivity, *but* are objective only relative to the community which makes use of them at the time of usage; they are *not* objective, then, in abstraction from that community and its actual or potential members (including language students).

Meanings are the currency of a common, directly experienced world, a world of shared linguistic habits and norms. The language learner reckon with this world which she can enter only on terms set by others. She will create her own subjective interpretations of word, sentence, and discourse meanings and try them out as hypotheses in communication with others. This is the kernel of common sense in radical constructivism. But she will see many of her hypotheses fall as skilled language users, including teachers, recognize her errors, or as she discerns them herself. To

understand why she should accept their judgments about her mistakes, we need to supplement our concept of the objectivity of meaning with the notion of authority in its interpretation and usage.

Authority in language use, and its practical implications for the intensive reading classroom

A person who has authority with regard to language usage is a person who is trusted within a particular linguistic community to comprehend the following accurately: the various possible meanings of particular words and sentences; the particular meaning that a word or sentence contextually has in a piece of discourse; and the meaning(s) that a writer or speaker intends for a particular word, sentence, or text. Moreover, a person with such authority is (mostly) able to produce spoken or written discourse that is judged to be accurate and comprehensible by other members of her linguistic community. It is to such persons that the language learner must initially defer and be dependent upon in acquiring skills in comprehending initially unfamiliar words, expressions, and texts, and interpreting texts in ways that will be perceived as accurate by members of the linguistic community to which he or she is seeking admittance.

The teacher in an intensive EFL/ESL reading class is, in this sense, an authority. Such authority can be possessed by a wide range of individuals, such as native speakers or skilled second or foreign language speakers of English who are peers of an English learner and to whom the learner looks voluntarily for guidance or correction in his English practice. The English teacher is merely a more multi-skilled, technically knowledgeable, and specialized stand-in for these individuals.

There are two practical implications for this notion of authority in the intensive reading classroom. Firstly, *the teacher should know her stuff*. Specifically, she should come to class having already read the reading passage, worked through the exercises prescribed for the class, and familiarized herself with some background information about the reading. More generally, through both qualifications and accumulated

teaching experience, she should possess in specialized form the skills of authoritative language use described above. Although radical constructivists will not deny the need for proper class preparation and teacher training, this implication does not sit at all well with the subjectivism about knowledge they espouse. For them, as has been stated already, knowledge is what the individual learner constructs in her own experience through problem-solving activities and is thus not imparted to her from outside. Moreover, the evaluative criteria for knowledge are just the standards for coherence and viability that are internal to the experience of each learner.

From the contrasting point of view argued for here, teachers ideally come to classrooms possessing many types of knowledge that students do not have or have only incompletely at the beginning of their learning experience: knowledge of prescribed reading texts and of the exercises that accompany them, explicit and tacit knowledge of reading skills, and technical knowledge of grammatical categories. Moreover, they ideally come with a command of interpretations and answers to classroom exercises that are generally correct or (with more literary genres) a sense for which textual interpretations are allowable rather than *outré*. For this point of view, it makes sense to say that reading teachers – or indeed more skilled peers – *do* impart knowledge. They do so not by directly feeding students correct interpretations or answers, but by modeling reading and study skills that students need to activate in a second or foreign language learning setting and by giving corrective feedback to their practice.

The second implication is that *teachers should monitor students' learning*, acting to constrain and channel interpretations of meanings in texts, to correct mistakes and to guide students away from mistaken approaches to reading exercises when necessary. Constructivists also accept the need for monitoring, feedback, and guidance (Williams & Burden, 1997, p.194). There is no occasion for disagreement on these issues. This paper's point of disagreement with constructivists is this: that teachers monitor and support students' learning through recourse to the authoritative knowledge

they have, which students trust them to have and to put to use in guiding their learning.

This does not make for a wholly teacher-centered learning experience. These two implications suggest rather a blending in of teacher-centered methods with what would otherwise be student-centered learning experiences, including pair or group discussion of interpretations and exercises and a problem-solving learning style. Here is an example of how these learning experiences can be integrated. Consider again the passage from Farley Mowat's book *Never Cry Wolf*, discussed briefly at the beginning of this paper. How would advanced level ESL/EFL students in an intensive English reading class correctly guess the meanings of the words "Norseman," "waggled" and "propeller wash" and of the passage as a whole? "The *Norseman* came over at about 50 feet. As it roared past, the plane waggled its wings gaily in salute, then lifted to skim the crest of the wolf esker, sending a blast of sand down the slope with its propeller wash" (Mowat qtd. in Wegmann & Knezevic, 2007, p.40).

This text was a challenge for the Japanese, Chinese, and Korean students I have taught it to because of its jargon and the rather culturally distant setting of the story (though this is in itself no barrier to students eventually appreciating the story on its literary merits). On the other hand, it is a good example to use to show how students can – with teacher guidance - activate bottom-up reading strategies to comprehend texts when their own background cultural assumptions and experiential knowledge are less useful for comprehension.

A teacher teaching a lesson around this passage should have already gone through the reading from which it is taken, figured out such unfamiliar vocabulary items as "Norseman," "waggled" and "propeller wash" and know the answers to the vocabulary questions that accompany the reading. To help build up student understanding of the cultural and geographical context for the passage, she might also have done some background reading of Farley Mowat's experiences of living with wolves in the Canadian wilderness.

We can expect students who are competent at this reading level to automatically exercise some bottom-up decoding skills - almost as automatically as they can in reading their first language - identifying words like "Norseman" as nouns by their structure and picking out predicates such as "...came over..." However, when confronting passages peppered with unknown words, students may be tempted to treat this vocabulary atomistically, decoding it word by word without paying attention to its syntactical and semantic relations. A teacher's first intervention in such circumstances would be to encourage students to close their dictionaries and work together at figuring out the meaning of the word *Norseman* by considering it in relation to its predicate.

Where groups of students are still having trouble guessing the meaning of the word *Norseman*, the teacher can model to students the ways in which they can identify the relations of identity between "Norseman" and nouns or pronouns in other sentences (*Norseman*=it=plane) and comprehend the passage as a piece of discourse, not just as an assemblage of disparate words and sentences. The teacher might hint to students why they should filter out unlikely meaning attributions, such as that the *Norseman* is a person or an animal, encouraging them to appeal to their common sense.

Students could also apply some "top-down" reading strategies, working backwards from a preliminary gloss of the reading as a whole, which tells them that it is about a man researching wolves in the Canadian wilderness. All of these factors help constrain interpretation of the sense of the word "Norseman" to "type of plane." Students can use the same bottom-up and top-down strategies and teacher hints to figure out unknown key words such as "waggled" and "propeller wash" and use knowledge of these words to guess the meaning of the passage. Using simple English word substitutions and synonyms, they can guess that it means "a plane flew low over the author as he stood on top of a sandy ridge and waved at him with its wings," etc.

In this example, the teacher is not too remote from constructivist expectations in getting students to

experiment in group work with attributions of meanings to texts, and to undertake textbook exercises collaboratively. But part of her brief is also to guide their learning towards authoritative interpretations of word, sentence, and discourse meanings, and of authorial intent.

Conclusion

A strong attraction of the radical constructivist understanding of how students learn to read in a foreign language is that it minimizes the power and knowledge differential between the reading teacher and learner. It is thus compatible with popular student-centered approaches to language teaching. However, its underlying philosophical assumptions are implausible. It also fails to accommodate the insights discussed and defended in this paper: that success in the study of intensive reading in EFL/ESL involves comprehending *correctly* and mastering word, sentence, and discourse meanings in a variety of foreign language media. Correctly, that is, in an objective sense, from the point of view of the language community to which they wish to gain admission. Of course, students need to be reminded that many texts (especially in literature) admit multiple interpretations. They also need assurance that the pleasure of the reading experience is a worthwhile goal, just as it is in their first language.

There should be no sin in believing that a reading teacher initially ought to know better than her students what the correct meanings or acceptable range of interpretations are for a given text, and understands the skills language students will need to acquire to get those meanings. She can thus be in a position to assist students towards more confident and skilled reading habits in a second or foreign language. Implied here is a balance of teacher- and student-centered approaches to teaching intensive reading in EFL/ESL classrooms.

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Applying cognitive load theory in reading comprehension

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to introduce and analyze the split-attention effect in reading comprehension tasks to assist teachers of English in facilitating learning. An experiment was designed to investigate whether the split-attention effect applied to reading comprehension in EFL/ESL by comparing two instructional formats: split-attention and integrated. Participants were randomly allocated to one of two groups and received one of two instructional formats. The integrated format included a reading text and 10 questions physically integrated into the text. The split-attention format consisted of the same reading text with the same questions at the end of the text. Results indicated that the split attention format increased extraneous cognitive load and interfered with the reading comprehension process compared to the integrated format.

Introduction

Learning English as a foreign/second language (EFL/ESL) is important in all universities in Vietnam. However, reading tasks in currently available course books use conventional formats. These formats are not very effective in helping students to improve their reading skills. One solution is to apply cognitive load theory in designing reading tasks. The theory is becoming popular as an application for teaching and learning and could help instructors to provide suitable task formats in EFL/ESL teaching and learning.

Cognitive load theory is based on the relationship between the nature of information structures and human cognitive architecture (Paas, Renkl, & Sweller, 2003). The theory emphasizes cognitive load, understood as the amount of information input. Learning may be difficult when there is an overloading of working memory. In reading comprehension, cognitive load theory can be used to improve reading task formats by replacing conventional formats with an alternative designed to reduce cognitive load and enhance comprehension.

In EFL/ESL course books designed to teach reading, text questions are frequently used to assist the learning process. Generally, questions can be an effective tool for reading comprehension. However, instructors have not focused on the location of these questions, an issue that, according to cognitive load theory, could be important. Questions have been located most commonly at the end of a text, a location that may not be optimal because learners must split their attention between the text and the questions.

The purpose of the experiment reported in this paper was to examine the split-attention effect in reading comprehension while using two different reading task instructions: split-attention and integrated. Using the split-attention format, questions were placed at the end of a textual passage; in the integrated format, they were integrated into the passage. It was hypothesized that the split-attention format would impose an extraneous cognitive load that would interfere with learning and that the physically integrated format would reduce this load and so prove superior.

Cognitive load theory

Cognitive load theory has been developing since the 1980s and has attracted many researchers all over the world. A number of applied educational researchers, especially those working in technology areas, have used the concept of working memory and developed it into what is known as cognitive load theory (Chandler & Sweller, 1991; Kalyuga, Chandler, Tuovinen, & Sweller, 2001; Mayer & Chandler, 2001; Mousavi, Low, & Sweller, 1995; Sweller, 1994, 1999; Sweller, van Merriënboer, & Paas, 1998; Paas et al., 2003). Cognitive load theory proposes that some learning environments impose a heavier working memory burden than others (Sweller et al., 1998). Cognitive load theory also focuses on learning structures in terms of an information processing system involving long-term and working memory (Cooper, 1998).

Human cognitive architecture

Human cognitive architecture is understood to refer to how people remember, think, and solve problems. Knowledge of human cognitive architecture plays a very important role in instructional design; the relationship between human cognitive architecture and instructional design has been recognized (Sweller, 1999).

Thorne (2005) showed that memory is commonly defined as the processes of encoding, storing, and retrieving information. The memory systems involved in encoding or registering information in memory are sensory memory and short-term memory (Thorne, 2005). Short-term memory is also understood as working memory (Sweller, 1999). According to other researchers (Baddeley, 1996, 1998; Sweller, 1999), there is one other type of memory, namely, long-term memory.

Sensory memory registers some stimuli from the senses such as sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches, which extinguish very quickly. Thorne (2005) describes visual information as an “image,” and the “image” is stored in sensory memory for several hundred milliseconds. For auditory material, the information is stored for one or two seconds (Thorne, 2005).

Short-term, or working memory, is associated with consciousness. Working memory has a relationship with the way people direct their own attention to think or to process information. Miller (1956) indicated that the biggest limitation of working memory is the capacity to deal with no more than about seven elements of information simultaneously. Working memory is related to consciousness, because humans are aware of and can manage the contents of working memory (Sweller et al., 1998; Sweller, 2004). People use working memory to process information by organizing, contrasting, and comparing elements, so only two or three items of information can be managed at the same time (Sweller et al., 1998; Paas et al., 2003). Too many elements may strain working memory and reduce the effectiveness of processing (Kalyuga, Chandler, & Sweller, 1999). Thus, working memory is considered as the memory system having the role of holding and manipulating information. In this view, the conventional working memory buffer becomes an element of a bigger storage and processing system (Dixon, LeFevre, & Twilley, 1988). That system is long-term memory.

Long-term memory refers to our immense body of knowledge and skills. It holds everything a person knows. For instance, in learning a language, the letters of the alphabet, new words, and new structures are kept in long-term memory. Long-term memory has no known limits in its capacity to store information in a relatively permanent form, but no one is directly aware of their long-term memory until some of its contents and functioning are brought into working memory (Kirschner, 2002). Sweller (2003) indicates that while long-term memory is a passive information store, it is a critical component of all cognitive activities.

The relation between working memory and long-term memory can be found in the process of encoding, storing, and retrieving information. These three processes interact with different memory systems (Thorne, 2005). Firstly, memory is considered to begin with the encoding or converting of information into a form that can be stored by the brain (Thorne, 2005). As previously mentioned, both sensory memory and working memory are

involved in the encoding or registration of information. It is clear that most of the information that comes into our sensory registers is not developed further; only the information that will be developed further flows from the sensory registers to working memory (Gaddes & Edgell, 1994). As a result, sensory memory and working memory are concerned with processes of encoding or registering information, while the long-term memory system is concerned with the processes of storing and retrieving information. Forgetting is a phenomenon that results in the loss of information from long-term memory (Thorne, 2005).

Knowledge is organized and stored in long-term memory as schemata. Sweller (1999) defines schemata as elements of information categorized according to the manner in which they will be used. Schemata, being domain-specific knowledge structures, offer the means of storing a large amount of information in long-term memory (Sweller 2003).

Automation of schemata is another learning process. It can be conducted with little conscious thought (Sweller, 1999). For example, when map reading in English, the schemata assist the accomplished reader in quickly identifying what is significant about the map.

Categories of cognitive load

There are three categories of cognitive load, namely, intrinsic, extraneous, and germane (Sweller, 1999). The first category, intrinsic cognitive load, refers to the level of element interactivity existing in the material being learned (Paas et al., 2003). Element interactivity refers to the number of elements that must be concurrently processed for understanding to happen. Intrinsic cognitive load is determined by different levels of element interactivity that cannot be changed by instructional manipulations without loss of understanding. The reason is that, basically, all information structures consist of elements, the level of difficulty of which may be chiefly determined by the extent to which the elements interact with one another (Sweller, 2003; Sweller & Chandler, 1994). Information with low element interactivity is easy to study because its elements may be learned

independently and so do not place a heavy burden on working memory. In addition, a simple task that leaves out some elements of interactivity can decrease intrinsic cognitive load (Paas et al., 2003). Learners can understand and study individual element by individual element because the elements do not act together (Pollock, Chandler, & Sweller, 2002).

Pollock et al. (2002) gave some examples of intrinsic cognitive load in learning a language. Each new word can be learned without reference to any other entry. Pollock et al. (2002) provide an example of the Spanish word for “bird.” The word can be assimilated and learned separately from the Spanish word for “cat,” because the information is low in element interactivity. It also imposes a low intrinsic cognitive load because it is necessary for a limited number of elements to be processed in working memory at any given time (Pollock et al., 2002). In contrast, high-element interactivity material includes elements that cannot be understood separately, because they interact (Pollock et al., 2002). In learning a language, it is impossible to learn the grammatical syntax without taking into account several vocabulary items. In this case, syntax is understood as being high in element interactivity. As a result, learning a language generates a high, intrinsic cognitive load because many elements must be processed in working memory concurrently (Pollock et al., 2002).

The second category of cognitive load is extraneous cognitive load generated by conventional instructional procedures that are designed without considering knowledge of the structure of information or cognitive architecture (Paas et al., 2003). For example, many conventional reading comprehension tasks require learners to search for an answer to a question from a text, but the question is often located at the end of the text. Thus learners find it difficult to integrate the text and the question, providing an example of the split-attention effect discussed below. Similarly, extraneous load relates to any additional cognitive load generated by inadequately designed instruction that leads to cognitive activities inappropriate to the construction and automation of schemas (Sweller & Chandler, 1994).

In contrast, germane or effective cognitive load improves learning (Paas et al., 2003) because germane load relates to any cognitive load that facilitates schema construction and automation (Paas et al., 2003). In other words, the relationship between intrinsic, extraneous, and germane cognitive loads are asymmetric, because intrinsic cognitive load provides a basic load that is impossible to make simpler or smaller other than by constructing additional schemata and automating earlier-acquired schemas or by leaving out some essential information. The use of an effective instructional design can decrease extraneous cognitive load, which leads to free capacity for an increase in germane cognitive load (Paas et al., 2003).

Instructional effects

There are several instructional effects generated by cognitive load theory. However, only the split-attention effect is examined here in accordance with the topic of this paper.

The split-attention effect

Researchers have paid attention to the cognitive and instructional processes that occur when two separate sources of information must be mentally integrated, referred to as the split-attention effect (Yeung, Jin, & Sweller, 1998). To overcome a split-attention effect, a physically integrated format is a good way to solve the problem. For instance, with an integrated format, a text and the associated diagram are located together. The physical integration of related elements of diagrams and texts eases the search and match process required by a split-attention format; as a result, physical integration lowers working memory load (Kalyuga, Chandler, & Sweller, 2000). There are examples of the split-attention effect in mathematics. For many conventional mathematics instructional materials, learners are required to unnecessarily split their attention between diagrams and text. The learner must hold small segments of text in working memory while searching for the matching part of diagrams (Kalyuga et al., 1999).

Experiment

Introduction

EFL/ESL has developed very rapidly in Vietnam since 1986. English has been a very important foreign language in all universities. Students must study English for Specific Purposes (ESP) as a compulsory subject. The structure of the textbooks used is typical. For example, in the department of Geography (Ho Chi Minh City University of Pedagogy, Vietnam), second-year students use the course book “English for Students of Geography.” It is a collection of geography texts and accompanying exercises selected and designed to provide vocabulary enrichment and reading, listening, writing, and speaking skills development. Each of the 12 units contains varied comprehension and text interpretation activities. However, the activities may impose an extraneous cognitive load because the exercises and questions often are located at the end of reading texts, resulting in split attention. Thus, students may find it hard to comprehend texts and apply new knowledge.

The experiment aimed to contribute to the study of split-attention as a cognitive effect in teaching EFL/ESL. It investigated the differences between a split-attention and an integrated format in reading tasks. Question asking was used as an instructional tool with the question format as an independent variable. The split-attention format included the reading text with questions about the text placed at the end of the text. The integrated format had the same reading text, but the same questions as those used in the split-attention format were integrated physically into relevant paragraphs of the text. (Appendices 1-3)

Method

Participants

The 21 participants were Vietnamese students studying ESL at the Foreign Language Center at the Ho Chi Minh City University of Social Sciences and Humanities. They were first year students who studied English for 7 years, from the 6th to the 12th grade. The students joined this experiment as a regular class activity. They were randomly divided into two groups: 11 participants for the split-attention group and 10 for the integrated group.

Learning phase

In the learning phase, participants were asked to read the material and answer the questions in 10 minutes (1 minute per one question).

Test phase

In the test phase, participants were required to answer 12 test questions, but were permitted to refer to the passage while attempting to answer the test questions. The original learning phase questions were not visible in the test phase. For both phases, one mark was given for a correct answer, and a score of “0” was given for an incorrect answer.

Results and discussion

A 2×2 ANOVA was used to analyze the test scores (Table 1). There was a significant difference between the two groups, $F(1, 19) = 4.630$, $MSE = .108$, $p = .044$, partial $\eta^2 = .196$. Also, there was a significant effect for the two phases, $F(1, 19) = 8.634$, $MSE = .059$, $p = .008$, partial $\eta^2 = .312$ with higher means for the test phase. There was no significant interaction between the two groups and the two phases, $F(1, 19) = .365$, $MSE = .059$, $p = .553$.

It was hypothesized that students would perform better with the integrated format than with the split-attention format in both phases. That result was obtained. We can conclude that the split-attention format imposed a heavy cognitive load that interfered with learning.

The research found that the split-attention formats used in ESL reading comprehension could produce split-attention effects. The results of the experiment demonstrated a significant group \times phase interaction

that did not show a split-attention effect in the test phase but did show the effect in the learning phase. The research was based on cognitive load theory. The experiment showed that the split-attention format could demonstrate a split-attention effect in reading comprehension. In the split-attention format, students may have spent much more time reading and re-reading the whole text before finding answers to the questions at the end of the text. For difficult questions, students may have had to re-read the text several times to find an answer. Because the answer was more readily found in the integrated group, such re-reading may not have been necessary. Hence, students in the split-attention group may have spent more time reading the material than those in the integrated group, resulting in more being learned. Nevertheless, while more time may have been spent reading the material in the split-attention condition, a “cognitive overload,” defined as the processing demands surpassing the processing possibility of the cognitive system, may have occurred (Mayer & Moreno, 2003) in this situation, resulting in poorer performance in answering questions. In other words while it may have been hard to answer the questions in the learning phase, some of the increased load may be germane load due to increased reading that resulted in more learning. The location of the questions might have imposed an extraneous cognitive load. The processing demands caused by the reading comprehension task may have surpassed the processing capacity of the cognitive system. An extraneous load due to split attention may have occurred while the students re-read the text due to the location of the questions at the end of the text. In the split-attention format, the position of questions at the end of the reading text resulted in

Table 1. Learning and test phase means and standard deviations

Phase	Group	Mean	Std Deviation	N
Learning phase	Split-attention	.127	.224	11
	Integrated	.300	.205	10
	Total	.209	.227	21
Test phase	Split-attention	.303	.387	11
	Integrated	.566	.296	10
	Total	.428	.364	21

slowing down the comprehension process. In contrast, the integrated format, using physically integrated questions, might have enhanced the reading comprehension process.

In the case of the question placement at the end of text, students were required to split their attention and find text keywords for answers. This activity, which is only a precursor (Chandler & Sweller, 1991) to learning, may have caused an extraneous load on working memory. In contrast, the integrated format may have facilitated the learning process by incorporating the questions next to the corresponding paragraphs of the text. Working memory consequently may have been freed to participate in all processes suitable to learning. For example, the integrated format might have allowed students to more effectively use automation of schemata to comprehend the reading. Integrated questions may have permitted them to more readily acquire and automate schemata and vocabulary as a “unity.” Based on the schema theory (Bartlett, 1932; Anderson, 1977; Adams & Collins, 1979; Rumelhart & Ortony, 1977; Rumelhart, 1980), students used modes of processes such as top-down and bottom-up processing for reading comprehension. Students in the integrated groups of the experiment may have used previous knowledge and experience in comprehending the text. As a result, the students’ schemata may be relatively easily stored in long-term memory, and this process may reduce working memory load (Yeung, 1996).

In the experiment, the reading text included geographical terms in English. As a result, students might have needed top-down and bottom-up processing to comprehend the text (Rumelhart, 1977, 1980). Students needed to have background geographical knowledge in English (top-down) as well as linguistic knowledge (bottom-up). They might have used interactive models for ESL reading to comprehend the text (Eskey & Grabe, 1988). The interactive models focus on the association between the top-down and bottom-up approaches (Eskey & Grabe, 1988). The integrated format may speed up an application of the interactive models in ESL reading comprehension, because integration helps students use linguistic knowledge (bottom-up) as a

means of automating schemata that enhance reading comprehension.

Limitations

1. Participants were from the Ho Chi Minh City University of Social Sciences and Humanities with the same English levels (in the experiment). As a result, the findings may not be generalizable to readers with different English levels in different schools. Further research would be required order to generalize the conclusions.
2. The reading text used in the experiment was an English language text on geography. It would be useful to consider texts from different areas.

Recommendations for further research

The present research focused on the split-attention effect in EFL/ESL reading comprehension. The split-attention effect may occur when reading instruction includes questions at the end of a text. However, other cognitive effects may be further explored in order to enhance the process of EFL/ESL reading comprehension. For example, the questions may be presented as auditory (spoken) rather than as visual (written) (Moreno & Mayer, 1999) in order to test for the modality effect. The modality effect may occur when the auditory (spoken) questions are used as a tool for checking reading comprehension.

An experiment testing for the modality effect in EFL/ESL reading comprehension would consist of a group presented with a reading text and questions in a visual only form and an audiovisual group with the questions presented in auditory form. The two groups would be compared, with the superior performance of the audiovisual group indicating the modality effect.

The redundancy effect may occur when learners are presented information or required to engage in activities that are irrelevant to schema acquisition and automation (Chandler & Sweller, 1991). In the current context, the redundancy effect may occur when readers comprehend the text better without questions because the questions are redundant. The redundancy effect occurs because inappropriate

questions may cause an extraneous cognitive load. An experiment testing for the redundancy effect in EFL/ ESL reading comprehension would consist of a reading text and questions for one group, with another group presented the same text without questions. Superior performance by the group with only the text would provide an example of the redundancy effect.

Lastly, the level of learner expertise may be considered in the process of comprehension. According to Kalyuga, Ayres, Chandler, and Sweller (2003), the split- attention effect obtained using inexperienced readers may be replaced by the redundancy effect for experienced readers presented with the same materials. An experiment testing for the expertise reversal effect would consist of having readers with different levels of expertise complete the same reading text and comprehension questions. If questions are redundant for more expert learners, the questions will have a negative rather than positive effect, resulting in the expertise reversal effect.

Conclusion

The results of the research reported in this paper have implications for ESL instructional design. For instance, questions are considered to be instructional variables referring to attention-related problems (Jenkins & Pany, 1982). Researchers such as Fincke (1968) and Swenson and Kulhavy (1974) have mentioned the location of questions in reading comprehension. Fincke (1968) favored locating questions before the text while Swenson and Kulhavy (1974) emphasized locating the questions after the text. Cairney (1990) stressed the usefulness of questions depending upon the kind of questions, the timing of questions, the text type, how the question is asked and the teacher's reason why the question is asked. The results of the present study might be useful in determining the optimal time spent in considering questions. The integrated format helped readers to spend less time in searching for answers. This format should be useful under conditions where intensive reading comprehension leaves students with less time to comprehend.

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Appendix 1

The Split-Attention Format - The Learning Phase

Read the text and answer the following questions

THE EARLY ABORIGINES

Science has not yet established precisely when, how, from where, and why the first humans came to Australia. Their origin remains an unsolved mystery. Skulls of primitive people have been found in various parts of Australia, in conditions, which

have suggested that their ages could date back from 12,000 to 125,000 years.

Blood group tests, physical descriptions and measurements, and the study of aboriginal customs, beliefs, art, tools and weapons, have made it clear that, before the arrival of Europeans, the Australian aborigines were of two distinct races, identified somewhat loosely as “Tasmanians” and “Mainlanders”.

The Tasmanians were small people, with woolly hair and black skins. It may be assumed that they were isolated in Tasmania when it was cut off from the Mainland by the geologic subsidence, which formed Bass Straits, thousands of years ago. On this theory they may have entered Australia from the North, possibly by a “land- bridge” from Papua, and were driven further and further to the South by later immigrants until a few families reached Tasmania, when it was a peninsula, and were later isolated there.

On this hypothesis, the mainlanders with wavy, not woolly hair, and a brown rather than ebony black skin-may have migrated to Australia from islands of the Arafura Sea; but there are doubts as to this theory, since the Mainlanders, like the Tasmanians, had no knowledge of seagoing vessels; they had only frail craft in which they navigated streams and calm coastal waters.

The theory of a land-bridge between Australia and Asia within “recent” times, up to one million years ago, conflicts with geological evidence that Australia became separated from Asia 125 million years ago. It is assumed by some that if indeed the aborigines did migrate south to Australia, then they brought the dingo with them; but fossil remains of the dingo have been found in association with marsupial fossils of very great antiquity. Even this, however, may have been coincidental and no convincing conclusion can be drawn from it.

Notwithstanding these diversities of opinion, the Australian Mainland aborigines are undoubtedly a distinct race of mankind. The “Carpentarian” aborigines in northern regions are darker in skin color than those of the south, the “Murrayians”- but

this may be an effect of sunburn, rather than of genetic causes. The aborigines were Stone Age people, having no knowledge of the use of metals. They were skillful as hunters and trackers, and were careful never to deplete the sources of their food supply beyond natural replenishment. They did not cultivate the soil, but lived on Nature's bounty, which was more than adequate for their food needs. Their invention of the boomerang and the woomera (spear-thrower) showed high ability, but they did not use the bow and arrow, which were known to the natives of Indonesia and New Guinea. They migrated from the islands to the North of Australia, and they must have done so before the bow and arrow were known there.

When Europeans arrived, there were possibly 300 "nations" of aborigines in Australia, each with its own territorial boundaries, and speaking its own language. The impact of Europeans destroyed their tribal and social structures throughout the 19th century.

Comprehension Check

1. *When did the first people reach Australia?*

2. *What evidence is there for two distinct races as "Tasmanians" and "Mainlanders"?*

3. *Did the "Tasmanians" aborigines reach Australia before, after or at the same time as the "Mainland" aborigines?*

4. *Where is it hypothesized that mainlanders migrated from?*

5. *Why are there doubts concerning this hypothesis?*

6. *List ways the Mainlanders differed from Tasmanians.*

7. *What evidence is there that dingoes came to Australia a very long time ago?*

8. *Why are the "Carpentarian" aborigines in northern regions darker in skin color than those of the south, the "Murrayians"?*

9. *What evidence is there for the skillfulness and ability of the Australian aborigine?*

10. *How many languages did aborigines speak when Europeans arrived?*

Appendix 2

The Integrated Format - The Learning Phase *Read the text and answer the following questions:*

THE EARLY ABORIGINES

Science has not yet established precisely when, how, from where, and why the first humans came to Australia. Their origin remains an unsolved mystery. Skulls of primitive people have been found in various parts of Australia, in conditions, which have suggested that their ages could date back from 12,000 to 125,000 years.

1. *When did the first people reach Australia?*

Blood group tests, physical descriptions and measurements, and the study of aboriginal customs, beliefs, art, tools and weapons, have made it clear that, before the arrival of Europeans, the Australian aborigines were of two distinct races, identified somewhat loosely as "Tasmanians" and "Mainlanders."

2. *What evidence is there for two distinct races as "Tasmanians" and "Mainlanders"?*

The Tasmanians were small people, with wooly hair and black skins. It may be assumed that they were

isolated in Tasmania when it was cut off from the Mainland by the geologic subsidence, which formed Bass Straits, thousands of years ago. On this theory they may have entered Australia from the North, possibly by a “land- bridge” from Papua, and were driven further and further to the South by later immigrants until a few families reached Tasmania, when it was a peninsula, and were later isolated there.

3. *Did the “Tasmanians” aborigines reach Australia before, after or at the same time as the “Mainland” aborigines?*
-

On this hypothesis, the mainlanders with wavy, not wooly hair, and a brown rather than ebony black skin-may have migrated to Australia from islands of the Arafura Sea; but there are doubts as to this theory, since the Mainlanders, like the Tasmanians, had no knowledge of seagoing vessels; they had only frail craft in which they navigated streams and calm coastal waters.

4. *Where is it hypothesized that mainlanders migrated from?*
-
5. *Why are there doubts concerning this hypothesis?*
-
6. *List ways the Mainlanders differed from Tasmanians.*
-

The theory of a land-bridge between Australia and Asia within “recent” times, up to one million years ago, conflicts with geological evidence that Australia became separated from Asia 125 million years ago. It is assumed by some that if indeed the aborigines did migrate south to Australia, then they brought the dingo with them; but fossil remains of the dingo have been found in association with marsupial fossils of very great antiquity. Even this, however, may have been coincidental and no convincing conclusion can be drawn from it.

7. *What evidence is there that dingoes came to Australia a very long time ago?*
-

Notwithstanding these diversities of opinion, the Australian Mainland aborigines are undoubtedly a distinct race of mankind. The “Carpentarian” aborigines in northern regions are darker in skin color than those of the south, the “Murrayians” - but this may be an effect of sunburn, rather than of genetic causes. The aborigines were Stone Age people, having no knowledge of the use of metals. They were skillful as hunters and trackers, and were careful never to deplete the sources of their food supply beyond natural replenishment. They did not cultivate the soil, but lived on Nature’s bounty, which was more than adequate for their food needs. Their invention of the boomerang and the woomera (spear-thrower) showed high ability, but they did not use the bow and arrow, which were known to the natives of Indonesia and New Guinea. They migrated from the islands to the North of Australia, and they must have done so before the bow and arrow were known there.

8. *Why are the “Carpentarian” aborigines in northern regions darker in skin color than those of the south, the “Murrayians”?*
-
9. *What evidence is there for the skillfulness and ability of the Australian aborigine?*
-

When Europeans arrived, there were possibly 300 “nations” of aborigines in Australia, each with its own territorial boundaries, and speaking its own language. The impact of Europeans destroyed their tribal and social structures throughout the 19th century.

10. *How many languages did aborigines speak when Europeans arrived?*
-

Appendix 3

The Test Phase

Answer the following questions:

1. When did the first people reach Australia?

2. Describe the physical characteristics of the Tasmanians.

3. Why was Tasmania cut off from the Mainland thousands of years ago?

4. Describe the physical characteristics of Mainlanders.

5. Where is it hypothesized that mainlanders migrated from?

6. Why are there doubts concerning this hypothesis?

7. List ways the Mainlanders differed from the Tasmanians.

8. When did Australia become separated from Asia?

9. Did the aborigines have knowledge of the use of metals?

10. How did the aborigines obtain food?

11. About how many nations of aborigines were there in Australia when Europeans arrived?

12. When were the aborigines' tribal and social structures destroyed?

Appendix 4

Lesson Plan

LESSON TITLE: Australian Geography

LESSON AUTHOR: Huynh Cong Minh Hung

SUBJECT AREA: English

TIME ALLOTTED FOR LESSON: 30 minutes

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF LESSON: Students are given a text to comprehend by answering all questions

GROUPING OF STUDENTS: 21 students

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVE: The students are expected to read the text and answer all the questions

MATERIAL: The material consists of a text entitled "The Early Aborigines" that is extracted from the book "Efficient reading: a practical guide" (Anderson, Durston, & Poole, 1969) (p.56, 57) (527 words)

STUDENTS' SKILL: reading skill

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES: Students were randomly allocated to one of the two groups and received one of two instructional formats: integrated or split-attention formats. The integrated format included a reading text and 10 questions integrating physically into the text. That means at the end of each paragraph there were one or more questions concerning that paragraph. For example, question 1 was located at the end of the first paragraph, while questions 2 and 3 were placed at the end of the second paragraph. The split-attention format consisted of the same reading text and the same 10 questions at the end of the text. The two groups of the experiment were identical in procedure with the only difference being in the material used. The experiment was run as part of a normal class. There were two phases: the learning and test phases. In the learning phase, participants were asked to read the material and answer the questions in 10 minutes with students working at their own pace on each question up to the 10-minute

limit. Students were informed beforehand that they would have a total of 10 minutes. A clock was used to indicate the time remaining.

After the learning phase, learners were given the test questions. They were required to answer the test questions without the passage being present. There were 12 questions, 4 of which were identical to 4 of the questions presented during the learning phase. The 4 identical questions were: When did the first

people reach Australia? Where is it hypothesized that mainlanders migrated from? Why are there doubts concerning this hypothesis? List ways the Mainlanders differed from the Tasmanians. These 4 questions were chosen because they were basic to an understanding of the passage.

The duration of the test phase was 10 minutes with students answering questions at their own speed up to the 10 minute limit.

The use of effective reading strategies to improve reading comprehension

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Abstract

The teaching and learning of science and mathematics in English for school students was implemented in 2003 in Malaysia. It was expected that student grades in the English language would improve with more exposure to English through these subjects. Unfortunately, this was not the scenario; students in rural schools fared poorly in English in public examinations. The problem faced by these students is the lack of appropriate reading skills for reading comprehension. Data relating to the lack of these skills was obtained through the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning, which provided information about the reading strategies the students used to comprehend English. This research sought to address the problem of lack of reading skills by teaching the strategies of predicting, visualizing, connecting, questioning, clarifying, summarizing, and evaluating to a sample of 40 students in a rural secondary school. It concludes that the findings are of practical value to educators.

Introduction

Reading skills have to be taught to second language learners of English, as reading is a complex process. Researchers in reading traditionally conceptualize reading as only a cognitive process limited to the ability to decode symbols and construct meaning. However, when viewed in different contexts, reading presents a diverse range of information. When viewed in a social context, reading presents a form of habit formation. It can be said that when students are forced to read, they move away from it, but when it is a habit, they are willing to read as much as possible. Students have to be given a purpose to read in school. They should be able to read willingly and seek pleasure from a variety of books. With processing strategies, skills that help students understand what they are reading, they will soon find enjoyment. On the other hand, if students are forced to read, they will soon give it up. In

developing countries like Malaysia, the ability to read is seen as a building block for nation building. It is surprising that after six years of primary school education, most students in rural secondary schools are still unable to read and comprehend in English. The concern is whether these students have mastered reading strategies or not.

Statement of problem

Reading comprehension presents a problem to many students, and rural secondary school students face more problems than their urban counterparts. These problems are due to environmental factors which impede reading development. The home, school, and societal environment all influence the achievements of students. These are all the more relevant in the case of English, which to many students is a foreign rather than a second language.

In the home environment, there seems to be a vicious cycle. Rural secondary school students generally come from homes with little or no exposure to the English language. Their parents do not speak or read English, and this has an influence on the students. When they go to school, their abilities are below average. They are not given much attention; this in turn does not improve their capabilities. To these students, the little exposure to English they may get is from television, that is, if they watch programs in English. In some homes, students are not encouraged to speak or read in English for fear that they will learn and adopt a foreign culture. Studies have shown that parental and teacher models influence the reading ability and habits of learners (Wigfield & Asher, 1984). The phenomenon of more adults developing into non-reading models for their children can only serve to strengthen the vicious cycle, as shown by Smith (1971).

The school, like the home, plays an important part in the reading comprehension of English. Administrators, teachers, and student peers all contribute to the learning of English, either positively or negatively. Many administrators and teachers do not use English within the school compound. They also refrain from speaking English to students on the assumption that they will not be understood. In addition, teachers of English sometimes set very high targets for their students. Students who cannot meet these targets lose motivation and do not improve their reading comprehension skills. Peers tend to tease students who attempt to speak or read English, causing them to shy away from the language.

The society or community where the student lives also affects his learning strategies. Murdock (1965) showed that patterns of behavior are learned and shared by all members of a society and are passed down to new generations. Thus, if a community feels that a language is not important, then this attitude has a negative influence on the student. Teachers of English come from three main ethnic groups, namely, Malay, Chinese and Indian. Their level of English is generally good; they are graduates of Teacher Training Colleges or

Universities and are trained in TESL (teaching English as a second language).

Research questions

1. To what extent do rural secondary school students use English to read and communicate?
2. How does the use of appropriate reading strategies improve reading comprehension?

Scope of the study

This study investigated problems in reading comprehension in English among rural secondary school students with below average reading comprehension and aimed to discover whether these students used appropriate reading strategies. "Reading" is accepted as a thoughtful process, requiring the reader not only to understand what the author is endeavoring to communicate but also to contribute his own experiences and thoughts to the process of understanding. "Comprehension" is composed of skills and abilities such as understanding word meanings, verbal reasoning, getting the main idea, detecting the author's mood, and discerning word meanings in context. "Rural" refers to areas far away from towns which lack most of the facilities available in towns. "Low achievement" is not being successful in acquiring a set of qualities that should have been obtained, according to the Cambridge International Dictionary of English.

Limitations of the study

The sample consisted of 40 Form Four students (aged sixteen), all of whom are low achievers in English. The students generally come from Felda schemes, Malay villages, Chinese villages, Rumah Rakyat and estates. Felda schemes and estates are plantations where rubber trees and oil palms are grown and processed for local and export use. Felda schemes are mainly populated by Malays and estates by Indians. Rumah Rakyat are low-cost housing schemes aimed at making house-ownership a possibility among low-income groups. The study faced time constraints, as the research had to be carried out during school hours, disrupting regular lessons. The research was carried out over four days only.

It should be noted that the study is only related to low-achieving Form Four students from the above mentioned rural locations. Therefore, it will have limited applications to other aspects of the English language, higher achieving students, and students from urban areas. The instrumentation will be limited to a survey using two sets of questionnaires to collect student background information and student classroom practices.

Review of literature

Reading is a very complex process. Widdowson (1979) defined reading as “the process of getting linguistic information via print.” This is too general a statement. Jennings (1982, p. 12), on the other hand, defined reading as “the art of transmitting the ideas, facts, and feelings from the mind and soul of an author to the mind and soul of the reader, with accuracy and understanding.” Goodman, Goodman, and Burke (1984, p. 828) further stated that in order to understand how reading works, it is important to examine the major purposes of reading.

The environment can play an important role in developing a child’s reading habits. Carroll and Chall (1975) noted that a child’s personality is shaped by many different environmental influences and the most important are the child-rearing practices of the parents. Wigfield and Asher (1984, p. 430) further suggested “parent-child interaction is the most important home influence on children’s later achievement behavior in school.” Wigfield and Asher also believed that parents can become involved in helping their children’s reading by providing appropriate reading materials in the home (1984). Older siblings can also influence younger ones.

Smith (1971) characterized reading as a process charting the reader’s path through a text rather than making judgments of comprehension based on reading outcomes. Eskey (1988) stated that second language readers will have weaker linguistic competence than first language readers and therefore will have less ability to draw on the cues available to first language readers. The view of Eskey (1988) of second language reading sees the reader as a participant in the reading process. The reader reconstructs meaning from the text by

making and confirming predictions using cues from the language. The inability to draw on these cues interferes with the ability to comprehend. Coady (1979) focused on the role of prior knowledge or experience in the process of reading. This form of information processing was given additional support from the schema theory. Widdowson (1983) described schemas or schemata as “cognitive constructs which allow for the organization of information in long term memory.” According to the schema theory, the reader interprets a text by mapping every input from the text against some existing schema in his memory. It adds a new dimension to second language reading. Dole, Duffy, Roehler, and Pearson (1991) claimed that in addition to the knowledge that second language readers bring to the reading task, they also possess a set of flexible, adaptable strategies that they use to make sense of text and to monitor their ongoing understanding.

Most rural secondary school student reading problems arise because of limited vocabulary. Grabe (1983) pointed out that second language readers “invoke a unique set of constraints,” the most significant of which is that they can be assumed to have limited vocabulary. Huey, in as far back as 1913, noted that “... until the insidious thought of reading as word pronouncing is well worked out of our heads, it is well to place the emphasis strongly where it really belongs, on reading as thought-getting, independently of expression.”

Reading strategies are to be applied in the three stages of reading: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. Predicting, questioning, visualizing, connecting, and summarizing are some of the reading strategies identified by readers (Knight, Padron, & Waxman, 1985). Predicting and questioning are a part of the pre-reading process. Visualizing forms the while-reading strategy, and connecting and summarizing are post-reading strategies. Pressley and Afflerbach (1995) said that good readers know and use many different strategies. Good readers predict, make notes, and summarize.

Research methodology

The information was tabulated and presented in a frequency table with percentages to ascertain what strategies were being used by students and what problems they faced in reading and comprehension. This helped teachers decide on the appropriate reading strategies to be taught.

Participants

The participants in this study were 40 Form Four students of a rural secondary school. The students were all low achievers in reading comprehension in English. Their achievement level was based on public examination results. The exams were conducted in Form Three when the students were fifteen years old.

Instrumentation

Two sets of questionnaires were used to conduct this survey. The questionnaires, adapted from Anderson (1992), were used on the sample only to gather data on student background and student classroom practices.

Research findings

This section looks at the data from two sources: student background information and student classroom practices. The data is organized accordingly into two sections. The findings and

inferences drawn from the data will be discussed as they are presented.

Thirty-seven students in the study have parents who are rubber tappers or oil palm plantation workers. These parents have only primary school education (up to 12 years old) in their mother tongue at either Malay or Chinese medium schools. Due to this, their proficiency in English is limited or nil. Thus, they are unable to help their children in the language. Only three students have parents who have gone up to secondary school. Out of these, only one parent has completed Form Five (17 years old). These parents also have limited English proficiency.

It is quite clear from the information in Table 1 that the students in the study wholly use the mother tongue at home. They also use the mother tongue quite widely in school among friends and with the English language teachers as well. The Malay language as well as dialects of Chinese and Indian languages are used widely. The researcher observed that during the course of the study, none of the students used English to communicate.

When it comes to reading, 92.5 % of the students read in their mother tongue as opposed to 2.5 % who take time to read in English. This is confirmed by library records, which show that students prefer

Table 1. Student background information

Background Information	Frequency	Percentage
1. Uses mother tongue at home	40	100.00
2. Uses English at home	1	2.50
3. Reads in mother tongue	37	92.50
4. Reads in English	1	2.50
5. Reads in mother tongue more than an hour daily	12	30.00
6. Reads in English more than an hour daily	0	0.00
7. Plans for further studies in English	22	55.00

to borrow books in their mother tongue rather than in English. Even in their mother tongue, only 30% of the students spend more than an hour reading daily. It can be seen that students generally do not like to read. As for English, none of the students read more than an hour a day. Their reading is limited to their school textbooks or library books. None of the students buy magazines or newspapers, although these are sometimes read in the school library. On the whole, reading is not cultivated and this leads to poor reading strategies. Forty-five percent of the students do not plan to further their studies and thus they do not read, as they feel it is unnecessary and a waste of time.

Before discussing the findings, here is a brief explanation of what each strategy means. The teaching and learning of these strategies could improve reading comprehension among rural school students.

- Predicting is finding clues about what might come next in a reading text. These clues can be in the title, the cover, the pictures, or the prior knowledge of the student relating to the content.
- Visualizing is forming images about what has been read in order to facilitate comprehension.
- Connecting involves making connections to personal life based on experiences of the student.
- Questioning is formulating and asking questions about a text. It can be about how one feels and how to solve problems. Students can practice questioning using who, what, where, when, why, and how.
- Clarifying involves students figuring out the meaning on their own, getting outside help, or checking a dictionary.
- Summarizing is composing a few sentences about the important ideas. This helps

students to differentiate between relevant and irrelevant information.

- Evaluating is where the teacher helps the students to assess their own questions and answers about important ideas in the reading.

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that rural secondary school students generally use very little English to read and to communicate, as the use of mother tongue is predominant. However, it can be seen that students do like to ask questions (Table 2). Interestingly, the questions are generally asked in Malay, the national language, not in English.

Visualizing is seldom used, mainly because the students do not understand what they are reading in English. This also applies to the connecting strategy where students are seldom able to relate their reading to personal experiences. Predicting, summarizing, and evaluating strategies, too, are mostly never used.

Students face difficulties in trying to guess what will happen next in what they are reading. In the post-reading process, students are unable to summarize the main points of the text. Nineteen students made the attempt to clarify what they had read. Only 9 students evaluate their readings, but that is not always done. The strategies most used are questioning and clarifying, and as mentioned earlier, this is done in the mother tongue.

In conclusion, students do not use the appropriate reading strategies required to master or improve their English because of the low level of their English reading skills. Thus, the lack of appropriate strategies leads to low achievement in reading comprehension examinations among rural school students.

Table 2. Strategies for reading and comprehension in English

Response Strategy	Never (0)	Sometimes (1)	Very Often (2)	Always (3)
1. Predicting	31	6	3	0
2. Visualizing	36	2	2	0
3. Connecting	28	7	4	1
4. Questioning	8	18	13	1
5. Clarifying	21	11	8	0
6. Summarizing	33	5	2	0
7. Evaluating	31	6	3	0

Implications and conclusions

With the general lack of appropriate reading strategies, most students merely read in English without understanding. In fact, reading in English is an unnecessary ‘burden,’ done only to carry out the tasks during an English lesson. For these students, it is not an enjoyable activity. The results of the study show that only three strategies are used quite extensively by the students: questioning, clarifying, and connecting. These may be popular strategies as they are generic to the learning of languages. If students can apply the strategies of predicting, visualizing, evaluating, and summarizing, they may be able to improve their performance on examinations. The first step towards improving student achievement is to include and stress the explicit teaching of appropriate reading comprehension strategies. However, this would have to be carried out in creative ways to retain student interest and attention. Teachers should also bear in mind that “strategies need to be taught over a sufficient duration for the training to be effective and should be presented over a number of contexts with a variety of texts” (Hudson, 2007).

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Appendix 1

Teacher information

Section 1: Personal data

1. Name of teacher:
2. Name of school:
3. Home address:
4. e-mail:
5. Sex: Male: _____ Female: _____
6. State of occupation: Permanent _____
Temporary _____
7. Experience as a teacher: years.
8. Experience as an English teacher: years.
9. Qualifications:
Basic degree in English _____
Teaching certificate in English _____
Others (specify) _____
10. Language used to converse with friends:
.....
11. Which model of English do you use:
British _____
American _____
Others _____

Section 2: Classroom Practice

Tick (/) in the appropriate spaces the practices that you MOST often use in the teaching of reading comprehension in English.

I read, students listen	
Students read aloud	
Students read silently	
Practice answering comprehension questions orally before students write on their own	
I write answers to comprehension questions on the board, students copy	
Students write answers on their own without prior practice	
If students answer questions on their own do they: often make mistakes often get the answers correct	
Encourage students to work individually	
Encourage students to work in pairs/groups	
Use newspapers / magazines in the class	
Encourage students to do extensive reading	
I enjoy teaching English	
I am motivated to teach English	

What are the problems you encounter as an English teacher?

.....

In what areas would you like to improve yourself with regard to teaching English?

.....

Appendix 2

Student background information

1. Name of student:
2. Name of school:
3. Home address:
4. Sex : Male _____ Female _____
5. Language used at home:

6. Language used to converse with friends:

7. Occupation
 Father:
 Mother:
8. Educational background
 Father:
 Mother:

9. Do you buy English newspapers? If, yes, give the name of the newspaper.

10. Do you buy English magazines? If, yes, give the name of the magazine.

11. Does anyone motivate you to read in English? If, yes, specify who.

Appendix 3

Student classroom practices

Tick (/) in the appropriate spaces the practices that you MOST often use in the learning of reading comprehension in English.

Make a prediction based on the title, cover, or pictures of a text	
Identify the main idea of a text	
Make a connection with the text to personal experience	
Connect the things read to what happens in real life	
Listen when someone is speaking	
Practice asking questions based on what has been read	
Ask questions to clarify meaning	
Answer questions based on what has been read	
Evaluate own answers	
Summarize text	
Form images in the mind based on the text	
Read aloud fluently	

A study of EFL instruction in an educational context with limited resources

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Abstract

This paper reports on a study exploring the beliefs of teachers and students about Content-Based Instruction (CBI) and the realities of CBI in EFL reading classes at the College of Foreign Languages, Vietnam National University, Hanoi. The aim is to improve the method of EFL reading instruction through integration of content and language in the Bachelor of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (BA TEFL) program, thus helping to enhance instruction with limited resources, leading to better preparation of English teachers for Vietnam. Salient findings emerged from the data concerning the mismatch of beliefs between teachers and students, the lack of professional subject-related topics in the reading programs and the less than satisfactory design and implementation of the intended curriculum. Respondents also suggest useful ways to handle CBI to improve the teaching of ESP and the development of curriculum/materials. Recommendations regarding administrators/higher level leaders, teachers, and students are then provided.

Introduction

As the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) model of teaching English, dominant till approximately the end of the 20th century, has been said to have produced a failure pattern of “low proportion of learners reaching high proficiency” (Graddol, 2007, p. 90), ELT practitioners have been seeking other models for improvement.

Since the second half of the previous century, there has been a growing interest in combining language and content teaching. In the American context, programs, models, and approaches have proliferated in all levels of instruction, creating various forms of incorporating language and content teaching. From the mid-1990s in Europe, curriculum innovations have been directed toward the content and language

integrated learning approach, in which both curriculum content (e.g. science or geography) and English are taught together (Graddol, 2007). All these forms of incorporating language and content teaching fall under the heading of content-based instruction, which is similar to what Graddol (2007, p. 86) termed the “content and language integrated learning” or CLIL, “a significant curriculum trend in Europe.”

Content-based instruction (CBI) is a curricula approach or framework, not a method (which involves a syllabus to be used: teaching and learning objectives as well as teaching and learning activities), in that it entails:

1. the view of the nature of language as a tool for communication.

2. the belief about the nature of language teaching/learning as interactions between language, content, teachers, and learners.
 3. the idea of how these views should be applied to the practice of language teaching.
- (To, Nguyen, Nguyen, Nguyen, & Luong, 2007)

In contrast to some EFL curricula with a focus on learning about language rather than learning to use language for meaningful communication about relevant content, the CBI approach seeks to reach a balance between language and content instruction.

In line with this emerging direction, the English program for a Bachelor of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (BA TEFL) at the English Department, College of Foreign Languages, Vietnam National University in Hanoi (ED, CFL, VNUH) has been designed on the basis of different general themes such as education, health, environment, and entertainment, as theme-based is one variant of CBI (Brown, 2007). Although designed to be theme-based, until the end of 2008, the English language development program has been implemented in ‘segregated-skill’ instruction with separate classes in the four English macro-skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing as often found in the EFL model. There has been anecdotal evidence that newly graduated teachers of English from the Department lack proficiency in the language they are supposed to be qualified to teach. This raised a question on the alignment of the intended/claimed program, CBI, and the implemented one for intended outcomes: good non-native teachers of English with an acceptable level of English proficiency. Thus, there appears a real need to empirically explore the beliefs of teachers and students about CBI and the realities of CBI in some English classes at the ED.

In response to this call, a study was conducted at the ED in 2008. This study, limited to English reading instruction, was framed specifically to explore ways to enhance EFL instruction in the constraints of the limited resources within the intended CBI framework. The findings revealed that teachers and students of English in limited-resource institutions could exploit their “location-specific” (Kumaravadivelu, 2001) curriculum concepts and

subjects to supplement the limited instructional materials and resource collection along the CBI approach for optimal results. The next section presents the study, originally entitled “*Content-based instruction: Beliefs and reality in EFL reading classes at English Department, College of Foreign Languages, Vietnam National University, Hanoi,*” conducted by Ha Thi Thu Nguyen.

The study

Definition of related terms

Limited resources

To define ‘limited resources,’ it would be easier to first look at resource standards for the teaching and learning of English. Then ‘limited resources’ in this study context could be defined as the lack of such standards of resources for the teaching and learning of English. According to Richards (2002), the resource standards for ELT are:

- instructional materials to facilitate successful ELT. They are up-to-date, accessible to all teachers, and include print materials, video tape recorders and cassettes, audio tape recorders and cassettes, as well as a range of realia;
- computerized language instruction and self-access resources for learning; and
- a resource collection of relevant books, journals, and other materials which is easily accessible to teachers and students (p. 230).

Another definition of ‘limited resources’ from the WeekendTEFL website is the lack of “access to modern equipment, adequate course materials and other teaching aids” (WeekendTEFL).

As such, the resources available in educational contexts in many Southeast Asian institutions, including the ED, can be regarded ‘limited.’ Teachers and students in these ELT institutions do not have frequent access to modern equipment, adequate course materials, or other teaching aids. Furthermore, they rarely have computerized language instruction or self-access resources for learning and professional development.

Content-based instruction

In Richards' work (2005), CBI is described as a "process-based CLT approach," an extension of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) movement which takes different routes to reach the goal of CLT, i.e. developing learners' communicative competence. This approach is the "integration of a particular content [e.g. Math, Science, Social Studies] with second language aims. [...] It refers to the concurrent teaching of academic subject matter and second language skills" (Brinton et al, 1989, p. 2). Curtain and Pesola (as cited in Met, 2007), however, limited the term to only those "...curriculum concepts being taught through the foreign language ... appropriate to the grade level of the students..." (p. 35).

This paper adopts a view similar to that of Curtain and Pesola (1994) in which CBI involves teaching content in the second language at a level suitable to the grade of the students.

Content

Different authors have different views about what content should be. In Crandall and Tucker (1990), content is seen as "academic subject matter" while in Genesee (as cited in Met, 2007), content "...need not be academic; it can include any topic, theme or non-language issue of interest or importance to the learners" (p. 3). Chaput (1993) defines content as "...any topic of intellectual substance which contributes to the students' understanding of

language in general, and the target language in particular" (p. 150). Met (as cited in Met, 2007) proposes that "... 'content' in content-based programs represents material that is cognitively engaging and demanding for the learner, and is material that extends beyond the target language or target culture" (p. 150).

This paper adopts the definitions of Curtain and Pesola (1994), which is most relevant to the research context. Thus, "content" in this study is seen as materials, or "curriculum concepts," that are "cognitively engaging and demanding for the learner," and "that extend beyond the target language or target culture."

Models of CBI

Overall, the various definitions of content do not conflict with each other; in fact, they represent the diverse characteristics of programs that integrate content and language (different models of CBI). Through a careful review of related literature, this paper adopts the classification based on models which are diverse in characteristics and are put into a continuum which illustrates the relative role of content and language with the content-driven program at one end and the language-driven program at the other. These CBI models differ in the degree to which outcomes determine priorities in designing instruction from the general to the specific: units, lessons, tasks and activities. The continuum is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Content-based language teaching: A continuum of content and language integration

CONTENT-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING: A CONTINUUM OF CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATION					
Content-Driven					Language-Driven
Total Immersion	Partial Immersion	Sheltered Courses	Adjunct Model	Theme-Based Courses	Language classes with frequent use of content for language practice

Along this continuum, the English programs at the ED, using the theme-based model of CBI, could be said to be skewed toward the language end. This points to the need to examine the fit of the designed and implemented programs in general, in the setting of English classes in particular, to ensure program effectiveness.

Belief and reality

Belief, in a broad sense, is the “acceptance of the mind that something is true or real” (Encarta, 2008a). In the language class context, teachers’ and students’ beliefs are their views and perceptions about the language learning process. These views and perceptions can greatly shape the way they teach and learn a language. In the work of Lightbown and Spada (2000), it is proved that learner beliefs can be strong mediating factors in their experience in the classroom. Their learning preference, whether due to their individual learning styles or their beliefs about how languages are learned, would influence the strategies they choose to learn new materials. Similarly, teachers’ beliefs would affect the way they teach, in particular, the way they organize resources, guide classroom procedures and activities, and assess the learning outcomes of their students (Lightbown & Spada, 2000). Therefore, in the context of the current research, it is of high significance to investigate teachers’ and students’ beliefs about CBI in the English reading classes.

Reality, on the other hand, is defined as the actual being or existence, as opposed to an imaginary, idealized, or false nature (Encarta, 2008b). In this

study, thus, reality in English reading classes is identified as what actually happens in the in-class reading lessons, including the reading course syllabus, materials in use, assessment, and classroom activities.

The setting of the study

The curriculum

The aim of the curriculum is to produce professionally competent and able-bodied teachers of English of the highest quality with a strong sense of responsibility (Undergraduate Programs, 2005). There are 5 blocks in the curriculum (Table 2).

The reading program

The ED reading program belongs to Block 4 and goes under the name Reading 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. First-year students take Reading 1 and 2, second-year students take Reading 3 and 4, third-year students take Reading 5 and 6, and fourth-year students take Reading 7. The aim of the program is to prepare students for the required reading proficiency level 4 of the Association of Language Testers of Europe (ALTE 4).

The problem and rationale for the study

At the ED, to earn a BA TEFL, students must accumulate 216 credits comprising 5 blocks of knowledge (see Appendix 1).

Final-year students often complain about the lack of time, background knowledge, and, sometimes, English proficiency to comprehend instructional materials for linguistic/cultural/professional subjects such as English Phonetics and Phonology,

Table 2. The curriculum

Block 1. Common subjects (57 credits)	Field experience (5 credits)	BA TEFL Curriculum (216 credits)
Block 2. Mathematics and Natural Science subjects (5 credits)		
Block 3. Basic subjects (17 credits)	Minor thesis or Graduation examination (10 credits)	
Block 4. Fundamental subjects (93 credits)		
Block 5. Professional subjects (23 credits)		

Introduction to English Semantics, English Morphology, English Syntax, English Literature, American Literature, British Studies, American Studies, Cross-Cultural Studies, and Language Teaching Methodology 1, 2, and 3. The students appear to only vaguely notice the link and purposes of the different blocks of knowledge in the program. As a result, many of the graduates still do not reach the required ALTE 4.

Many teachers working in different divisions such as English Language, Linguistics, ELT Methodology, Literature, and Cross-Cultural Communication seem to operate in their own world, almost failing to notice what is happening in the other divisions. The fact is that the necessary content to prepare English teachers well has not been optimally strengthened through language work. This calls for a need for a study on the beliefs and realities of CBI in EFL classes at the ED so that even better integration of content (curriculum concepts/ materials) and language in the BA TEFL program leads to good preparation of English teachers for Vietnam, the aim of the research reported in this paper. The reading class setting was selected as it was hypothesized that reading instruction could be the most appropriate area to apply the CBI approach.

One of the difficulties for this study was the lack of available research in similar fields (CBI in EFL contexts). To the researcher's best knowledge, there are some studies seeking to integrate content and language in the same context, e.g. Davies (2003) team taught psychology and English with a psychologist at a Japanese college; Luchini (2004) integrated a methodology component into a language improvement course at Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata in Argentina; Adamson (2005) tried to combine teaching sociolinguistics to Japanese and Chinese second-year students at a college in Japan with EFL; and Shang (2006) applied CBI in literature classes at I-Shou University in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. However, these studies dealt with the technical level of CBI, not at both the technical and evaluative development of a CBI reading program as the current study attempted.

Research questions, design, and procedures

The aim of this study was to explore the beliefs of both teachers and students on how to handle CBI in the English reading classes at the ED and the congruence between the teachers and students' beliefs in reality. The investigation was to eventually find out possible ways to handle CBI in the reading lessons for better train future English teachers. To realise the above aim, three research questions were detailed:

1. How do teachers and students at the English Department believe CBI should be handled in the reading classes?
2. How are teachers using the required materials for CBI in the reading classes?
3. How do teachers and students suggest applying CBI in the reading classes?

Participants

Thirty teachers involved with the EFL program at the ED and 100 students of mixed proficiencies from Year 1 to Year 4, Fast-track and Mainstream, were the target participants of the study. However, only 19 teacher questionnaires could be used for further data analysis. Seven teachers from these 19 were interviewed on the basis of their voluntary participation (Tables 3.1 and 3.2). All 100 students agreed to participate in the study (Table 3.3).

Instrumentation

The methodology of this research was qualitative. Three data gathering instruments, namely belief questionnaires for teachers and students (see Appendix 2), interviews with teachers (see Appendix 3), and classroom observations (see Appendix 4) in 8 classes, each over 6 hours, were used to ensure accurate information from the respondents (Wallace, 1998). The researcher also conducted an analysis of available official documents on syllabi and relevant policy papers for in-depth information on the BA TEFL program. In the main section, the set of questionnaires is comprised of 4 parts: (i) general information; (ii) beliefs about content-based instruction in the English reading classrooms at ED, CFL, VNUH; (iii) the block(s) of knowledge to be integrated into the language classroom; and (iv) participants'

judgment on the appropriateness of the techniques to be employed in the CBI context.

Table 3.1. A classification of surveyed teachers by division

Division	Number of Teachers	Percent
English 1	2	10.5
English 2	4	21.1
English 3	3	15.8
Country Studies	1	5.3
Fast-Track Program	3	15.8
ELT Methodology	2	10.5
ESP	2	10.5
Minority Group	2	10.5
Total (N=19)	19	100.0

Table 3.2. Brief background of teacher interviewees

Teacher Interviewee	Gender	Division	Teaching Experience
T1	Female	English 4, Country Studies	30 years
T2	Female	English 2, 3	4 years
T3	Female	English 2	1 year
T4	Female	English 2	2 years
T5	Male	ESP	13 years
T6	Male	Fast-Track Program	1 year
T7	Male	Country Studies, Minority Group	6 years

Table 3.3. Student participants by classes and academic year

	Mainstream Students	Fast-Track Students
Year 1	7	21
Year 2	5	11
Year 3	27	14
Year 4	5	10
Total (N=100)	44	56

Interviews were conducted in Vietnamese. They were translated into English or notes were taken in English by the researcher in order to probe in-depth information, as Vietnamese is the mother tongue of both interviewer and interviewees. Triangulation was utilised through the translations or notes of the transcriptions and then confirmed with respondents for accuracy.

Data analysis

The collected data were classified and then qualitatively and statistically analysed. Data from questionnaires were statistically analysed via SPSS software version 14 to find answers to research questions number 1 and 3. Prior to being inputted into SPSS, questionnaire data were coded (see Appendix 2). Then means, standard deviations, and percentages were calculated; charts and tables were generated for comparison, interpretation, and discussion.

Data obtained from interviews and classroom observations were analysed interactively (Huberman & Miles, 1994, p. 436) in a matrix merging both cases and variables for trends and patterns within categories of themes. These themes were:

- For teachers:
 1. necessary and sufficient conditions for the successful handling of CBI
 2. what they have done to implement CBI in their English reading classes
 3. their suggestions for even more successful implementation of CBI

- For students:
 1. description of the reading program they attended
 2. their perceptions of the effectiveness of that program in preparing them as students of professional subjects and as teachers of English
 3. their perception of the appropriateness of integrating the contents of the professional subjects (e.g. English Language Teaching Methodology, Country Studies, Literature, Discourse Analysis) into the reading program in years 1 and 2
 4. their suggestions for even more successful integration of these contents into the reading program

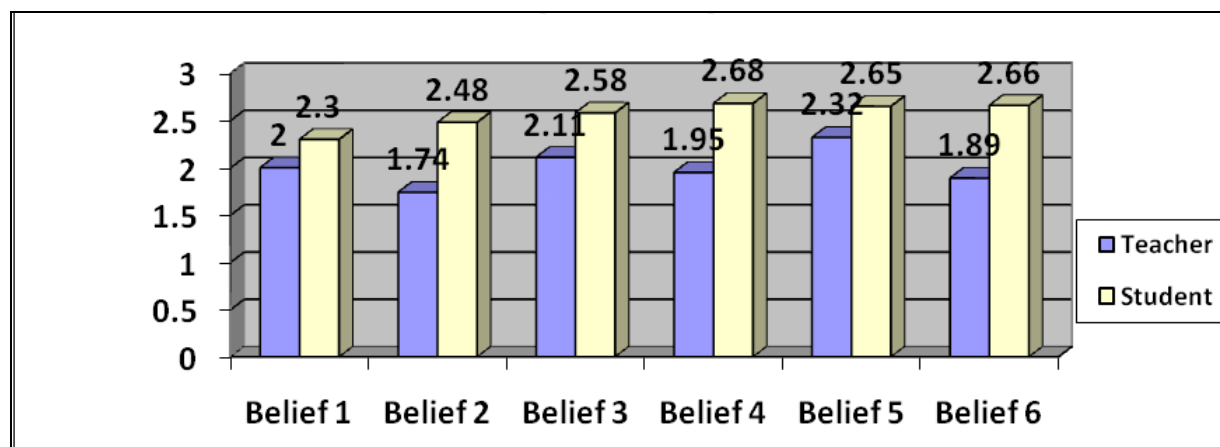
The resulting information helped to triangulate data from questionnaires and to answer research question number 2.

Major findings and discussions ***How do teachers and students believe CBI should be handled in the reading classrooms?***

The study found that both teachers and students held high beliefs toward the benefits of CBI. However, teachers appeared to endorse all belief statements with their means for Beliefs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 being consistently lower than those of the students (1 is the highest level of endorsement and 5 is the lowest). Teachers endorsed Belief 2 and Belief 6 more than students. Table 3.4 and Figure 1 present the information.

Table 3.4. Types of knowledge and skills needed to handle CBI

THINGS TO BE CONSIDERED WHEN HANDLING CBI	Teachers	Students
1. <u>Both teachers and students</u> should have a good knowledge of the Bachelor of English Teaching Program they are working for, e.g. its aims and objectives, how many blocks of knowledge it consists of, the subjects in each block.	2.00	2.30
2. <u>Both teachers and students</u> should understand the relevance and linkages of the different blocks of knowledge and different subjects in each block in the program, e.g. Logics is useful for English writing and critical thinking, Statistics for social sciences is a good tool for scientific research, Psychology, Pedagogy & ELT Methodology are very important for teachers of English.	1.74	2.48
3. <u>Both teachers and students</u> should understand what CBI is .	2.11	2.58
4. <u>Both teachers and students</u> should come to an understanding that CBI is a good way of preparing students for various job-related requirements in the future.	1.95	2.68
5. <u>Teachers</u> should know the various CBI models and techniques.	2.32	2.65
6. <u>Teachers</u> should be able to apply the appropriate CBI models and techniques to their classroom teaching.	1.89	2.66

Figure 1. Students' & Teachers' beliefs about Content-based Instruction in the English reading classes at ED

From students' perspectives, it was "*a good idea*" to integrate content of the professional subjects such as ELT Methodology, Country Studies, and Discourse Analysis into the reading programs even in Years 1 and 2 as the academic load was much lighter in these years. However, they stressed that the reading materials should cover only the introduction to the professional subjects to be studied in the following years.

Their teachers, however, seemed a little reserved about the use of CBI in the English reading classes. They mentioned several necessary and sufficient conditions for the successful handling of CBI such as teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical skills, students' proficiency and study skills, suitable materials, and physical conditions.

Thus it could be concluded that both teachers and students believe that for successful handling of CBI in the English reading lessons at the ED, both teachers and students should try very hard to improve themselves in terms of content knowledge and professional-pedagogical skills (especially teachers), critical reading (students), and a thorough knowledge of the curriculum (both).

To what extent do the beliefs that the teachers have about CBI in the classroom and the students' own beliefs match the reality?

The findings showed a trend with both Fast-track and Mainstream students. They seemed to share common ideas that the themes in the reading programs were "too broad" and "not so interesting." Thus, to a large extent, the beliefs of students about CBI in the English reading classrooms were not matched: the reading themes were repetitive and did not cover areas that facilitated the study of subsequent professional subjects. Some of the teachers were not active enough in helping to provide students with supportive learning conditions/ experiences.

As for teachers, although they believed that CBI was a good way of teaching at the ED, the reality of their English reading classes was still far from perfect for CBI. Classroom observations showed that teachers only used a language-driven approach, using materials that dealt with topics such as food and drink, the weather, relationships and travel. Data from the Teachers' Beliefs Questionnaires on the use of tasks for CBI in the English classrooms revealed a limited number of tasks that teachers reported using. They were: student expressing an opinion or idea on a specific topic, student justifying why he chooses to do something a certain way, and role play.

There were, however, some young teachers who had appropriately focused their class activities on eliciting "knowledge of content, acquisition of

thinking skills and development of English language abilities” (Shang, 2006, p. 5). These young, successful teachers also recommended that CBI should aim to develop all of the four macro skills of English, not just the reading skill.

What do teachers and students suggest applying CBI in the reading classes?

The findings yielded useful information on blocks of knowledge to be used for CBI, and the appropriateness of fundamental and professional subjects for CBI.

While both teachers and students appeared to agree on the appropriateness of Blocks 1, 2, and 3, they seemed to disagree on Blocks 4 and 5. Teachers thought that Block 4 was much more appropriate for CBI than Block 5 (with a respective mean difference of 1.27), but students held different ideas such that there was a slight difference of only 0.64 between these two blocks’ means with Block 5 having a higher level of endorsement than with teachers. The mismatch may lead to a differing focus by teachers and students, thus causing difficulties and ineffectiveness in the process of teaching and learning in the English reading classes at the ED.

In terms of the CBI appropriateness of fundamental subjects, there was congruence between teachers’ and students’ perceptions. The only exceptions were British Studies and English-Speaking Countries Studies, where teachers thought that these subjects were more appropriate than students did. The reverse happened with the subjects of English Literature, Cross-Cultural Studies 1 and 2, Communication Skills, Reading-Writing 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, Advanced English, Translation, Consolidated Oral Communication, and Consolidated Written Communication (Figure 2). Teachers, students, and administrators should be made aware of such mismatches if quality teaching and learning at the ED is to be striven for. Regarding the appropriateness of subjects in the Professional Knowledge Block for CBI handling, teachers consistently displayed a lower level of endorsement than students with most professional subjects. Both teachers and students showed their agreement on the CBI appropriateness of the subjects of Language Teaching Methodology 1, 2, 3, and 4 with their respective means of 2.11 and 2.10. This means that both teachers and students majoring in English teacher training were fully aware of the importance of Language Teaching Methodology and wished to use its content in English classes.

Figure 2. Subjects for CBI in block 4

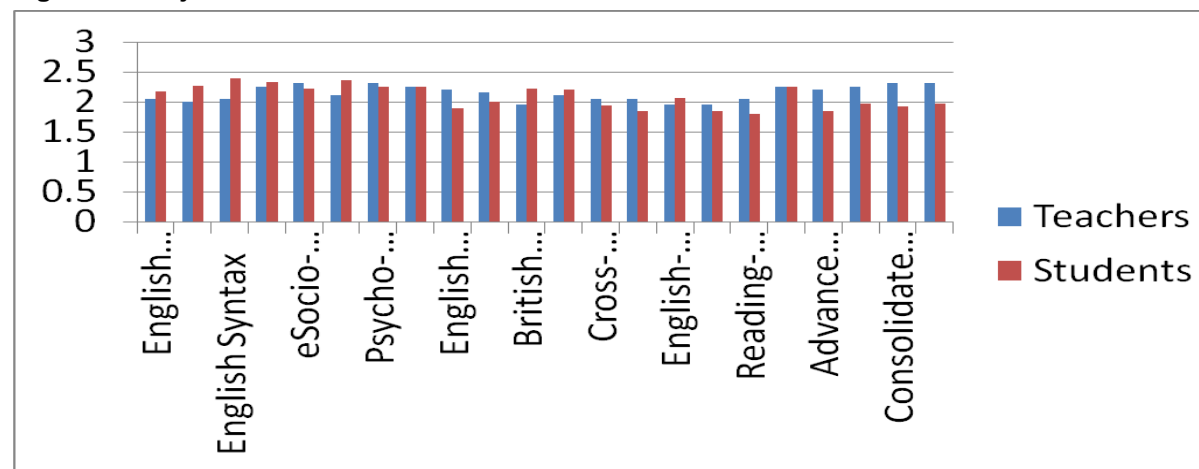


Table 4. The appropriateness of activities for learning and practicing English in CBI classrooms as perceived by teachers and students

Activities	Teachers		Students	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Review of previously learnt content	1.68	.671	1.96	.828
Use content-related visuals	1.84	.688	1.93	.665
Reaction journals	1.95	.848	2.48	.867
Vocabulary previews	1.79	.713	2.30	.868
Free association	2.11	.809	2.71	.968
Visualization exercises	2.58	.838	2.57	.912
Anticipation reaction guides	1.79	.631	2.32	.930
Grammar development	2.21	.855	2.30	1.032
Vocabulary expansion	1.63	.684	1.75	.708
Reading guides	1.79	.713	1.87	.772
Information gap tasks	1.79	.713	2.08	.909
A variety of text explication exercises, either oral or written.	1.84	.602	2.05	.906
Role-plays	1.95	.780	2.40	1.133
Debates	1.37	.597	2.20	.964
Discussions	1.37	.597	1.86	.829
Essays	1.68	.749	2.43	.956
Summarizing	1.58	.607	2.29	.889
Pair work	1.47	.697	1.99	.919
Group work	1.37	.597	2.07	.949
Reporting	1.53	.697	2.59	.966
Description	1.89	.737	2.57	.923
Telling a story	2.16	.834	2.62	.951
Giving instructions	1.89	.809	2.22	.881
Presentations	1.68	.820	2.02	.924

Interviews	1.89	.994	2.45	1.061
Practicing dialogues	2.32	.820	2.64	1.138
Reading comprehension	1.58	.692	1.77	.848
Problem solving	1.37	.597	1.94	.876
Giving/defending opinion	1.58	.838	2.04	.989
Substitution activities (drills)	2.32	1.003	2.66	.967
Translation (from E-V & V-E)	2.16	.898	2.62	1.122

In short, the findings from questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observation revealed that although teachers and students at the ED held high beliefs about the benefits of CBI, some of their beliefs were mismatched in the appropriateness of the different blocks of knowledge and subjects within each block and the types of suitable classroom activities. Classroom observations showed that though the curriculum was claimed to be theme-based, a branch of CBI, the implementation of CBI in the reading classroom could still be further improved with better integration of more professional subject-related topics into the reading programs. In order to ensure the successful handling of CBI at the ED, there are many things to be done regarding teachers, students, and the physical conditions.

Implications

Recommendations for a more effective implementation approach to the integration of language and content in the BA TEFL curriculum

- Integrating some introductory content of the subjects in the professional knowledge block into the fundamental knowledge block, specifically into the reading program of the ED, to provide richer and more professional subject-relevant content to prepare students for their BA TEFL. The themes in the reading program of the ED, currently revolving around general topics of education, transportation, etc., need to be made more relevant to the professional

subjects of the third and fourth years (ELT Methodology, Pedagogy, Psychology, etc.).

- Integrating content of the linguistic, literature, and culture-related subjects into the language classes (covering all the four macro English skills) within the fundamental knowledge block.
- Adopting the adjunct model to optimally prepare students for their learning of the professional subjects as well as preparation for their future careers; that is, language and content should be integrated using a team design, in which a content course instructor works collaboratively with a language instructor. At the ED, a content course instructor could be a lecturer from ELT Methodology, Linguistic, Literature, or Cross Culture Communication Divisions (Theory Divisions). A language instructor could be a teacher from English Skills Divisions 1, 2, 3, 4 (Practice Divisions). The best arrangement could be that a lecturer at the ED should be able to work at both types of divisions for the successful implementation of CBI.
- Providing on-going professional support and development as well as better teaching conditions to teachers.
- Raising awareness and training students for optimal handling of CBI.

What teachers should do?

1. Obtain a good knowledge of the English language and the subject matter that they integrate in their reading lessons.

2. Organize class discussions focused on explaining difficult phrases, main ideas, and interesting aspects of the teaching materials. To make this activity more effective, the teachers can call on some students to form a group which is supposed to answer any questions from the audience about the reading passage or question the audience.
3. Encourage students to have more real-life examples related to a difficult view during discussions. Help students enhance background knowledge.
4. The advantages of this activity:
 - enhances comprehension
 - gives students the chance to discuss different views on one idea; by discussing, they can figure out or have a clearer idea of difficult phrases/ideas in the material
 - makes students have the feeling that they are not being tested and read actively
 - improves explanation skills (useful for future teaching)
5. Difficulty of this activity: choose suitable topics (interesting, updated, not very specialized).

What students should do?

- Understand the importance of CBI for their future careers or for further study
- Increase their English vocabulary and proficiency level
- Read widely in both English and Vietnamese
- Understand that English should be a tool for acquisition of knowledge
- Have a good knowledge of the BA TEFL curriculum

What should be done about the physical conditions?

- Check if classrooms are well equipped and teaching conditions are good.
- Verify that reading materials are really “content based.”
- Vary the themes to include more professional-subject-related topics.

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Appendix 1

The 5 blocks of knowledge for the BA TEFL
Block 1 - Common subjects (57 credits): all taught in Vietnamese

Block 2 - Mathematics and Natural Sciences (5 credits)

Block 3 - Basic subjects (17 credits): Fundamentals of Vietnamese Culture, Introduction to Linguistics, Vietnamese 1 and 2, Logics, Contrastive Linguistics, which are taught in Vietnamese, and Research Methodology, which is taught in English

Block 4 - Fundamental subjects (93 credits):

1. Linguistic knowledge subjects
Compulsory: English Phonetics and Phonology, Introduction to English Semantics, English Morphology, English Syntax
Elective: English Stylistics, Introduction to English Pragmatics, Socio-Linguistics, Introduction to English Discourse Analysis, Psycho-Linguistics, Introduction to Functional Grammar
2. Cultural knowledge subjects
Compulsory: English Literature, American Literature, British Studies, American Studies, Cross-Cultural Studies
Elective: Literature in other English-speaking countries, Communication Skills
3. Language components
English for Specific Purposes (English for Economics, Finance and Banking); Translation; Listening 1,2,3,4,5,6; Speaking 1,2,3,4,5,6; Reading 1,2,3,4,5,6; Writing 1,2,3,4,5,6; Academic Writing; Advanced English

Block 5 - Professional subjects (23 credits):

General Psychology, Psychology for Teachers, General Pedagogy, Pedagogy for General Education, State Administration of Education and Training (taught in Vietnamese), Language Teaching Methodology 1,2,3 (taught in English) (compulsory), Music, Drawing (taught in Vietnamese), Technology in Language Teaching (taught in English) (electives)

The Field Experience (5 credits) and Minor Thesis or Graduation Examination (10 credits) make up the final 15 credits.

Appendix 2

Belief questionnaires for teachers and students

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

*My name is Nguyen Thi Thu Ha, from K38A1. I am conducting a research on **how to handle Content-Based Instruction (CBI) in the English reading classes**. Content-Based Instruction is basically an approach which seeks to integrate the learning of a subject (content) with language learning. Its principle is that students can learn a language better through learning content in that language.*

*As part of the research project, I would like your input on how you **believe, actually deal with** and **suggest** that CBI should be handled in your reading classes. Please take your time to respond to this survey as the information you give us will help improve the preparation of English teachers at the English Department. The survey will take you approximately 15 minutes. When answering the questions, think not only of the courses you are teaching now, but also about the courses you have taught in the past. If you have any questions, please see Ms Vu Mai Trang, my supervisor. All the information you provided will remain anonymous. Thank you very much for your help.*

Background information - Please provide us some relevant information before you go to the next parts:

Your gender:

Your division:

Part 1. Your beliefs about Content-Based Instruction in the English reading classes at ED, CFL, VNUH

Things to be considered when handling Content-Based Instruction (CBI)

In the left hand column are the things that we think should be taken into consideration when handling CBI in classes. In the right hand column **rate** each of these items on a scale from **MOST important (1)** to **NOT important (5)**.

THINGS TO BE CONSIDERED WHEN HANDLING CBI	RATING
Both teachers and students should have a good knowledge of the Bachelor of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language Program they are working for (e.g. its aims and objectives, how many blocks of knowledge it consists of, the subjects in each block...).	
Both teachers and students should understand the relevance and linkages of the different blocks of knowledge and different subjects in each block in the program (e.g. Logics is useful for English writing and critical thinking; Statistics for social sciences is a good tool for scientific research; Psychology, Pedagogy, and ELT Methodology are very important for teachers of English...).	
Both teachers and students should understand what CBI is.	
Both teachers and students should come to an understanding that CBI is a good way of preparing students for various job-related requirements in the future.	
Teachers should know the various CBI models and techniques.	
Teachers should be able to apply the appropriate CBI models and techniques to their classroom teaching.	
Others: Please feel free to fill in other things that we fail to identify.	

Part 2. Which block of knowledge and subject do you think is most appropriate for CBI in the reading classrooms:

If CBI were to be employed in your course, which block of knowledge and which subject do you think is the most appropriate to be integrated into your reading classes? In the right hand column **rate** these items from **MOST appropriate (1) to NOT appropriate (5)**.

BLOCKS OF KNOWLEDGE/ SUBJECTS	YOUR RANK
Block 1: Common subjects (57 credits):	
1. Marxist-Leninist Philosophy; Political Economics; Ho Chi Minh Ideology	
2. Scientific Socialism; History of Vietnamese Communist Party	
3. Basic Informatics 1 & 2; Logics	
4. Second Foreign Language 1, 2, 3, 4	
5. Physical Education 1, 2; National Defense Education 1, 2, 3	
Block 2: Mathematics and Natural Sciences (5 credits):	
1. General Geography	
2. Statistics for Social Sciences	
3. Human and Environment	
Block 3: Basic subjects (17 credits):	
1. Fundamentals of Vietnamese Culture; Introduction to Linguistics	
2. Contrastive Linguistics; Vietnamese	
3. Research Methodology (taught in English)	
4. Critical Thinking (taught in English)	
Block 4: Fundamental subjects (93 credits) are subdivided into three areas:	
<i>Linguistic knowledge subjects:</i>	
1. English Phonetics and Phonology	
2. Introduction to English Semantics	
3. English Syntax	
4. Introduction to English Pragmatics	
5. Socio-Linguistics	
6. Introduction to English Discourse Analysis	
7. Psycho-Linguistics	
8. Pragmatics	
9. Functional Grammar	
<i>Cultural knowledge subjects:</i>	
1. English Literature	
2. American Literature	
3. British Studies	
4. American Studies	
5. Cross-Cultural Studies 1, 2	
6. Communication Skills	
7. English-Speaking Countries Studies	
<i>Language components:</i>	
1. Listening-Speaking 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	
2. Reading-Writing 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	
3. ESP (English for Economics, Finance and Banking....)	
4. Advanced English	

5. Translation	
6. Consolidated Oral Communication	
7. Consolidated Written Communication	
Block 5: Professional subjects (23 credits):	
1. General Psychology (taught in Vietnamese)	
2. Psychology for Teachers (taught in Vietnamese)	
3. General Pedagogy (taught in Vietnamese)	
4. Pedagogy for General Education (taught in Vietnamese)	
5. State Administration of Education and Training (taught in Vietnamese)	
6. Language Teaching Methodology 1, 2, 3, 4	
7. Technology in Language Teaching	
8. Music (taught in Vietnamese)	

Part 3. How should CBI be handled in the English reading classes?

The following is a list of activities that were thought to be appropriate for learning and practicing English in CBI classes. For each item in the list, please mark (✓) how appropriate you think the activity is for practice in the classroom.

Activity	Very Appropriate	Appropriate	Somewhat Appropriate	Not Very Appropriate	Not Appropriate
Review of previously learnt content					
Use content-related visuals					
Reaction journals					
Vocabulary previews					
Free association					
Visualization exercises					
Anticipation reaction guides (to assist students in accessing the new content material)					
Grammar development					
Vocabulary expansion					
Reading guides (e.g. idea sequencing and/or text completion exercises)					
Information gap tasks (such as jigsaw reading)					
A variety of text explication exercises, either oral or written					
Role-plays					
Debates (formally arguing pros and cons of an issue)					
Discussions					
Essays					
Summarizing					

OTHER:					
Pair work					
Group work					
Whole class activities					
Reporting					
Description					
Telling a story					
Giving instructions					
Presentations					
Interviews					
Practicing dialogues					
Reading comprehension					
Problem solving					
Giving/defending opinion					
Substitution activities (drills)					
Translation (from E-V & V-E)					

Thank you very much for your help!

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

*My name is Nguyen Thi Thu Ha, from K38A1. I am conducting a research on **how to handle Content-Based Instruction (CBI) in the English reading classes**. Content-Based Instruction is basically an approach which seeks to integrate, or combine, the learning of a subject (content) with language learning. Its principle is that students can learn a language better through learning content in that language.*

*As part of the research project, I would like your input on how you **believe, actually deal with** and **suggest** that CBI should be used in your reading classes. Please take your time to respond to this survey as the information you give us will help improve the preparation of English teachers at the English Department. The survey will take you approximately 10 minutes. All the information you provided will remain anonymous. Thank you very much for your help.*

Background information - Please provide us some relevant information before you go to the next parts:

Your gender:

Your class:

Part 1. Your beliefs about Content-Based Instruction in the English reading classrooms at ED, CFL, VNUH

Things to be considered when handling Content-Based Instruction (CBI)

In the left hand column are the things that we think should be taken into consideration when handling CBI in classes. In the right hand column **rate** each of these items on a scale from **MOST important (1)** to **NOT important (5)**.

THINGS TO BE CONSIDERED WHEN HANDLING CBI	RATING
Both teachers and students should have a good knowledge of the Bachelor of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language Program they are working for (e.g. its aims and objectives, how many blocks of knowledge it consists of, the subjects in each block...).	
Both teachers and students should understand the relevance and linkages of the different blocks of knowledge and different subjects in each block in the program (e.g. Logics is useful for English writing and critical thinking; Statistics for social sciences is a good tool for scientific research; Psychology, Pedagogy, and ELT Methodology are very important for teachers of English...).	
Both teachers and students should understand what CBI is.	
Both teachers and students should come to an understanding that CBI is a good way of preparing students for various job-related requirements in the future.	
Teachers should know the various CBI models and techniques.	
Teachers should be able to apply the appropriate CBI models and techniques to their classroom teaching.	
Others: Please feel free to fill in other things that we fail to identify.	

Part 2. Which block of knowledge and subject do you think is most appropriate for CBI in the reading classes?

If CBI were to be employed in your course, which block of knowledge, which subject do you think is the most appropriate to be integrated into your reading class? In the right hand column **rate** these items from **MOST appropriate (1) to NOT appropriate (5)**.

BLOCKS OF KNOWLEDGE/ SUBJECTS	YOUR RANK
Block 1: Common subjects (57 credits):	
1. Marxist-Leninist Philosophy; Political Economics; Ho Chi Minh Ideology	
2. Scientific Socialism; History of Vietnamese Communist Party	
3. Basic Informatics 1 & 2; Logics	
4. Second Foreign Language 1, 2, 3, 4	
5. Physical Education 1, 2; National Defense Education 1, 2, 3	
Block 2: Mathematics and Natural Sciences (5 credits):	
1. General Geography	
2. Statistics for Social Sciences	
3. Human and Environment	
Block 3: Basic subjects (17 credits):	
1. Fundamentals of Vietnamese Culture; Introduction to Linguistics	

2. Contrastive Linguistics; Vietnamese	
3. Research Methodology (taught in English)	
4. Critical Thinking (taught in English)	
Block 4: Fundamental subjects (93 credits) are subdivided into three areas:	
<i>Linguistic knowledge subjects:</i>	
1. English Phonetics and Phonology	
2. Introduction to English Semantics	
3. English Syntax	
4. Introduction to English Pragmatics	
5. Socio-Linguistics	
6. Introduction to English Discourse Analysis	
7. Psycho-Linguistics	
8. Pragmatics	
9. Functional Grammar	
<i>Cultural knowledge subjects:</i>	
1. English Literature	
2. American Literature	
3. British Studies	
4. American Studies	
5. Cross-Cultural Studies 1, 2	
6. Communication Skills	
7. English-Speaking Countries Studies	
<i>Language components:</i>	
1. Listening-Speaking 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	
2. Reading-Writing 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	
3. ESP (English for Economics, Finance and Banking....)	
4. Advanced English	
5. Translation	
6. Consolidated Oral Communication	
7. Consolidated Written Communication	
Block 5: Professional subjects (23 credits):	
1. General Psychology (taught in Vietnamese)	
2. Psychology for Teachers (taught in Vietnamese)	
3. General Pedagogy (taught in Vietnamese)	
4. Pedagogy for General Education (taught in Vietnamese)	
5. State Administration of Education and Training (taught in Vietnamese)	
6. Language Teaching Methodology 1, 2, 3, 4	
7. Technology in Language Teaching	
8. Music (taught in Vietnamese)	

Part 3. How CBI should be handled in the English reading classes

The following is a list of activities that were thought to be appropriate for learning and practicing English in CBI classrooms. For each item in the list, please mark (✓) how appropriate you think the activity is for practice in the classroom.

Activity	Very Appropriate	Appropriate	Somewhat Appropriate	Not Very Appropriate	Not Appropriate
Review of previously learnt content					
Use content-related visuals					
Reaction journals					
Vocabulary previews					
Free association					
Visualization exercises					
Anticipation reaction guides (to assist students in accessing the new content material)					
Grammar development					
Vocabulary expansion					
Reading guides (e.g., idea sequencing and/or text completion exercises)					
Information gap tasks (such as jigsaw reading)					
A variety of text explication exercises, either oral or written					
Role-plays					
Debates (formally arguing pros and cons of an issue)					
Discussions					
Essays					
Summarizing					
OTHER:					
Pair work					
Group work					
Whole class activities					
Reporting					
Description					
Telling a story					
Giving instructions					
Presentations					
Interviews					
Practicing dialogues					
Reading comprehension					
Problem solving					
Giving/defending opinion					
Substitution activities (drills)					
Translation (from E-V & V-E)					

Thank you very much for your help!

Coding Scheme for Questionnaire Data	
Variables	Coding
Male	1
Female	2
Belief 1	BLF 1
Belief 2	BLF 2
Belief 3	BLF 3
Belief 4	BLF 4
Belief 5	BLF 5
Belief 6	BLF 6
Block 1: Common subjects (57 credits) Marxist-Leninist Philosophy; Political Economics; Ho Chi Minh ideology Scientific Socialism; History of Vietnamese Communist Party Basic Informatics 1, 2; Logics Physical Education 1,2; National Defense Education 1,2,3	BLK1 BLK1.1 BLK1.2 BLK1.3 BLK1.4
Block 2: Mathematics and Natural Sciences (5 credits) General Geography Statistics for Social Sciences Human and Environment	BLK2 BLK2.1 BLK2.2 BLK2.3
Block 3: Basic subjects (17 credits) Fundamentals of Vietnamese Culture; Introduction to Linguistics Contrastive Linguistics; Vietnamese Research Methodology (taught in English) Critical Thinking (taught in English)	BLK3 BLK3.1 BLK3.2 BLK3.3 BLK3.4
Block 4: Fundamental subjects (93 credits) English Phonetics and Phonology Introduction to English Semantics English Syntax Introduction to English Pragmatics Socio-Linguistics Introduction to English Discourse Analysis Psycho-Linguistics Pragmatics Functional Grammar English Literature American Literature British Studies American Studies Cross-Cultural Studies 1,2 Communication Skills English-Speaking Countries Studies Listening-Speaking 1,2,3,4,5,6 Reading-Writing 1,2,3,4,5,6 ESP (English for Economics, Finance and Banking...) Advanced English Translation	BLK4 BLK4.1.1 BLK4.1.2 BLK4.1.3 BLK4.1.4 BLK4.1.5 BLK4.1.6 BLK4.1.7 BLK4.1.8 BLK4.1.9 BLK4.2.1 BLK4.2.2 BLK4.2.3 BLK4.2.4 BLK4.2.5 BLK4.2.6 BLK4.2.7 BLK4.3.1 BLK4.3.2 BLK4.3.3 BLK4.3.4 BLK4.3.5

Consolidated Oral Communication	BLK4.3.6
Consolidated Written Communication	BLK4.3.7
Block 5: Professional subjects (23 credits)	BLK5
General Psychology (taught in Vietnamese)	BLK5.1
Psychology for Teachers (taught in Vietnamese)	BLK5.2
General Pedagogy (taught in Vietnamese)	BLK5.3
Pedagogy for General Education (taught in Vietnamese)	BLK5.4
State Administration of Education and Training (taught in Vietnamese)	BLK5.5
Language Teaching Methodology 1,2,3,4	BLK5.6
Technology in Language Teaching	BLK5.7
Music (taught in Vietnamese)	BLK5.8
Review of previously learnt content	CBI1
Use content-related visuals	CBI2
Reaction journals	CBI3
Vocabulary previews	CBI4
Free association	CBI5
Visualization exercises	CBI6
Anticipation reaction guides (to assist students in accessing the new content material)	CBI7
Grammar development	CBI8
Vocabulary expansion	CBI9
Reading guides (e.g., idea sequencing and/or text completion exercises)	CBI10
Information gap tasks (such as jigsaw reading)	CBI11
A variety of text explication exercises, either oral or written	CBI12
Role-plays	CBI13
Debates (formally arguing pros and cons of an issue)	CBI14
Discussions	CBI15
Essays	CBI16
Summarizing	CBI17
Pair work	CBI18
Group work	CBI19
Whole class activities	CBI20
Reporting	CBI21
Description	CBI22
Telling a story	CBI23
Giving instructions	CBI24
Presentations	CBI25
Interviews	CBI26
Practicing dialogues	CBI27
Reading comprehension	CBI28
Problem solving	CBI29
Giving/defending opinion	CBI30
Substitution activities (drills)	CBI31
Translation (from English-Vietnamese & Vietnamese-English)	CBI32

Appendix 3

Interview schemes

QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS

My name is Nguyen Thi Thu Ha, from K38A1. I am conducting a research on how to handle Content-Based Instruction (CBI) in the English reading classes. Content-Based Instruction is basically an approach which seeks to integrate the learning of a subject (content) with language learning. Its principle is that students can learn a language better through learning content in that language. Following are some interview questions which aim to investigate your beliefs and suggestions on how CBI should be applied in the Reading Classes.

I. General Information:

1. Your gender:
2. Your division:

II. Specific Information:

T	1. What do you think are the necessary and sufficient conditions for successful handling of CBI?	2. Could you please share what you have done to handle CBI in your English (reading) classes?	3. What would you suggest for even more successful handling of CBI in the English (reading) classes?
T1			
T2			
T3			
...			

QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS

My name is Nguyen Thi Thu Ha, from K38A1. I am conducting a research on how to handle Content-Based Instruction (CBI) in the English reading classes. Content-based Instruction is basically an approach which seeks to integrate the learning of a subject (content) with language learning. Its principle is that students can learn a language better through learning content in that language. Following are some interview questions which aim to investigate your beliefs and suggestions on how CBI should be applied in the Reading Classes.

I. General Information:

1. Your gender:
2. Your class:

II. Specific Information:

S	1. Can you briefly describe the reading program you are attending this semester? (in terms of syllabus, assessment criteria, assignments, class activities)	2. Do you think the reading program better prepares you for your study of Professional subjects (e.g. English Language, Teaching Methodology, Country Studies, Literature, Discourse Analysis...) and your future career as a teacher?	3. Do you think integrating the contents of the Professional subjects (e.g. English Language Teaching Methodology, Country Studies, Literature, Discourse Analysis...) into the reading program in years 1 and 2 is a good idea?	4. If yes, can you suggest some ways to successfully integrate these contents into the reading program? If no, can you please give the reason(s)?
S1				
S2				
S3				
S4				

Appendix 4

Classroom observation checklist**Classroom Observation Checklist****I. Class Profile**

Class Observed	_____	Date	_____
Number of Ss	_____	Time	_____
Current Theme	_____	Materials used	_____

II. Activities

	Very Frequent	Rather Frequent	Frequent	Not very Frequent	Not Observed
<u>Methods</u>					
Invites class discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employs other tools/ instructional aids	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delivers well-planned lecture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discussions/activities relevant to course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Teacher-Student Interaction</u>					
Solicits student input	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involves a variety of students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Presents difficult ideas using several different methods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

III. Content Evaluation

Content					
Explains concepts clearly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relates concepts to students' experiences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Selects learning experiences appropriate to level of learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relates concepts to fundamental knowledge contents (Block 4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relates concepts to professional knowledge contents (Block 5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Comments:					

Teaching writing by modeling genres through the teaching-learning cycle

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Abstract

Over the last 60 years, the teaching of writing has gone through multiple metamorphoses, from being simply a way to reinforce grammar learning, to encouraging self-expression and the writer's composing process, to focusing on writing the genres of academia and the professions (Silva, 1990). Developed by teacher-researchers in the Hallidayan Systemic-Functional school of linguistics, a multi-step cycle - the 'Teaching-Learning' (Hammond, 1990) or 'Curriculum' (Rose, 2006) Cycle - provides a principled and practical way to teach school-age or adult ESL/EFL students to write the genres that they need in the "real life" of school or the workplace, or for "survival" in their country of immigration (Derewianka, 1990; Rose, 2006). After providing a brief history of writing pedagogy over recent decades and the background of the genre approach, this paper demonstrates how to use the Teaching-Learning Cycle to teach students to write the "Instruction" genre by modeling a very familiar text type, the *recipe*.

Introduction

Writing instruction from Behaviorism to the genre approach

In the mid-20th century, when the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) was thought to be the final answer to how we should teach a language, writing was relegated to a subsidiary role of giving additional practice to the oral drill routine that was ALM's main technique. After the patterns were thought to have been drilled enough, reinforcement was given by having students write many of the words in the same patterns verbatim. Memorization of dialogues could also be tested by having students fill in blanks in the lines in the conversation with the exact words and phrases of the original (Matsuda, 2001). Other techniques for practicing language, controlled and guided composition, sentence combination, and so-called free writing, all had the aim of having the student imitate previously written language as much as possible, making only incremental changes and writing as error-free as possible (Silva, 1990).

The current traditional approach (Silva, 1990) did allow the student to do actual composing, but set up a rigid framework for it. The three- or five-paragraph-essay formula became ossified as Introduction-Body-Conclusion, with the Thesis Statement naming the topic of the essay at or toward the end of the Introduction, a Topic Sentence introducing the topic of each paragraph, and some form of Support filling out the paragraphs. The kind of support and the language used to develop the essay was determined by different Rhetorical Modes: narrative, descriptive, cause/effect, contrast/comparison, and so forth. This framework provided the student with a model to work from, but had the disadvantage in that it was an empty form which was simply to be filled with any sort of content the student, or perhaps the teacher, decided on.

Learning to write, then, involves becoming skilled in identifying, internalizing, and executing these patterns. The writer fills in a preexisting form with provided or self-

generated content...The text is a collection of increasingly complex discourse structures..., each embedded in the next largest form. (Silva, 1990, p. 14)

It did not start at the point of an authentic written communication: with the writer's actual purpose for writing, that is, what the writer really wanted to say. Rather, it was assumed that once the form had been filled with content, the writing product was complete and ready to submit to the teacher. The student writers were assessed without having a chance to make improvements, leading, for many, to frustration and negative feelings about writing in a foreign language.

Process writing, which developed as a teaching approach in the late '70s, for the first time encouraged the student to engage in real written communication to express authentic ideas and feelings. This approach is based on the observation that professional writers follow a process when they write which is non-linear, and, depending on the individual, proceeds in fits and starts from the 'genesis' or 'generation' of the idea to write about, to gathering information and examples, to deciding on further ideas to include in the writing, to drafting, 'recursively' rereading and redrafting, to possibly polishing the style and editing it for the mechanics of punctuation, capitalization, and grammar. It is assumed to be a "messy" process of 'discovery of meaning' one wants to clarify for oneself while getting it across to the reader as articulately as possible (Zamel, 1982). This insight about L1 writers spawned strategies for adapting process writing for the ESL/EFL classroom - Brainstorming-Drafting-(Peer) Review-Revision-Editing-Publishing - which have influenced college composition books and ESL writing books to the present day (for an incisive description of a process classroom, see Hedge, 2000). Its advantage is that it allows the writer to develop an inner 'voice' or personal style and encourages a patient procedure of writing which allows for the slow percolation of ideas and the gradual honing of the language to express them.

Where it may fail the L2 writer is in not offering a clear image of what the final draft should look like.

While L1 writers can rely on their knowledge of and previous experience with the kind of text they are intending to write (their schema of genres they have read or written before), L2 writers may not have this experience, either in L2 or, depending on the writing culture they come from, even in L1. It is known that different cultures may prefer different models and procedures which are not easily transferred to L2 writing (see Connor, 2003).

The genre approach incorporates many of the insights of the process approach as classroom strategies, at the same time overcoming the student's uncertainty about form by providing models to follow and adapt, and scaffolding to support the students as they learn to produce their own texts.

The genre approach

While the term genre was formerly reserved for the literary genres of novel, short story, drama, and poetry, with the development of the field of discourse analysis, it has been recognized that any of the text types commonly used by a society to fulfill its writing needs can be analyzed for its structure and linguistic features. Genres of all types, from newspaper articles to advertisements to travel brochures and more have been incorporated into language teaching as examples of authentic language use and reproduced in beginning and intermediate textbooks.

In terms of approaches specifically aimed at teaching L2 learners principles of writing in English, the concept of genre has been applied in various ways. The subfields of EAP and ESP, especially in the U.S., have analyzed the kinds of texts needed by students in various academic and professional discourse communities. These have been provided as authentic models or as frameworks for writing and have also been analyzed in terms of "moves," using a concept borrowed from spoken discourse analysis (Swales, 1990).

The Australian genre approach, sometimes called the "Sydney School," developed out of Michael Halliday's *Systemic-Functional Linguistics* (1985). It differs from the ESP/EAP approaches in that it

has focused on two ESL groups with particular writing needs. First, immigrant children attending public schools need to know how to write the genres that are commonly demanded in the school system. Secondly, adult immigrants have need of the genres that help them to survive and become acculturated in the society; for example, writing letters of application for jobs (see Burns, 2001). The system has also developed a complete literacy curriculum for a third group, Aborigine students who are culturally different and thus often left behind educationally. Using the genre curriculum cycle has been shown to allow them to catch up to their grade level within a two year cycle (Rose, 2006).

This functional approach thus focuses not so much on academic or professional genres as on authentic, real-world writing for ordinary people that is addressed, at least potentially, to readers that the writer really wants to communicate with. It is therefore especially suitable for students who are novices in writing in English, and can be used as a writing component in school English classes at the primary or secondary levels as well as in English proficiency classes at university and adult English classes. Teachers can choose the genres they want to teach based on the overall curriculum, the students' writing needs or interests, and, of course, their proficiency level in English.

Various genres have been described by Systemic-Functional Linguists. Some of these are named *Instruction* (or *Procedure*), *Recount*, *Explanation*, *Narrative*, *Report* and *Exposition* (see Derewianka, 1990; Martin, 1985), and each might encompass a variety of specific *text types*. Thus, for instance, the genre of *Instruction* might include such diverse texts as recipes, rules for playing games and manuals for installing or using appliances, while *Recounts* might include newspaper reports as well as a casual retelling of an incident that happened to the speaker the day before.

Furthermore, a system has been developed for teaching both the overall text organization and specific language features of each genre, and these form the basis of the instruction that students receive when writing with a genre approach. Beverly Derewianka's *Exploring How Texts Work*

(1990) provides a simple-to-follow guide to teaching six genres, which, although written in the context of the Australian primary classroom, can be readily adapted to other teaching situations. It emphasizes the importance of introducing any genre with a task in mind that the student needs to do, either as a school assignment, or for some purpose in the real world. Derewianka's book provided the basis for the present paper and is a useful guideline for how to teach the genre approach to writing.

Instructions: How something is done

Instructions belong to a group of text-types concerned with procedures, which tell us how something is accomplished through a sequence of actions or steps. It is a very important genre in our society because it enables us to get things done, and it is equally common in the oral and written mode.

Purpose: To tell someone how to do or make something

Examples: Recipes, science experiment or craft instructions, games rules, appliance manuals, how-to-do-it kits, directions to reach a destination

Text Organization: The focus of instructional texts is on a sequence of actions. The structure is easily recognized, usually consisting of:

- **Goal:** often indicated in the main heading and / or diagram
- **Materials:** listed in order of use
- **Method:** steps oriented towards achieving the goal

Each stage serves a particular function – e.g. telling us what we need, or what to do next. The text may also include comments on the usefulness, significance, danger, fun, etc. of the activity.

Headings, subheadings, numbers, diagrams, photos, etc. are often utilized to make Instructions as clear and easy to understand as possible.

Language Features: Generalized participants referring to a whole class of things (ingredients, utensils) as well as specific ones (the eggs)

The reader or the person following the Instructions is referred to in a general way (one / you) or sometimes is not even mentioned at all (Draw a 10 cm line). Linking words to do with time (first, then, when)
Mainly action verbs [material processes] (put, twist, hold, take)
Tense is timeless (“what people do in general”), e.g. simple present tense (you stir, you cut, you mix)
Detailed information on how (carefully, with the knife, quickly), where (6 cm from the top, into the bowl, in the oven), and when (after you have folded the napkin)
(Source: Derewianka, 1990, p. 27, 29)

Each genre in Derewianka’s book has a similar description of the key generic features. Once the mode of analyzing a genre is understood, a teacher can use the same model to analyze other genres that may be needed for a specific situation.

The above description is kept in very simple language, since it is intended for use in a primary school context. Obviously, not all the information will be used by the teacher as presented here, although some of the elements are presented in language that can be taken over directly in the lesson. However, in general, it is the teacher who will learn from this presentation how to view the form and language of this genre, then work out how to present it step by step to the students, so that they are supported, or “scaffolded,” while learning to write in the genre. Derewianka keeps the special terminology of Systemic-Functional grammar (SFG) to a minimum, although a few of the concepts are used; for example, “participants” can refer to either human or non-human subjects. Verbs are termed “processes” in SFG, and here the term “material processes” is introduced for “action verbs.”

Having been initiated into the overall structure and the linguistic characteristics of a given genre, the teacher follows a series of steps to guide the students in mastering these same features and practicing the writing of texts in the chosen genre.

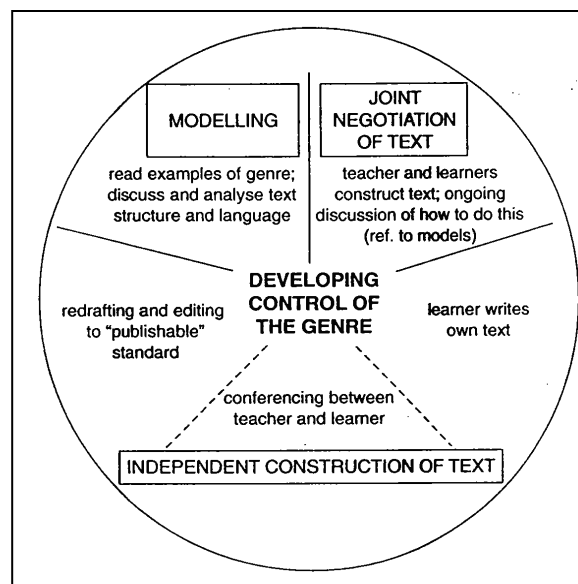
Using the teaching-learning cycle to scaffold writing in the genre approach

The teaching-learning cycle (also called curriculum cycle when used to organize at curricular level) is the instructional organizer for the genre approach. Several variations exist, but they all contain similar stages. The cycle clearly shows the stages in the acquisition of knowledge about and subsequent gradual initiation into the writing of the genre. The stages shown in the wheel diagram are elucidated below:

Stage 1: Orientation

The teacher initiates discussion about the genre either directly or by doing an activity that illustrates how the genre works. Thus, students might do a task in which they have to use some of the genre’s properties: giving instructions while doing a handicraft, for example (see Derewianka, 2000), or visiting a site where the genre is carried out to see it in a typical context (e.g. seeing a scientific experiment in a lab written up as a lab report).

Figure 1. Teaching-Learning Cycle (Hammond, 1990)



During this stage there is discussion about the purposes of the genre, and as many examples as possible are gathered by the teacher and students together, so that their collective schemata can be tapped and common elements in all the examples

visualized. The teacher elicits the students' observations about the purposes and general form of the examples, keeping his/her theoretical knowledge of the structure and language features in mind. For example, the teacher might ask questions like: Who might write this text? To whom? How does it begin? Why do you think it begins this way?

Stage 2: Modeling

Now that there is a general understanding of the purpose and workings of the genre, one or more examples are looked at in detail. Students and teacher together analyze the example for its:

- overall structure (text organization)
- linguistic features

To scaffold the students in discovering these features, the teacher asks questions that elicit the features and encourages students to find names for them. In this way, a metalanguage is negotiated that is appropriate to the age, language level and experience of the class. It is desirable to study a number of different examples of the genre in this way, so that the class becomes adept at analyzing the features that the different examples have in common. In this way, the students absorb the overall shape and language of the genre, so that they will be ready to adapt these to their own purposes when they write.

Stage 3: Joint negotiation of text

Based on the analysis, with the teacher's guidance, the students attempt to construct a similar text to the one(s) analyzed, first in whole class discussion, then in small groups. When the text is being constructed by the whole class, the teacher acts as scribe, eliciting the text in incremental steps from the students. The analysis of the models at Step 2 serves as a guide for structure and language. For example, the teacher asks: What shall we write at the top of the paper? Where does the address go? What comes first, the name of the writer, or the street?

After the whole class has produced a draft of the text, it becomes a further model for the group drafting of a text. While the class works in groups, the teacher walks around the room, observing the students' text work and giving suggestions to make the text conform to the genre specifications.

When the group has produced a draft, it may be sent to another group for peer review. The other group will read it to see whether everything is understandable and whether the text conforms to the genre in overall organization and language. Then another draft is produced, based on the peer comments. The teacher will also give feedback on further drafts. Multiple drafts should be produced until the organization and language features are deemed to be well-formed.

This stage may need to be repeated with different texts until the teacher is confident in the students' understanding of the genre and their ability to produce it effectively at their language level in a group.

Stage 4: Independent construction of text

The final step is for each student to write a sample of the genre independently, ideally for an authentic context of their own choice. For example, an immigrant looking for work might actually answer an ad in the newspaper and send the letter to the employer when it is ready (see Burns, 2001).

The teacher assists the students by written feedback or, if possible, in individual conferences, where both student and teacher can have input into the writing (for example in Derewianka, 1990). Again, multiple drafts are produced to improve the text.

Stage 5: "Publication"

When the composition has been revised and polished, it is 'published,' that is, made available to readers in some way, whether within the classroom, in book or magazine form, or by being sent to a real-world addressee.

A demonstration lesson: Using the teaching-learning cycle for genre-Instructions, text type-recipe

In this paper, the genre Instructions and the text type recipe have been chosen to demonstrate the use of the teaching-learning cycle to teach writing using a genre approach. As pointed out above, the genre Instructions is very frequently found in real life, being realized in many types of texts which may at

first glance not seem to have much in common: a recipe and an appliance manual, for instance. If the students can analyze what characteristics such apparently diverse texts have in common, they will have gained the generic understanding they need to produce their own texts. The Instruction genre may be a relatively simple genre to begin with. Since it has a clear structure but makes fewer grammatical demands, students can hope to produce a largely authentic and accurate text in a relatively short time.

The text type *recipe* has been chosen because it is commonplace, known to most learners and available in most homes as a model. If the learning situation allows, the learners may actually be able to cook the recipe they have written!

Stage 1: Orientation

Stage 1 includes a general discussion of kinds of Instructions and their general characteristics. The teacher might have asked the students to:

- bring in some examples of written instructions to show (e.g. how to play a game, how to connect or run an appliance like a video recorder), or
- look around the classroom to discover some examples that may be displayed there (e.g. what to do in case of a fire).
- think about the general characteristics of these examples and try to find out what they have in common.

Stage 2: Modeling

At Stage 2, Instructions is modeled using the text type of the recipe. Several recipes are used as models and analyzed for their features. The lesson is kept as simple and transparent as possible. It is organized around eliciting questions the instructor poses to scaffold the students, who might be beginning or low-intermediate writers of any age from upper primary school pupils to adults.

Example: Eliciting information

Introductory discussion of the text type to be studied (to activate students' recipe schemata):

T = teacher S = student C = class as a whole -- indicates response given by S(s)

T to various students Ss, who volunteer responses:
What is your favorite food?

T to C: *How do we know how to prepare the foods we like to eat?*

T to S: *Can you tell the class how you prepare your favorite food?*

T to C: *Did you understand how to cook that food?*

T continues to elicit from C:

Could you do it yourself from those directions?

How can we make it easier to follow the directions for cooking this food?

Right, we need to write it down! What do we call the written instructions for cooking something?

And if we gather all the recipes together and put them in a book?

T to S: *Do you have a cookbook?*

T to C: *What parts do recipes in a cookbook have in them?*

Right, a list of foods we need to cook the recipe. The ingredients. And then?

We need to know what to do, that's right.

We need the cooking instructions.

Let's look at an example.

The example may be displayed on an overhead projector:

Model text

Eggplant and Tofu Fritters

250 g tofu

1 eggplant

2 eggs

1/3 C plain flour

1 1/2 C finely grated Parmesan

2 Tbsp chopped fresh basil

1 C breadcrumbs

oil for frying

Cut the tofu and the eggplant into 1 cm slices. Beat the eggs in a shallow bowl. Spread the flour on a

plate. On another plate, combine finely grated Parmesan, the chopped basil and breadcrumbs. Coat the eggplant and tofu slices separately with the flour; shake off the excess and dip into the egg, then into the Parmesan mixture. Press on gently; shake off any excess cheese. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a frying pan. Fry the slices in batches for 5 minutes until just golden. Drain on paper towels and serve with a warm tomato pasta sauce.

Elicitation of text organization

Goal (heading, name of recipe). The teacher elicits the ‘Goal’ of the text by asking a question like:

T to C: *What is this a recipe for?*

Where do we put the information that tells us what we are going to cook, that is, the name of the recipe? (Is it written in a special way?)

Materials (ingredients). The teacher asks in a similar way about the ‘Materials’ part of the text organization, in this case the ingredients. The teacher will cover the ‘Text Features’ of this part of the recipe at the same time, making sure the students understand the abbreviations used and are aware of the necessity for including all details given including:

- all the foods used (including the oil for frying)
- the quantities (including abbreviations for weight, e.g. 250 g, and volume, e.g. C and Tbsp)
- the descriptive words (plain flour)
- the manner in which they are prepared (finely grated, chopped)

The following question may be asked:

T to C: *In what order should the ingredients appear?*

This is to make sure the students realize that they appear in the order in which they will be used in the procedural instructions below.

Method (steps in preparation). In eliciting the procedural steps or ‘Method,’ the teacher may first want to ask the students to tell in simplified form

what the order of steps is. He/she may then ask about the *processes* and *participants*:

T to C: *What actions have to be carried out?*

(Ss: *cut, beat, spread, etc.*)

T to C: *Who carries out these actions?*

(Ss: *You, any person cooking.*)

T to C: *How do we know who is doing them?*

(Ss: *We just know; so we don’t have to say it.*)

Similarly, the teacher can ask about words that tell us how to carry out the actions (e.g. separately, gently, until just golden, in 1 cm slices) and what kind of items are to be used (e.g. shallow bowl). He/she may ask why this is important (to make sure the recipe comes out as it should).

When the students have thoroughly studied this example as a group, the teacher may review the main facets of *Text Organization and Language Features*, writing them on the board to reinforce the genre features. If the students can participate in this review well, they may proceed to Stage 3, joint negotiation of text.

Stage 3: Joint negotiation of text

Writing another recipe

The students will now construct a similar text to the one just modeled as a group; for instance, they may brainstorm to find a favorite recipe to write. In the present case, the text type recipe is sufficiently easy that students can form groups of 3 or 4, each group choosing their own recipe to write. With a more complex text type, the teacher might decide to do one more cycle with the full class before proceeding to group work. In either case, the teacher continues to scaffold by asking questions to assist in the writers’ process of producing the text according to genre expectations. Burns (2001: 203-4) has a remarkable example of successful teacher scaffolding for a class of very low-level writers with very basic language.

Writing another kind of instructions

With the genre “Instructions,” a further step at this stage might be to have student groups decide on another kind of instructions to write. For example, groups I have taught wrote instructions for:

- putting on makeup or creating hairdos for a festive occasion
- crafting a beautiful box out of paper
- preparing 100-day-old Chinese eggs
- getting from the university to a destination in the city by public transportation

Scaffolding to get the job done

While students write, they scaffold each other to get the job done. Burns (2001), referenced above, has a delightful transcript of the same low-level students scaffolding each other simply but effectively as they write their text in a group. If each group in the class has written about a different procedure, they can exchange instructions and peer review the instructions. They look to see if the genre organization and features are right, if all the steps are easy to understand, and if any important ones have been left out. They are asked to pretend they do not know how to do the operation being described and to try to imagine whether they would be able to follow it.

Stage 4: Independent construction of text Moving on to authentic writing

Group writings can cover a number of different texts in the chosen genre, the writers becoming more and more proficient at producing the discourse features fluently. When they are solid with writing as a group, they move on to writing a text independently. Here they may be able to choose their own text, ideally one that they can use in real life.

Peer and teacher support

After a draft has been written in or outside of class, peer feedback, teacher conferencing or both may be used so that students have the necessary support even at this stage to write texts that are correctly structured and can be well understood by peers and the teacher.

Drafting, editing and publishing

At each writing stage, multiple drafts will be written until the writer and readers are satisfied with the text. It will then be edited for main grammar and mechanical errors before being “published” either in the classroom or, preferably, in an authentic setting.

Conclusion

The general procedure described above can be used with any genre of written discourse, as long as its structure and features have been analyzed by the teacher, with the help of the many materials available from the functional linguists, some of whom -Derewianka (1990), Martin (1985), Rose (2006) and Burns (2001) - have been cited in this paper.

At all stages of the writing process, the objective is to get the genre features right and to compose in such a way that the result is acceptable to those who will read it, not primarily to write a 100% grammatically accurate text. By following the teaching-learning cycle, teachers can scaffold writing practice in a given genre until learners can truly be independent writers of the genre. As Burns summarizes the principles of the genre-based approach, it “provides [students] with learning activities presented within a social contextual framework, which encourage them to focus on language and which assist them to become more independent and analytical learners” (Burns, 2001, p. 207).

Certainly, these are some of the important goals of all communicative language learning. The genre approach, as modeled here, has systematized the process so that it is relatively unproblematic for the teacher to convey and leads to predictable success on the part of the learner, leaving both with a positive feeling about the teaching and learning of writing.

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English co-curricular activities: A gateway to developing autonomous learners

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Abstract

It is commonly believed that co-curricular activities are complementary to classroom instruction, which is particularly the case when it comes to English learning in an EFL context. English co-curricular activities not only offer many opportunities for learners to use the target language in context, but also serve as a gateway to developing autonomous learners. By observing and examining various English co-curricular activities currently employed in a large university in Southeast China, the authors attempt to explore the functions and impact of these activities on learner independence as well as interdependence in learning English. By highlighting salient findings through the analysis of the data collected from learner responses to several items of a questionnaire about their perceptions of English co-curricular activities, the authors will discuss the pedagogical implications for English curricular and co-curricular development in EFL settings pertaining to cases such as China and Cambodia.

Introduction

Large-sized classes, mixed proficiency levels of students, variations in motivation, and test-oriented teaching and learning patterns — all seem pretty common in most EFL settings. The fact of the matter is that they do not work to the advantage of improving overall learner communicative competence. Because of these situational difficulties, how to enhance learner communicative competence is almost always high on the agenda for teachers. Just as Savignon (1997) put it, "... it is only through performance that competence can be developed, maintained, and evaluated" (p. 15). That is to say, language learning will be more effective if learners can be frequently exposed to the target language. However, in most EFL settings, it is far from enough for learners to practice the target

language if they only rely on classroom instruction. In this sense, co-curricular activities can be regarded as a supplement to classroom instruction. Not only can co-curricular activities offer many opportunities for learners to use the target language in context, but they also serve as a gateway to developing autonomous learners.

As such, the present study is intended to explore the role and impact of a number of co-curricular activities on the independence and interdependence of learners at different proficiency levels in English in the hope that some pedagogical implications can be drawn for English curricular and co-curricular design in EFL settings.

Literature review

This part will briefly deal with three areas, namely, the definition of “learner autonomy,” relevant research on co-curricular activities, especially on English co-curricular activities, and pertinent research on autonomy in language learning.

Definition of learner autonomy

It is often pointed out that “learner autonomy” is a fuzzy term. Not only is it often interpreted as learner independence, self-direction, autonomous learning, or independent learning (Palfreyman, 2003, p.1), but learners are regarded as being totally responsible for their own learning processes.

In fact, autonomous learning, especially in foreign language learning, does not simply mean that learners learn by themselves. Just as Little (as cited in Littlewood, 1999) put it, “learner autonomy is the product of interdependence rather than independence” (p.75). In other words, “autonomy develops most effectively in an interpersonal environment which supports it” (Littlewood, 1999, p.75). Smith (1997) also pointed out that “autonomy entails interdependence as well as independence.” Therefore, in this study, we would like to adopt Dam, Eriksson, Little, Millander, & Trebbi’s (1990) viewpoint that learner autonomy can be viewed as “a capacity and willingness to act independently *and* in cooperation with others, as a social, responsible person” (p. 102).

Relevant research on co-curricular activities

In the field of education, there is no doubt that all-round student development cannot be achieved only by means of classroom instruction. It is therefore necessary that activities outside the classroom be treated as equally important as those in the classroom. Much literature on co-curricular activities has indicated that active participation in co-curricular activities has positive impacts on student academic achievement as well as other aspects of personal development (Brown, 2002; Carroll & Purdie, 2007; Banack, 2007).

Carroll and Purdie (2007) discuss the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities

and self-regulatory strategies of children, coming to a conclusion that “ECI (extra-curricular involvement) has positive benefits to children in terms of their self-regulation” (p. 396). According to Masten and Coatsworth (as cited in Carroll & Purdie, 2007), “self-regulation comprises a set of skills which enables children to control themselves in numerous ways including the implementation of strategies such as goal setting, the development of task persistence and self-efficacy, and the execution of compliance or behavioural control” (p. 20), which to a great extent corresponds to the main characteristics of autonomous learners (Benson, 2005).

In terms of research on English co-curricular activities, most of the papers focused on illustrating forms of co-curricular activities which are not theory-driven (Guo, 2006, p. II). However, there is some relevant literature providing a pertinent theoretical foundation, such as that by Zhou and Jiang (1999), Guo (2006), and Gao (2009). For example, in Zhou and Jiang’s (1999) paper, Cummins’ distinction between “context-reduced” and “context-embedded” is used to analyze the interdependent and interactive relationship between co-curricular learning and teaching activities. In her M.A. thesis, Guo (2006) employs Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis and task-based approach as basic theoretical support to account for student participation in co-curricular activities.

Although different people may have different interpretations of the term “English co-curricular activities,” we would like to confine our definition to *those optional activities mainly run by students and supervised by faculty members outside the regular curriculum which engage learners in practicing the target language.*

Pertinent research on autonomy in language learning

According to Xu (2007), most of the literature on autonomy focuses on illustrating the concept of, the theoretical foundation for, and the factors influencing learner autonomy in language learning. In EFL contexts such as in China, it was not until after 2004 that learner autonomy began to capture more researcher and practitioner attention. Although

there are a couple of studies which concluded that Asian students displayed a lack of autonomy (Chan, Spratt, & Humphreys, 2002; Thang & Alias, 2007), it should be acknowledged that Asian learners have begun to show positive attitudes toward learner autonomy and put it into practice, as shown in Jones' (1995) study on English language students in Cambodia, Ho and Crookall's (1995) project on Hong Kong tertiary students, Usuki's (2002) study on Japanese students, and Xu, Peng, and Wu's (2004) survey on Chinese non-English major undergraduates' autonomous English learning competence.

However, studies in English co-curricular activities in EFL contexts related to autonomous learning are scarce. Gao (2009) pinpoints this in saying that there is still insufficient "research into language learners' self-initiated strategic learning efforts beyond the classroom" (p. 60). As far as we know, no study to date has ever looked at the relationship between learner English proficiency levels and learner participation patterns in a variety of co-curricular activities, so the present study is the first attempt to address this issue.

The present study

The present study takes a close look at the English co-curricular activities employed in a comprehensive university in Southeast China with regard to their functions and impact in helping students gain overall communicative competence.

Types and functions of English co-curricular activities

The English Language Center (ELC) at the university offers three main types of English co-curricular activities to students: weekly activities, series events, and an annual event. Weekly activities include the English Lounge (accessible to students every night, designed to provide them with an all-English environment in which they can chat with their peers and teachers, read newspapers, magazines, novels, etc., and watch movies), the English Corner (one night per week with featured programs, including fun games, casual conversation on certain topics with invited teachers, fun activities teaching vocabulary and expressions, debates, etc.),

the Creative Expression Club (an open stage for all the students to exercise their creativity by creating and performing skits and plays), the Reading Club, the Poetry Club, Early Bird Reading (held early in the morning, using movie dialogues to improve student pronunciation, intonation, expressions, and fluency) and the News Discussion Group (an invited teacher leads a student discussion group on the preceding week's big news stories). Series events consist of the Conversation Series (a forum for the exchange of ideas where invited guests share their expertise, experiences, viewpoints, and perspectives on various topics of interest), the Faculty Lecture Series (organized by the faculty and designed to expose students to lectures in English on various topics) and the Film Series (theme-based, engaging students in film-related discussion). The annual Intercollegiate English Festival is a good showcase for student talent. In addition, there are other fun and educational activities for students, such as Cross Country Games, a Halloween party, and Christmas caroling. Moreover, *The Shantou Beat*, an English publication, is always accessible to students and gives them the chance to work on the editorial staff.

Except for the series events and a few weekly activities, most of these co-curricular activities are mainly run by students and supervised by faculty members. The rationale for designing and developing various English co-curricular activities is our belief that a high-level of communicative competence (i.e., grammatical, pragmatic, discourse, and strategic competence) is the ultimate goal for all of our students. Only when students are frequently exposed to the target language outside the classroom can they gradually become competent language learners and users.

The functions of these co-curricular activities can be roughly summarized as follows:

1. Providing learners with a relaxed, natural, and authentic linguistic environment;
2. Improving learners' English proficiency, especially enhancing learners' aural and oral English communicative skills;
3. Raising learners' cultural awareness;
4. Developing learners' autonomous learning ability;

5. Providing learners, student facilitators in particular, with a platform for developing to their highest potential.

Research questions

The primary objective of the present study is to investigate the attitudes of students at different English proficiency levels toward participating in English co-curricular activities. To be specific, we attempt to find out whether students at different levels have different views regarding English co-curricular activities as a gateway to developing autonomous English learning. Hence, the research questions addressed are as follows:

1. Do students with different English proficiency levels have different attitudes toward participating in English co-curricular activities?
2. Do students with different English proficiency levels have different allocations of time for participating in English co-curricular activities?
3. Do students with different English proficiency levels have different reasons for participating or not participating in English co-curricular activities?

Data collection

In order to obtain learner perception about all the English co-curricular activities organized by the ELC, we designed a questionnaire consisting of 20 questions (see Appendix 1). Using this questionnaire, we collected responses from 383 purposively sampled undergraduate students taking different levels of ELC courses.

Informants

Students taking ELC courses were placed into different levels based on their English placement test results upon registration. For the sake of purposive sampling, we aimed at two to three classes at each level except EA2 (high beginning) because there was only one class at the time the questionnaire was administered. EA stands for English for Art students who have low English proficiency levels and specific requirements for completing ELC courses. There are 3 levels of required EA courses. Students of other majors are generally required to complete up to Level 4, starting from the level they are placed. In this study, “level of English proficiency” refers to the description of students placed at each level, which roughly corresponds to the generally accepted description in foreign language teaching shown in Table 1. Therefore, the questionnaire was finally distributed to 696 students at different levels, with 682 copies returned. Though the return rate was high (97.99%), only 383 questionnaires (56.16%) could be used for the study, because copies from informants who indicated they had not participated in any English co-curricular activities (most of them freshmen admitted into the university about 2 months prior) were excluded. Those who chose “Never” for Item 5, regarding how much time students spend in participating in co-curricular activities per week, were treated as valid cases because they indicated they had participated in other types of co-curricular activities (e.g. the Film Series, the English Festival) rather than regular weekly activities. Details of the population sample for the study are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Study sample

Level	Distributed	Returned	Valid
EA1 (Beginning)	58	57	24
EA3 (Low intermediate)	67	67	15
Foundation (Low intermediate)	90	88	37
Level 1 (Intermediate)	109	109	39
Level 2 (High intermediate)	101	101	76
Level 3 (Low advanced)	109	105	73
Level 4 (Advanced)	95	93	83
Others	67	62	36
Total	696	682	383

Note: “Others” refers to students who have completed the ELC courses.

Methodology

A survey was used in the present study to obtain data from the target population shown in Table 1. In the present study, only five questions (items 2, 5, 6, 7, and 13) from the questionnaire were selected to be statistically analyzed, using SPSS 13.0.

Before we discuss the results of the selected items of the questionnaire, a brief account for the selection is necessary. Items 2 and 13 were related to student attitudes toward all the English co-curricular activities offered by the ELC. To be specific, these two items were intended to obtain overall student perception of whether English co-curricular activities were conducive to learning English and were enhancing autonomous learning. Item 5 indicated the time students allocated to activities. Items 6 and 7 respectively were used to probe into the reasons for student participation and non-participation in the activities.

Results

Percentage results of each item

The following findings are clearly shown in the tables (see Appendix 2, Tables 1-5). For Item 2, regarding the helpfulness of co-curricular activities in English learning, 16.19% strongly agreed and 49.61% agreed that the co-curricular activities were beneficial in learning English for them. For Item 13, regarding student belief in the enhancement of autonomous learning ability through co-curricular activities, 51.7% partly agreed that English co-curricular activities could enhance autonomous learning. For Item 5, regarding student time allocation for co-curricular activities, 44.39% indicated that they spent less than one hour per week participating in the activities. For Item 6, regarding the main reasons students participated in co-curricular activities, 55.61% regarded the usefulness of the activities as their main reason for participation. For this item, students who chose “other” as their responses were either reluctant to provide any specific reason(s) or they were volunteer members in charge of a certain activity. A few responses indicate that it was curiosity that prompted them to participate in the activities. It is also worth mentioning that 31.58% of Level 2 students indicated that their instructor required them

to participate in the activities. As far as we know, a few of our faculty members prefer to require their students to participate in the co-curricular activities and give extra points to their students’ final course scores. For Item 7, regarding why some students did not participate, informants gave their reasons as having no interest in learning English (47%), not enjoying the activities (41.51%), and hardly finding time (35.25%). For those who chose “Other” for this item, one of the reasons frequently mentioned was that they are “too shy to speak English in public.”

Chi-Square test results of each item

In order to address the research questions, we used a chi-square test for independence to see if there was a statistically significant correlation between two variables. Except for Item 7 ($p=0.1216>0.05$), regarding reasons for not participating in the activities, the Fisher’s exact test results ($p<0.05$) of the other selected items indicate that the level of English proficiency has a statistically significant effect on student participation patterns (i.e. attitudes, allocation of time, and reasons) in English co-curricular activities. Details of the results for each item are shown in Table 6 (see Appendix 2).

Discussion

The discussion of the results will be divided into three sections to address the research questions mentioned above.

Student attitudes toward participation in English co-curricular activities

The data suggest that most of the informants are in favor of English co-curricular activities. Regardless of their level of English proficiency, most of them not only agree that English co-curricular activities are helpful in learning English for them, but also believe, at least partially, that these activities can enhance autonomous learning for them. To a great extent, the English co-curricular activities make up for insufficient linguistic input and output in the classroom and provide learners with a more flexible learning environment because of the great variety of activities. As mentioned in the introduction, English co-curricular activities are complementary to classroom instruction. This is supported in Barnes’

(as cited in Benson, 2005) distinction between “school knowledge” and “action knowledge.” Hence, active student participation in co-curricular activities will aid students in acquiring “action knowledge,” which “cannot be transmitted from teachers to learners” (p. 38).

However, it is worth pointing out that the level of English proficiency does affect informant attitudes toward English co-curricular activities. Interestingly, there are more students at higher levels who tend to consider it negative to participate in the activities. Specifically, the percentage by category of respondents choosing “disagree” to Item 2 increases from 2.7% (Foundation) to 8.33% (Others). There are fewer students at higher levels (Levels 2 - 4) who chose “strongly agree” as their response. In fact, about one-third (30% to 35%) of informants at Levels 2 - 4 had reservations about the benefits of learning English through participation in co-curricular activities. One of the possible reasons is that the activities they participated in didn’t seem as productive as they had expected. Students with a high level of proficiency in English somehow find it unequal to communicate with those with a low level of proficiency; this might discourage them from actively participating in such co-curricular activities as the English Lounge, the English Corner, and the Reading Club. Generally, students tend to focus more on conscious learning, hoping that it will yield immediate results. Another explanation may be that a high level of English proficiency does not necessarily lead to a high level of motivation to learn. Based on our observation, many students in China still study English as a subject because it is compulsory. Their primary purpose in learning English is to meet minimum course requirements.

In addition, students with a low level of English proficiency (i.e. from EA1 to Level 1, see Appendix 2, Table 2) seem to have a strong belief that participating in co-curricular activities will enhance autonomous learning, though this is not always the case. If analyzed by Kelly’s (as cited in Benson, 2005) “personal construct theory,” in which “systems of constructs ... are shaped through attempts to make sense of experiences that are uniquely one’s own” (p. 36), a plausible explanation might be that students are still anxious to improve

themselves. To some degree, English co-curricular activities offer learners at low levels opportunities to meet new friends who may serve as role models, which may help them construct their new knowledge. However, given the features of the co-curricular activities offered, we have to acknowledge that higher levels of English proficiency are generally demanded if students hope to benefit more from many of the activities such as debate, discussion about poems, films, stories in the news, and skit creation. Therefore, for those students with high levels of English proficiency, their positive attitude toward the impact of co-curricular activities on enhancing autonomous learning (30.56% of “Others” chose “greatly”) might be attributed to the fact that their efforts in being actively engaged in the activities have finally paid off. Nevertheless, more than half of the informants only partly agree that English co-curricular activities can enhance autonomous learning for them. Two possible reasons might account for this result. For one thing, some informants might fail to understand the connotation of the concept of “self-learning ability,” though we purposely avoided using the term “autonomous learning.” For another, they might fail to realize the importance of autonomous learning through participation in co-curricular activities.

Student actions toward English co-curricular activities

It is commonly held that one’s attitudes are generally reflected in one’s actions. Our results show (see Appendix 2, Table 3) that about half of the informants spent less than an hour per week participating in co-curricular activities, which at the least indicates that they failed to take full advantage of the activities though they had fairly favorable attitudes toward them. Although level of English proficiency affects student allocation of time for participation in the activities, it seems to us that this independent variable alone cannot really account for the statistical results. In fact, it is understandable because undergraduate students in China are supposed to take many courses each semester, especially in the first three academic years. They might be pressured by the workload in other content courses or have time conflicts with a number of co-curricular activities. Unless they are highly

motivated, they are reluctant to spend extra time learning English. Chan, Spratt, & Humphreys' (2002) study on Hong Kong tertiary student attitudes and behaviors toward autonomous language learning also indicates this problem. In fact, student response to Item 7 (i.e. hardly finding time accounting for 35.25%) could be treated as a cross-reference. In addition, Benson's (2005) elucidation on Kelly's personal construct theory may shed some light on this phenomenon. It is pointed out that the processes of promoting learner autonomy "can be arduous and disorienting for the learner, both cognitively and emotionally, and that they are not easily implemented where learners are not fully motivated to change" (p. 37). Lack of motivation can therefore hinder students from frequently engaging in the co-curricular activities. It is also possible that other variables, such as learner gender, personality, major, and educational background may come into play.

Reasons for student participation and non-participation in English co-curricular activities

Knowing what exactly encourages students to participate or discourages them from participating in co-curricular activities might be helpful in interpreting what accounts for their allocation of time for participation in the activities. According to the student responses to Item 6, the activities being helpful in learning English is one of the main reasons that prompted more than half of the informants to participate in co-curricular activities. Another main reason for participation is that the activities are fun and educational, accounting for approximately one-fourth of the responses. The Fisher's exact test result ($p=0.0004<0.05$) of Item 6 indicates that the level of English proficiency affects student decisions for participation in the activities. Among all the responses to Option C, those who have completed the ELC courses hold the highest rating (69.44%). As mentioned above, a high level of English proficiency is required for active participation in many of the activities. Therefore, it seems reasonable that those highly proficient students actively participate in the co-curricular activities because they have more self-confidence. This can find support in Wenden's (as cited in Cotterall, 1995) claim that "without

confidence in their ability to learn successfully, learners cannot develop autonomous approaches to learning" (p. 201). In addition, Cotterall (1995) notes, "the beliefs and attitudes learners hold have a profound influence on their learning behavior" (p. 195). In fact, active student participation in the activities could be attributed to a high level of motivation, which in turn boosts student self-confidence.

The statistical results of Item 7, regarding why some students did not participate, seem to indicate that student responses vary from level to level, though having no interest in learning English was one of the main reasons for non-participation in the activities. However, the Fisher's exact test result ($p=0.1216>0.05$) indicates that there is no statistically significant correlation between student levels of English proficiency and reasons for not participating in the co-curricular activities. One possible explanation could be that the responses to the question, "In your opinion, what might be the possible reasons that some students do not participate in the English co-curricular activities?" were only collected from informants who had participated in co-curricular activities. Informants who had not were excluded. In other words, we cannot understand the real thoughts of those excluded informants unless we do follow-up interviews with them. However, it should be pointed out that 41.51% of the whole population (of which 35.9% of students were at Level 1 and 51.81% of students at Level 4) thought that the current ELC co-curricular activities were not appealing to students. This helps to explain why there are still so many students (treated as invalid cases for the present study) who have never participated in any ELC co-curricular activities. Therefore, the co-curricular activities offered demand careful review.

Pedagogical implications

Based on statistical results and the points under discussion, several pedagogical implications may be drawn from the present study.

First, English co-curricular activities are useful to enhance learner communicative competence. In EFL settings, it cannot be overemphasized that

English co-curricular activities play an important part in enhancing learner communicative competence, which is strongly supported by student responses. Although students with low levels of English proficiency might be discouraged from participating in co-curricular activities, the point is whether there are appropriate activities for students with different English proficiencies.

Thus, various types of English co-curricular activities aimed at students with different English proficiencies are needed. Not only can students be offered opportunities for making choices, but also they can be motivated to learn. In fact, a certain type of activity may be designed in different ways if student levels of English proficiency are taken into account. Consequently, the language anxiety of learners with low English proficiency levels may be lessened.

Also, empowering learners to take charge of their own learning in class should be stressed as frequently as possible. It is often pointed out that not all Asian students have a strong incentive to take responsibility for their own learning. Part of the reason might be due to cultural factors. However, instructors of English sometimes tend to dominate the discussion in class both consciously and unconsciously. Therefore, it is important for teachers to create a live learning environment in which students can be autonomous in class.

Finally, fostering learner autonomy through co-curricular activities still involves cultivation of learning strategies so as to sustain autonomous learning efforts. Gao (2009) pointed out that “committed learner leaders played a crucial role in maintaining and strengthening a sense of community among the participants and supporting their learning efforts” (p. 65). Therefore, it would be more advisable for student facilitators to receive some training on a regular basis so that they can be better equipped to run the activities for their peers. Students with low levels of English proficiency also need to be provided with some basic learning strategies before they can eventually become autonomous learners. Only in this way can the co-curricular activities be more appealing to learners. Fostering learner autonomy does not simply mean

that learners should take full responsibility of their own learning, especially in EFL settings. In fact, teachers should always be ready to provide students with whatever help is needed.

Conclusion

The findings of the present study suggest that the majority of informants, regardless of their English proficiency levels, believe that English co-curricular activities are beneficial to learning English for them. According to Ryan (as cited in Littlewood, 1999), the four factors below “constitute the ideal ‘facilitating environment’ for autonomy”:

- concrete support through the provision of help and resources;
- personal concern and involvement from significant others;
- opportunities for making choices;
- freedom from a sense of being controlled by external agents (p. 75).

In this sense, English co-curricular activities offered by the ELC represent this kind of “ideal facilitating environment for autonomy.” Various co-curricular activities are not only funded by the ELC, but also supervised or guided by its faculty members, especially by international teachers. Higher-proficiency students volunteer to serve as facilitators and act as role models, interacting with their peers. Students are almost always encouraged rather than forced by their instructors to participate in the activities. Although student levels of English proficiency affect participation patterns (i.e. attitudes, allocation of time, and reasons) in co-curricular activities, the English learning environment created, if students can fully take advantage of it, will be conducive to promoting learner autonomy.

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Appendix 1

ELC co-curricular activities survey

Instructions: In answering the following questions, please check (✓) what is appropriate. Sometimes you should check as many as are applicable.

1. What do you find useful to you in learning English?(Check all that apply)
 - A. Talking with foreign teachers
 - B. Talking with local teachers
 - C. Talking with peers
 - D. Reading or watching TV
 - E. Other (please be specific)
2. Do you think co-curricular activities (the English Corner, the English Lounge, the English Expression Club, the Reading Club, *The Shantou Beat*, etc.) are helpful in your English learning?
 - A. Strongly agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Neither agree nor disagree
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly disagree
3. What co-curricular activities organized by the ELC have you participated in? (Check all that apply)
 - A. English Lounge
 - B. English Corner
 - C. Creative Expression Club
 - D. Reading Club
 - E. Poetry Club
 - F. Early Bird Reading
 - G. Pronunciation Training Sessions
 - H. Conversation Series
 - I. Faculty Lecture Series
 - J. Film Series
 - K. English Festival (including speech contest and singing contest)
 - L. *The Shantou Beat*
 - M. Other (please be specific)
4. Among those activities mentioned above, which one/s do you think has/have benefited you in learning English? Please write down the corresponding letter/s in the blank.

5. How much time do you usually spend in participating in co-curricular activities per week?
 - A. Never
 - B. Less than 1 hour
 - C. 1 hour
 - D. 2 hours
 - E. 3 hours
 - F. More than 3 hours
6. The main reasons why you participate in the co-curricular activities are that _____ (Check all that apply)
 - A. you have the opportunity to exchange ideas with others in English
 - B. you can meet with friends who also like English
 - C. the activities are helpful in learning English
 - D. your instructor requires you to do so
 - E. the activities are fun and educational
 - F. it is a good way to kill time
 - G. other (please be specific)
7. In your opinion, what might be the possible reasons that some students do not participate in the English co-curricular activities? (Check all that apply)
 - A. They feel that these activities interfere with their studies.
 - B. These activities are not assessed in the examinations.
 - C. They have no interest in learning English.
 - D. They can hardly find time to participate in the activities.
 - E. They don't enjoy these activities.
 - F. They do not believe that these activities

- can help them learn English.
G. Other (please be specific)
8. In what areas do you believe participating in will help you to learn English? (Check all that apply)
A. Listening
B. Speaking
C. Reading
D. Writing
E. Culture/s
F. Other (please be specific)
9. Which of the following types of co-curricular activities do you think can improve your English proficiency and critical thinking skills? (Check all that apply)
A. Debate and discussion
B. Lectures
C. Story telling
D. Reading Club
E. *The Shantou Beat*
F. Games
G. Library work
H. Cross Country
I. Drama
J. Music
K. Dancing
L. Celebration of religious, national and social festivals
M. Contests
N. Watching videos and TV
O. Other (please be specific)
10. How would you rate the activities you have participated in?
A. Very good
B. Good
C. So-so
D. Poor
E. Very poor
11. How would you describe yourself when participating in these activities? (Check all that apply)
A. A facilitator
B. An active participant
C. A team member
D. An audience member
E. Other (please be specific)
12. In what areas do you think you benefit from participating in the co-curricular activities? (Check all that apply)
A. Enhancing social skills
B. Improving English proficiency
C. Broadening your vision
D. Developing self-learning ability
E. Helping you become better learners of English
F. Other (please be specific)
13. To what extent do you believe that participating in the co-curricular activities can enhance your self-learning ability in English learning?
A. Completely
B. Greatly
C. Partly
D. Somewhat
E. Hardly
14. Do you agree that those who actively participate in English co-curricular activities are usually better at English?
A. Strongly agree
B. Agree
C. Neither agree nor disagree
D. Disagree
E. Strongly disagree
15. To what extent do you believe that participating in co-curricular activities can make you aware of what you should aim for?
A. Completely
B. Greatly
C. Partly
D. Somewhat
E. Hardly
16. Whenever you encounter difficulties in expressing yourself while joining the activities, _____.
A. you try to manage it by yourself
B. you always ask teachers around for help
C. you always ask peers for help
D. you just give up
E. you often feel embarrassed

17. Do you agree that a system of rewards should be given for the most active participants?
- A. Strongly agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Neither agree nor disagree
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly disagree
18. What role(s) do you think a teacher should play when she or he joins the co-curricular activities? (Check all that apply)
- A. A motivator
 - B. An advisor
 - C. A facilitator
 - D. An evaluator
 - E. Other (please be specific)
19. Do you agree that all the co-curricular activities should only be coordinated by students themselves?
- A. Strongly agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Neither agree nor disagree
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly disagree
20. If you were asked to suggest one English co-curricular activity to the English Language Center apart from those mentioned in Question 3, what would you like to have? Please be specific.

Appendix 2

Percentage and chi-square test results of the selected items

Note: The highest percentage of student response at each level is highlighted in bold.

Table 1. Results of item 2 in percentages

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
EA1	29.17	62.50	8.33	0.00	0.00
EA3	33.33	60.00	6.67	0.00	0.00
Foundation	32.43	40.54	24.32	2.70	0.00
Level 1	28.21	41.03	25.64	5.13	0.00
Level 2	7.89	47.37	36.84	6.58	1.32
Level 3	5.48	57.53	31.51	5.48	0.00
Level 4	7.23	54.22	31.33	7.23	0.00
Others	30.56	33.33	27.78	8.33	0.00
Grand total	16.19	49.61	28.46	5.48	0.26

Table 2. Results of item 13 in percentages

	Completely	Greatly	Partly	Somewhat	Hardly
EA1	20.83	41.67	33.33	4.17	0.00
EA3	6.67	40.00	20.00	13.33	20.00
Foundation	13.51	29.73	48.65	5.41	2.70
Level 1	0.00	30.77	56.41	7.69	5.13
Level 2	10.53	22.37	47.37	14.47	5.26
Level 3	6.85	24.66	52.05	15.07	1.37
Level 4	2.41	16.87	62.65	13.25	4.82
Others	5.56	30.56	58.33	5.56	0.00
Grand total	7.31	25.85	51.70	11.23	3.92

Table 3. Results of item 5 in percentages

	Never	Less than 1 hour	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	More than 3 hours
EA1	4.17	16.67	37.50	20.83	8.33	12.50
EA3	26.67	46.67	13.33	13.33	0.00	0.00
Foundation	8.11	45.95	29.73	10.81	2.70	2.70
Level 1	2.56	48.72	23.08	17.95	5.13	2.56
Level 2	3.95	32.89	36.84	17.11	6.58	2.63
Level 3	5.48	58.90	12.33	16.44	5.48	1.37
Level 4	12.05	53.01	18.07	7.23	6.02	3.61
Others	5.56	30.56	22.22	19.44	8.33	13.89
Grand total	7.31	44.39	23.76	14.62	5.74	4.18

Note: "Never" here refers to regular activities, especially those on a weekly basis.

Table 4. Results of item 6 in percentages

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
EA1	50.00	20.83	66.67	0.00	33.33	0.00	0.00
EA3	0.00	20.00	40.00	0.00	6.67	13.33	26.67
Foundation	18.92	24.32	40.54	0.00	24.32	2.70	5.41
Level 1	25.64	15.38	69.23	2.56	25.64	12.82	2.56
Level 2	21.05	21.05	51.32	31.58	17.11	6.58	2.63
Level 3	20.55	16.44	58.90	13.70	28.77	8.22	8.22
Level 4	27.71	20.48	50.60	14.46	34.94	6.02	12.05
Others	36.11	30.56	69.44	13.89	22.22	5.56	5.56
Grand total	25.07	20.63	55.61	13.58	25.85	6.79	7.05

Table 5. Results of item 7 in percentages

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
EA1	12.50	12.50	50.00	29.17	37.50	20.83	25.00
EA3	26.67	0.00	53.33	26.67	13.33	13.33	20.00
Foundation	16.22	13.51	35.14	51.35	32.43	21.62	18.92
Level 1	23.08	17.95	30.77	33.33	35.90	35.90	5.13
Level 2	10.53	9.21	52.63	30.26	40.79	17.11	7.89
Level 3	5.48	24.66	45.21	41.10	43.84	24.66	9.59
Level 4	22.89	12.05	45.78	33.73	51.81	20.48	9.64
Others	8.33	11.11	66.67	30.56	44.44	27.78	13.89
Grand total	14.62	14.10	47.00	35.25	41.51	22.72	11.49

Table 6. Chi-square test results of each item

Item	Chi-Square Test	Monte Carlo Sig.
2	Fisher's Exact Test	0.0002
13	Fisher's Exact Test	0.0108
5	Fisher's Exact Test	0.0029
6	Fisher's Exact Test	0.0004
7	Fisher's Exact Test	0.1216

Music and song beyond the classroom: strategies to aid the language learning process

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Abstract

For many people, music is an important, if not essential, part of daily life. For language learners, learning with songs in the second language can serve as an effective means of improving language skills. This research is the result of a materials development project and reports on the process of designing song worksheets for independent study. Surveys and interviews were conducted with twenty-four students to discover how they used songs for language learning. Workshops using the song worksheets provided valuable student input, and through feedback, the researcher was able to design worksheets that could help foster autonomous learner development. A framework for independent language learning, which was presented to participants, will be included in this paper, with a description of how it can be used for learning with songs.

Introduction

We are surrounded by music every day, and for many of us, it is an important, if not essential, part of our lives. Over the past decade, there has been an increase in research showing that the pedagogical conjoining of music and the second language promotes language acquisition (Siek-Piskozub, 1998; Fonseca Mora, 2000). This kind of research has helped educators to see the benefits of using music for language learning. That is, through songs, teachers can help students to cultivate linguistic skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Jalongo and Bromley, 1984), improve comprehension skills (Lynch, 2005), spelling (Martin, 1983) and pronunciation (Graham, 2001), as well as to advance lexical (Medina, 1993) and grammatical (Hancock, 1999) abilities. Moreover, listening to music in a second language offers students the opportunity to integrate cultural understanding into language learning. As music has such a far-reaching effect, the researcher sought to find out if students made use of this resource to

improve their second language learning. Research questions were as follows:

- How often do students listen to music in their second language?
- What kind of activities do students enjoy doing with English songs for independent language learning?

This is not an academic paper, but rather a report on an ongoing materials development project conducted at Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS). The main goal was to increase usage of the listening section of the self-access learning center (SALC) while exposing students to a new and interesting method of out-of-class learning. Practical examples of activities using English songs for independent language learning were developed as a result of student suggestions from surveys and interviews. Changes to existing worksheets were made based on feedback from workshops held, and from this, new worksheets were designed based on student input. This research hoped to expose

students to a more focused and effective method of achieving language-learning goals.

Independent language learning through music

Self-directed learning is a concept where the learner takes “responsibility for major decisions such as why, what, where, when and how they are going to study” (Benson, 1992). This emphasis on becoming an autonomous language learner is central to the KUIS curriculum and the SALC. In particular, students are encouraged to take advantage of all practice opportunities outside the classroom to improve their second language. Cross (1981) estimates that an average of 80% of learning takes place outside of formal education, and as such, informal language learning should play a larger role in students’ school life. Foreign music can be found everywhere and is easily accessible – on the radio, mp3 players, cell phones, computers, televisions, karaoke and at schools. Therefore, it provides students with a unique opportunity to explore language. If students are able to connect their musical interests to their language learning, they would be more likely to sustain motivation, and motivation, according to research literature, is at the core of language learning (Ellis, 1994; Dornyei, 1998; Johnstone, 1999; Lightbown & Spada, 2001). Learning with songs can also help learners tap into prior knowledge through memory activation and recall. That is, if learners can associate the song with an event in their lives, such as an emotion, a person, or a place, new information can be learned and retained at a faster rate.

Research background

Students participating in this research included twenty-four 1st and 2nd year students majoring in English. Data were gathered from several sources: 1) Short surveys on language learning with music were given randomly to students visiting the SALC; 2) Interviews were conducted with students who frequented the listening section of the SALC and were familiar with the song worksheets; 3) ideas were considered from activities students completed in their self-study portfolios; and finally, 4) suggestions were offered and noted during workshops to garner additional learner input.

Results

Surveys and interviews

Results of the survey and interviews (see Appendix 1) revealed that more students listened to English music for pleasure and as background music than for learning. However, for those who used songs for language learning, the areas focused on primarily were listening and vocabulary. Unsurprisingly, the fill-in-the-blanks activity (an activity widely used in classrooms) proved to be the most popular among students. This was followed by vocabulary and grammar journals. As making journals was a key component in some classes, it was interesting and encouraging to know that students chose to use English songs, as opposed to textbooks, as their resource. Notably, activities that students did outside of class were shorter in length than classroom activities and could be done in various situations, for example, on the train or during breaks between classes. Students also responded well to being able to choose songs they were interested in. These points were carefully considered when creating new song worksheets.

Self-study modules

Self-study modules offered to sophomore students at the university require learners to reflect on their learning, decide on a language learning goal, search for suitable resources, and design activities to help them achieve that goal. Two module takers reported in their portfolio that they found learning with English songs a fun resource, which helped them to stay focused on their goal of improving their vocabulary skills. In addition, because they enjoyed foreign music, it helped to keep them motivated throughout the eight-week program. The activities these students completed each week were similar to those reported in the surveys and interviews. However, what was significant about the module students was that they not only decided which materials were most effective for their study purposes, but as part of the self-directed process, they also reflected on the strengths and weaknesses of the activities completed. This provided great insight into how the new song worksheets could be designed for independent learners. Once again, the main consideration for these learners was that the activities should be short and that students should

be able to do them at school, while commuting, or at home.

Workshops

After compiling data from surveys, interviews, and modules, existing worksheets were improved and new worksheets were made to match student interest. Following this, two workshops were held to share the new song worksheet and ask for feedback. The researcher used this opportunity to expose participants to the study model – SURE (See Figure 1), which module takers were using for their independent study. Students were asked to think about learning needs and to reflect on how they could use their time more effectively. Feedback from these workshops was useful in helping to create the final drafts.

Pedagogical application of songs for independent learning

Before trialing the worksheets, students were made aware of how they could be used for independent study. The SURE (Study-Use-Review-Evaluate) model, which was developed at KUIS by the learning advisory team, is used as a guide for learners to help them understand how to improve their language learning.

Learners can begin planning at any point of the model; however, they must first decide on an achievable goal and then connect each area of the model to that central goal. Finding the right balance is key to successfully acquiring the second language. Learners were then shown how they could apply this model to their language problems using any resource they thought suitable, such as graded readers, movies, computer software, newspapers or songs. Below are examples of activities that students found effective in their independent studies.

The SURE model in practice

Study: Learning new vocabulary or grammar by creating a “musicictionary”

Songs provide a means of acquiring new vocabulary through repetition, memorization and association. Through repetition, students can listen and get accustomed to accent, speed, rhythm, and intonation. By memorizing and then using the new knowledge repeatedly in speech, learners will be able to understand how common everyday phrases and expressions, slang and idioms are used. One of the methods of studying vocabulary and grammar

Figure 1. SURE model



using song lyrics is by creating a music dictionary (see Appendix 2) in the form of a vocabulary or grammar journal. Frequently repeated words and recurring grammar points throughout song lyrics make it an effective learning tool. For students, this was a fun and interesting way of using songs as a resource for language learning. In addition, recording and reviewing new words and grammar each week allowed students to check their progress.

Use: Selective listening

Acquiring listening skills in a second language is sometimes a difficult task for students. This is mainly because students need to develop this skill over a period of time and with constant repetition and practice. This is made more difficult for students who do not do additional studies outside the classroom. According to Weaver (as cited in Morley, 2001), listening is the most important skill in language acquisition. He continues, "On average, we can expect to listen twice as much as we speak, four times more than we read and five times more than we write" (p. 70). Music provides a simple and fun way of immersing oneself in the language in order to become accustomed to the sounds of the language. Selective listening is a key strategy that helps students to get the main idea of the song from listening out for a few key words instead of trying to understand or translate each word of the song. Translation is a learning strategy that many Japanese students are familiar with and tend toward, but translating English songs usually becomes a frustrating and futile activity due to little subtleties in the language and socio-cultural references found in the foreign music.

It is important for students to practice listening to the target language as often as possible and to build up listening from short periods to longer periods of time. This will help the brain to slowly become accustomed to English sounds. With frequent practice, students will be able to start picking out key words. By answering a few generic questions as they listen (see Appendix 3), students can be trained to pick out key words. Students have reported that this listening strategy is also useful for test-taking and daily conversation, as they can guess the intended meaning from a few key words. Moreover, students can do it in short bursts and as often as they

wish, as long as they have a source of music available (iPod, MD player, CD player, etc.). Best of all, students will, after repetition, be able to understand their favorite music. Less advanced learners have found it more effective to have the song lyrics nearby for support.

Review: Fill-in-the-blanks

Review plays a critical role in language learning by helping learners understand new knowledge and making it accessible for future use. Regularly reviewing material supports memorization and helps the newly acquired knowledge to become a permanent part of the learner's knowledge base. There are many activities that can help learners to study and remember vocabulary learned from songs, the most popular being the cloze (or fill-in-the-blanks) exercise. The cloze procedure is a commonly used technique by teachers in the classroom to help learners anticipate meaning from context by looking for clues and making inferences based on prior knowledge of grammar rules. Unlike traditional cloze tests where every nth word is deleted, when using this technique with songs, the second language learner can instead focus on particular lexical or grammatical points and select specific words for omission. This makes it a very effective and suitable activity for reviewing purposes. For independent study, students can choose the words they want to delete and then create their own fill-in-the-blank exercises. Self-generated materials enable students to focus intently on the language they want to acquire, and allows them to exercise more autonomy. Fortunately, there are online cloze-making programs, which provide ready-to-print cloze activities based on the student's input (see useful websites: Appendix 6).

Evaluate: Self-Assessment

Self-directed learning requires learners to plan their learning, to find useful resources to help achieve goals, and finally to assess their learning. Self-assessment can be defined as the ability to observe, reflect on and judge one's performance on the basis of set criteria, and from that information, determine how to do better in the future. The ability to successfully evaluate one's learning is a valuable life-long learning skill that can assist learners

beyond university. Examples of reflexive questions are:

- Affective: How do you feel about your method of study?
- Cognitive: What knowledge have you gained since you began your course of study?
- Skills: Compare your skill now and when you began the course. How much has your target language skill improved?

Self-assessment activities (see Appendix 5) are challenging for self-directed learners, but it is an important strategy to learn if one is to become a successful second language learner.

Discussion

The worksheets produced were borne out of many weeks of surveying and interviewing. Student input was critical during the design phase in order for them to have more ownership and to ensure that the worksheets would more likely be used once placed in the SALC. Unfortunately for the researcher, when the song worksheets were about to go through the final testing phase, the research project had to be put on hold due to a sudden change in copyright law in Japan. Instead, classroom teachers were given the worksheets to test in class and to encourage students to find opportunities outside of class to continue using English songs as a useful resource. Follow-up research will be conducted on these classes to see how many students used the song worksheets and to get further feedback.

Conclusion

This paper has presented some practical ideas of how songs can be used as a pedagogical tool for independent study to improve language skills. Listening to music in English is a joy to many students and it can increase their motivation to study. As learners have constant and free access to music through libraries, self-access centers, mp3 players, streaming online music stations, and television, music can be promoted as a very effective learning tool for independent language learning. Further, asking students to reflect on their learning using the SURE model enabled them to make a conscious decision to use their out-of-class

time more effectively, thereby increasing chances of second language acquisition.

Tanya M. McCarthy is currently working as a learning advisor at Kanda University in Japan. Her research interests include learner autonomy, self-access, materials development and analyzing the discourse of advising.

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Appendix 1

Combined data from music survey, interviews, and self-study modules

Total Completed Surveys: 24

Please circle one:

Year: 1st 2nd 3rd 4th

1. How many hours a day do you listen to music in English?

Category	Response Count	Response Percent
Less than 1 hour a day	6	25.0%
About 1-2 hours a day	9	37.5%
About 3-4 hours a day	5	21.0%
About 4-8 hours a day	1	4.0%
More than 8 hours a day	3	12.5%

2. In what situations do you listen to music in English? You can check more than one box.

Category	Response Count	Response Percent
Commuting to school	19	79.0%
Before going to bed	12	50.0%
Doing chores	14	58.0%
Background music	11	46.0%
Classroom activity	5	21.0%
Independent language learning	11	46.0%
In between classes	3	12.5%
Exercising	6	25.0%
Getting ready in the morning	3	12.5%
Using the computer	2	8.0%
Karaoke	2	8.0%
Doing homework	1	4.0%
Relaxing	16	67.0%
Other - TV music program	1	4.0%

3. *What skill do you practice when you use songs in English for language learning? You can check more than one box.*

Category	Response Count	Response Percent
Speaking	9	37.5%
Listening	24	100.0%
Reading	15	62.5%
Writing	0	0%
Pronunciation	6	25.0%
Vocabulary	18	75.0%
Grammar	12	50.0%

4. *What kind of language learning activities have you done in the classroom with songs in English?*

Fill-in-the-blanks Discussion Rhyming words Guess the word Write a song/album review Write a biography of the artist Talk about culture

5. *What kind of language learning activities have you done for independent study with songs in English?*

Fill-in-the-blanks Vocabulary journal Grammar journal Listen music on the train and try to think of the meaning Listen song many times and try to remember Singing songs Practice connected speech, like 'gonna' 'wanna' Go to karaoke. English song is cool.. Listen music with friends Reading lyrics Watch music videos and listen Put lyrics on iPod and try to remember the words

Appendix 2

Study: Musictionary

What is a Musictionary?

A musictionary is your own personal music dictionary. You can use it to study authentic words and expressions, or you can use it to study grammar! All you have to do is choose a favorite song, read the lyrics, and write down new words or choose a grammar point to study. Have fun!

Song: Tom's Diner

Artist: Suzanne Vega

Album: Tom's Album

LYRICS	GRAMMAR – VOCABULARY
<p><u>I am sitting</u> in the morning at the diner on the corner I am waiting at the <u>counter</u> for the man to <u>pour</u> the coffee And he fills it only halfway and before I <u>even argue</u> He is looking out the window at somebody coming in</p> <p>"It is <u>always</u> nice to see you" says the man behind the counter To the woman who has come in she is <u>shaking</u> her umbrella And I look the other way as they are <u>kissing their hellos</u> And I'm <u>pretending</u> not to see them and <u>instead</u> I pour the milk</p>	<p>Present Continuous: I + am + he/she/it + is + present participle you/we/they + are + sit – sat – sat – <u>sitting</u> (present participle) counter (n): like a table on which food or drink is served. pour (v): to serve a drink from one container into another container. even (adv): used for emphasis argue (v): to express disagreement angrily (synonyms: quarrel, fight) always (adv) Rule = place adverbs after verbs but in front of adjectives / adverbs. shake (v): to move something back and forth in short quick movements. kissing their hellos: greeting used by French people to say hello or goodbye. pretend (v): to make believe; use the imagination instead (adv): as a replacement</p>

Appendix 3

Use: Selective listening

How do you listen selectively?

This means listening for specific information and trying to understand what you hear.

1. Choose a favorite song.
2. Listen as many times as you want to and then try to answer the questions below.

Title of the song: **Tom's Diner**

Name of the artist/group: **Suzanne Vega**

1. Look at the title of the song. What do you think the song is about?
2. **What** emotion is the singer feeling? What words do you hear that describe this emotion?
3. **Who** are the main characters in the song?
4. **Where** is the song taking place? (at a restaurant / in a park etc.)
5. **When** is the song taking place? (date / time / year / season etc.) How do you know?
6. **What** is happening in the song? What is the story? How much do you understand?

NOTE !!

You can do this activity at school, on the train or at home.

You can practice your speaking skill. Here is a question that you can discuss with a teacher:

- Have you had a similar experience to this song in your life? Talk about it.

You can do this activity to practice your **reading** skills.

Appendix 4

Review: Fill-in-the-blanks

What is Fill-in-the-blanks?

“Fill-in-the-blanks” is an activity that will help you to:

1. Improve your listening skills
2. Learn authentic words and expressions.
3. Guess the meaning of unknown words.
4. Review grammar and vocabulary.

Title of the song: **Tom's Diner**

Name of the artist/group: **Suzanne Vega**

Let's practice correct verb forms

STEP 1: Read through the lyrics and try to guess the words that go in the blank spaces

STEP 2: Use the Word Bank for help

STEP 3: Listen to the song and check answers

I am 1) _____ in the morning at the diner on the corner

I am 2) _____ at the counter for the man to 3) _____ the coffee

And he 4) _____ it only halfway and before I even 5) _____

He is 6) _____ out the window at somebody 7) _____ in

"It is always nice to 8) _____ you" 9) _____ the man behind the counter

To the woman who has 10) _____ in she is 11) _____ her umbrella

And I 12) _____ the other way as they are 13) _____ their hellos

And I'm 14) _____ not to 15) _____ them and instead I 16) _____ the milk

WORD BANK

sit/sitting

look/looking

look/looking

wait/waiting

come/coming

kiss/kissing

pour/pouring

see/seeing

pretend/pretending

fill/filling

say/saying

argue/arguing

shake/shaking

Appendix 5

EVALUATE: Self-Assessment

What is Self-Assessment?

Self-assessment is the ability to observe, reflect on, and judge your performance, and then think about how you can do better. This is an important skill to learn for independent study!

Answer as many of these questions as you can **after** completing the learning activity:

1. What did you hope to accomplish when you started? Did you achieve it?
2. What new skills have you learned? What old skills have you improved?
3. Were the activities useful or a waste of time? Why?
4. What are you proud of?
5. What was difficult? What was easy?

Appendix 6

Useful Websites

Song lyrics in English: www.songlyrics.com; www.lyricsfreak.com

Music videos: www.youtube.com

Free online streaming music: www.musicmesh.net; www.jango.com

Free online cloze test-maker: http://www.oup.com/elt/global/products/ef_teachertools/elem/

Gender differences in language learning strategy use

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Abstract

This study was designed to investigate the influence of gender on language learners' choice of language learning strategies. Seventy-two EFL students in Hanoi took part in the research. Participants were required to complete a set of questionnaires based on Oxford's (1990) SILL. The collected data were analyzed using one sample T-test and Spearman's rho two-tailed test. This was followed by an informal interview with a smaller group to triangulate the data collected from questionnaires and get insights into the issue. The results revealed that (1) the students were medium strategy users; compensation and metacognitive strategies were the most and memory and affective strategies were the least frequently used strategies; (2) there were no significant differences between male and female students' overall strategy use. Statistically significant differences were found in the use of affective strategies and social strategies with female students being more frequent strategy users.

Introduction

Along with the appearance of the cognitive view of learning, which regards language learning as a dynamic, creative process and the language learners as active strategy users and knowledge constructors, many researchers have shifted their focus of attention from teaching methods to learners (Chamot & O'Malley, 1990).

Since the first studies on the "good language learner" by Rubin (1975), more and more researchers have come to recognize the significance of special learner techniques or strategies in second language acquisition. Bialystok (1978) states in her study that learning strategies are "optimal means for exploiting available information to improve competence in a second language" (p. 71). Oxford (1989) considers learning strategies one of the "most important variables influencing performance in a second language" (p.238). Her research findings also recommend that "better strategies improve language performance" (Oxford, 1989, p. 238).

Of the many individual learner differences and situational and social factors that determine learners' choice of learning strategies, gender has been recognized as "a profound" choice on strategy choice (Oxford & Nyiko, 1989, p. 545). Swann also asserts that "gender differences may have implications for second language learning, teaching and assessment" (as cited in Shehadeh, 1999, p. 256).

However, the body of research on the relationship between gender differences and language learning strategies is still limited. Studies that are applicable to the Vietnamese situation are even harder to find. This research was, therefore, carried out with the hope of providing an insight into this relationship. Specifically, it aims at answering the following research questions:

- What are EFL learning strategies employed by the students?

- Is there a significant difference in the frequency of EFL learning strategies used by male and female students?

Together with answering these two research questions, we also wish to find out some implications for teachers in order to better support students of both genders in their studies.

Literature Review

Definition of language learning strategies

Looking at how learners learn the language, several attempts have been made to define the concept of language learning strategies. Weinstein and Mayer (1986) use the notion to refer to both “behaviors and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning that are intended to influence the learner’s encoding process” (p. 315), whereas for Oxford, language learning strategies are “behaviors or actions which learners use to make language learning more successful, self-directed and enjoyable” (as cited in Ellis, 1999, p. 531). As for Chamot (1987), learning strategies are techniques, approaches, or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate their learning.

In fact, it is hard to find the exact number of definitions of language learning strategies available. It is even more challenging to find one which is helpful to all research purposes. In the hope of finding a solution to this confusion, Ellis (1999) offers a new approach to defining learning strategies. He described the main characteristics of learning strategies in the following list:

1. Strategies refer to both general approaches and specific actions or techniques used to learn an L2.
2. Strategies are problem oriented - the learner deploys a strategy to overcome some particular learning problem.
3. Learners are generally aware of the strategies they use and can identify what the strategies consist of if they are asked to pay attention to what they are doing/thinking.
4. Strategies involve linguistic behavior (such as requesting the name of an object) and non-linguistic (such as pointing at an object so as to be told its name).
5. Linguistic strategies can be performed in the L1 and in the L2.
6. Some strategies are behavioural while others are mental. Thus some strategies are directly observable, while others are not.
7. Some strategies contribute indirectly to learning by providing learners with data about the L2 which they can then process, while others may contribute directly (for example, memorization strategies directed at specific lexical items or grammatical rules).
8. Strategy use varies considerably as a result of both the kind of task the learner is engaged in and individual learner preferences.

(Ellis, 1999, pp. 532-533)

This list can be considered “one of the best approaches to defining learning strategies” up to now (Ellis, 1999, p. 532). Moreover, these characteristics of learning strategies also lend themselves well in the context of our study. They have contributed considerably to forming the basis of our analysis.

Classification of learning strategies

Oxford's (1990) classification of language learning strategies

Oxford (1990) built on earlier classifications but attempted to include almost every strategy previously mentioned in the literature in her taxonomy. She sees the aim of language learning strategies as being oriented towards the development of communicative competence and divides language learning strategies into two main classes, direct and indirect, which are further subdivided into 6 groups. The strategies are organized into a hierarchical diagram (Figure 1).

In Oxford's system, cognitive strategies are the mental strategies learners use to make sense of their learning, memory strategies are those used for storage of information, and compensation strategies help learners to overcome knowledge gaps to continue the communication (Table 1). Metacognitive strategies help learners to regulate their learning. Affective strategies are concerned with the learner's emotional requirements such as

confidence, while social strategies lead to increased interaction with the target language.

It can be observed that the three taxonomies above bear some basic similarities. The difference between Oxford's (1990) taxonomy and the others lies in that she classified her heterogeneous strategies into more specific categories. In comparing Oxford's (1990) and other taxonomies, Ellis (1999) considered it "the most comprehensive

classification of learning strategies to date...the organization of specific strategies into a hierarchy of levels and the breadth of the taxonomy is impressive" (p. 539). For its comprehensiveness and for convenience in the data analysis process, this taxonomy of Oxford (1990) was chosen to be the basis of our research study.

Figure 1. Diagram of a strategy system: Overview (Oxford, 1990, p. 16)

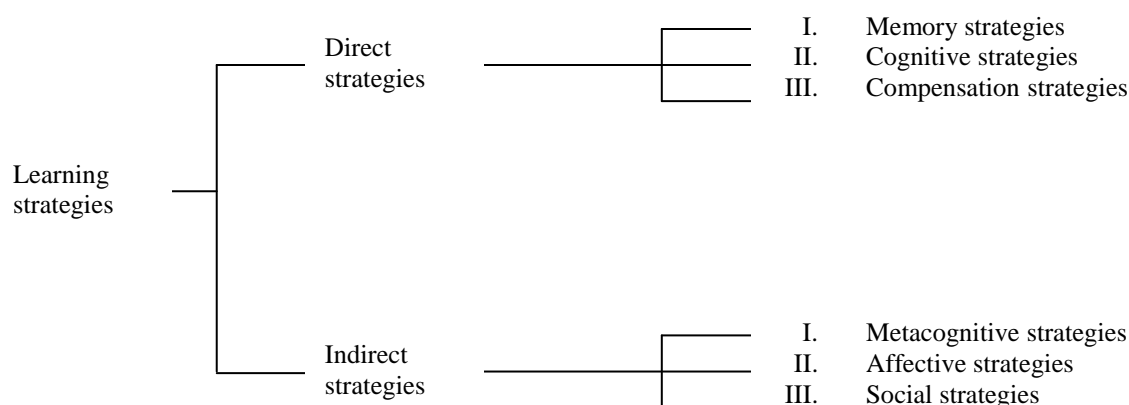


Table 1. Comparing Oxford's (1990) taxonomy and some others

Oxford (1990)	Chamot and O'Malley (1990)	Stern (1992)
Metacognitive strategies	Metacognitive strategies	Management and planning strategies
Affective strategies	Social-affective strategies	Affective strategies
Social strategies		Interpersonal strategies
Cognitive strategies	Cognitive strategies	Cognitive strategies
Memory strategies		
Compensation strategies		

Overview of gender differences in language learning strategies

Though in recent years, the study of learning strategies has seen an “explosion of activity” (Skehan, as cited in Ellis, 1999, p. 529), different studies have suggested different results.

Lan and Oxford’s (2003) study with Taiwanese children shows significant differences in strategy use between girls and boys. The differences are present in 11 out of 50 strategies, with greater strategy use by girls. Chang, Liu, and Lee’s (2007) study with 1,993 students, including freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors at Taiwanese colleges, also reveals significant differences between male and female learners in overall strategy use with male learners presented less frequently in using overall strategy than female learners. With reference to the six subcategories of language learning strategies, however, significant differences only existed in the use of cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, and social strategies.

Tercanlioglu (2004), in a quantitative data analysis of gender differences in language learning strategies used by foreign language learners at a Turkish university, however, reports significant gender differences, favoring males in student strategy use. These differences are pronounced in two scales of the inventory, namely: students’ perceived use of all their mental processes and their satisfaction in organizing and evaluating their learning of the foreign language.

In contrast to these studies showing significant gender differences, there are also studies showing a less clear distinction in strategy use between males and females (Oh, 1992; Park, 1997). Kaylani (1996) found out that girls were different from boys in terms of strategy use, but gender was not the only factor that caused the differences. Proficiency was also recognized as a contributing factor in this study.

In summary, it is still controversial as to whether the differences between male and female learners’ choice of strategies are significant and whether males or females are more frequent strategy users.

This study is, therefore, carried out with the hope of discovering how gender influences the choice of language learning strategies among a group of Vietnamese learners.

Research methodology

Participants

The research was carried out among 72 students at a public university in Hanoi, Vietnam. There were 27 males and 45 females. They were second-year students majoring in finance and banking. Their ages ranged from 19 to 21 years old. Most of them had studied English for at least five years. The researcher’s personal working experience with these participants suggested that most of them were confident, self-motivated, and lively. They had a high level of motivation for their studies in general, and studying English in particular.

The participants had to study English intensively in the first year of university, with 20 hours of classroom study per week. Of these, 8 hours were spent using the New Cutting Edge-Intermediate textbook to help them become familiar with everyday language use; 12 hours were spent on providing them with necessary skills and language knowledge to perform well on the TOEFL PBT test at the end of the first year. Besides English language lessons, these participants did not receive any other training in learning skills or strategies.

Instruments

Questionnaires: Oxford’s strategy inventory for language learning (SILL) - version 7.0

In this research, Oxford’s Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) - version 7.0 was adapted and used for the 72 participants (see Appendix 1). This taxonomy of Oxford (1990) has been widely used by ELT researchers. Its reliability is reported as high across many cultural groups (Oxford, 1996). The questionnaires consist of 50 statements designed to measure participants’ level of English learning strategy use. The items were grouped according to the six categories in Oxford’s (1990) strategy classification systems: (a) memory strategies, (b) cognitive strategies, (c) comprehension strategies, (d) metacognitive strategies, (e) affective strategies, and (f) social

strategies. Participants responded individually on a 1 to 5 scale. For each statement, they had to decide whether that statement was (1) *Never true*, (2) *Usually not true*, (3) *Somewhat true*, (4) *Usually true*, or (5) *Always true* of them. For the convenience of the respondents and the researcher's purpose of getting the most accurate information about the participants' language learning strategies, the whole questionnaire was translated into Vietnamese (see Appendix 2).

Piloting and revising the questionnaire

The questionnaire was piloted with another group of learners at the intermediate level to test whether the wording used was understandable enough to the participants. Changes were then made to the wording to make sure it would be comprehensible to the respondents.

Delivering the questionnaires

In order to avoid careless responses on the questionnaires and a low rate of questionnaire return, the researcher stayed engaged in the process of data collection. The researcher spent around 45 minutes on the set of 50 questions and went carefully from one question to another. With each question, the researcher read aloud the statement, gave participants some time to read and ask questions if they did not understand and then decide their frequency of use for each strategy. Of the 75 questionnaires distributed, 72 were returned.

Informal Interview: Interviewees

After the participants had finished with the questionnaires and their scores had been calculated and highlighted, twelve (five males and seven females) with the mean score value close to that of the average were invited to take part in the interview. However, on the interview day, only eight participants (four males and four females) attended.

The interview questions

The interview was carried out with the purpose of elaborating on participant responses in the questionnaires and probing for more details from them. Emerging themes from the questionnaires were noted down and used to form the interview

questions. The questions were divided into different sections corresponding to the different categories being focused on (see Appendices 3 and 4 for the interview questions). The researcher tried to keep to the interview questions, but at the same time be flexible in response to some unexpected but valuable responses from the participants.

Language of the interview

Participants were given the option to decide on the language to use. They all agreed to use Vietnamese in the interview.

Audio-taping the interview

For the convenience and preciseness of data analysis, the researcher asked the participants for permission to record the interview. It was also made clear to the participants that they did not have to state their names on the tape. Along with recording the interview, the researcher also took notes to keep track of the speakers and to note down further questions that arose in the interview.

Data analysis

The data collected from the questionnaires was coded and the mean scores for each question item as well as the average mean scores of the six categories of language learning strategies in the SILL were calculated. This was followed by a statistical analysis using the SPSS Windows statistical package version 16.0.

To address the first question, the researcher ran the One-sample t-test to see the frequencies, means, and standard deviations of language learning strategies used by the participants. On the 1-5 scale, the frequencies of 2.5-3.5 were considered medium in this study.

In order to answer the second question, the researcher employed the Spearman's rho two-tailed test to see whether any significant relationships existed between gender and language learning strategy use in general as well as the relationships between gender and the sub-strategies in the categories. The statistical significance of .05 was set in the current study.

With reference to the data collected from the interview, though the whole interview was audio-taped, only particularly interesting and useful responses were noted down, translated into English, and used for analysis.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Question 1: What language learning strategies were used by the students?

First of all, descriptive statistics were employed to investigate the language learning strategies that the participants reported using. The study revealed that the frequencies for most of the strategies were in the medium range of 2.5-3.5, except for that of affective strategies, which was slightly below the medium range. The mean frequency of overall strategy use was 2.78, which was also approximately at medium degree. A detailed description of the statistics for language learning strategy use is summarized in Table 2.

The participants appeared to be quite active in their learning. They did make use of compensation strategies to facilitate their learning, especially communication. They were also good at managing their study, arranging and regulating their work

(metacognitive strategies). That was understandable as they were quite dynamic and had a clear goal for their learning. Their motivation for learning in general and learning English in particular was high as well.

However, these students seemed to lack the skills to cope with stress and tension when they learnt English and were not good at motivating themselves in learning (affective strategies). Affective strategies were at the bottom of the list of mean frequency in these studies. Our interviews with students revealed that they were not aware of such affective strategies and effects of these strategies on the learning process. When they heard of these strategies, some even considered them weird: “*I see no point in writing a diary. I think it’s a girly thing*” (M1), “*I’ve never thought of writing a diary. It must be really challenging for me [laugh]*” (M4), or “*I don’t know what I should write in the diary. I’m not good at literature or writing*” (M2). What they did as part of home study was to simply try to memorize words, phrases, grammatical rules, and language expressions.

Table 2. Summary of descriptive statistics for language learning strategy use

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
A. Memory	72	2.58 (Medium use)	.50492	2
B. Cognitive	72	2.87 (Medium use)	.46744	4
C. Compensation	72	3.35 (Medium use)	.62123	6
D. Metacognitive	72	3.02 (Medium use)	.61988	5
E. Affective	72	2.24 (Medium use)	.29539	1
F. Social	72	2.61 (Medium use)	.34364	3
Overall strategy use	72	2.78 (Medium use)	.37833	

Note: Scores were rounded to 2 decimal places. 6 = most frequently used; 1 = least frequently used

Question 2: How did the male and female students differ in their use of learning strategies?

Spearman's rho two-tailed test was used to see if a relationship existed between learner gender and choice of language learning strategies (Table 3). Both the correlation coefficient ($r = .200$) and the significance of the test ($p = .092 > .05$) helped to confirm that there was no association between the

two variables. Therefore, it can be concluded that both male and female participants used language learning strategies with similar frequency.

The same test was used with the six subcategories to see if there was a relationship between gender differences and each of these subcategories in Oxford's (1990) SILL. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 3. Correlations between gender and language learning strategy use

			Gender	LLS Total Score
Spearman's rho	Gender	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.200
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.092
		N	72	72
	LLS total score	Correlation Coefficient	.200	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.092	.
		N	72	72

Table 4. Correlations between gender and subcategories of language learning strategy use

N= 72

Independent variable: Gender

Strategies	Female N= 45		Male N= 27		r	P	Comments
	M	SD	M	SD			
A. Memory	2.6051	.48705	2.5474	.54091	.060	.615	r : close to "0" $p > .05$
B. Cognitive	2.8529	.47414	2.9156	.46225	.001	.995	
C. Compensation	3.4329	.58378	3.2222	.66958	.172	.149	
D. Metacognitive	3.0491	.64011	2.9667	.59285	.075	.532	
E. Affective	2.3236	.27531	2.1059	.28152	.399	.001	$r = .399$ (moderate) $p < .05$
F. Social	2.7082	.31979	2.4559	.32879	.399	.001	

The female participants reported using language learning strategies more frequently than their male counterparts, except for cognitive strategies. However, the difference was not significant in most cases ($p > .05$). In the last two categories (affective and social strategies), the correlation coefficient reported was moderate ($r = .399$). However, it should be clarified that gender is not the only factor that determines learner choice of learning strategies. Age, language proficiency, cultural background, motivation, etc. also contribute greatly to learner choice. However, despite the modest correlation coefficient value, it is still reasonable to conclude that there is a slight relationship between gender and language learning strategy; and that female participants tend to use affective strategies and social strategies more frequently than their male friends.

These findings of gender differences were also found to be in accordance with previous studies by Ehrman and Oxford (1989) and Green and Oxford (1995). Epstein (1997) justified this by proposing that females were more emotional than males. Another possible explanation that researchers offered was the female's better social skills, stronger verbal skills, and greater conformity to academic and linguistic norms (Oxford, 1993).

The interview with eight of the participants also provided some rationalizations for male and female learner differences in choices of language learning strategies.

In using strategies to deal with affective states in learning, three out of these four boys reported that they usually *rewarded themselves for good results in their study*. This would give them some tangible goals to go for. After being rewarded, they would feel more satisfied with themselves and they would be more motivated to try harder to get better results, which would mean bigger rewards (M1, 3, 4). *Talking to and sharing with others about how they felt* when they learnt English was also rarely found among male participants. All four males in the interview said "No" to this statement. However, they all found it difficult to explain why they didn't choose this strategy.

On the side of females, these responses from F2 and F3 probably reflected the typical way that females deal with stressful situations:

When I feel stressed, not just in my study but also in my daily life, I usually need to cry and get it all out (F2).

When I am stressed, I often find someone who I can confide in. We can talk over the problem. And then once I've had a chance to talk through all the things I usually feel better (F3).

Sharing seems to be an important need for girls in helping them to overcome fears and worries. Females are also better at noticing their fears and encouraging themselves. This helps them to balance their emotions and get back to their studies more easily.

Girls in this study also considered writing down their feelings to be one of the ways to de-stress. However, nowadays, girls prefer writing weblogs to writing diaries. They were also eager to receive their friends' comments and share their experiences (F1, 3, 4).

In terms of social strategies, both male and female participants made no attempt to learn about the cultures of English speaking countries. One reason that these participants offered was that culture study was not part of their lessons. One also reasoned that he found it not really necessary, as he did not have to communicate with English speakers on a daily basis (M4). This may also explain why, when faced with English speakers, students were rather resistant to initiate a conversation.

Conclusion

Summary of the findings

Concerning learner use of language learning strategies in general, our research results revealed that the participants were medium strategy users with the average mean score of 2.78. Of the six sub-categories listed in Oxford's (1990) SILL, compensation and metacognitive were used most frequently while memory and affective strategies

were the least frequently used strategies. The range of sub-strategies used by the students was also limited.

We also surprisingly found that there were no significant differences in overall use of strategies between male and female participants. Differences were only reported in male and female use of social and affective strategies with females being the more frequent users.

Implications

From the findings above, the first implication is that strategy training would surely benefit students and help them become more efficient strategy users and independent learners. This would be realized with efforts from both educational institutions and teachers.

At the institutional level, it is suggested that teacher training be the first priority. There are several ways that teacher training or staff development can be carried out, either intensively through frequent workshops, collaborative planning, classroom observation feedback with peers over a period of one or more school years (Joyce & Showers, 1987), or through experience-sharing sessions.

Another issue that educational institutions should take into consideration is developing materials and curriculum that would enable teachers to carry out strategy training. Up to now, there have been few readily available materials to teach learning strategies in second language lessons. This has posed great difficulty to teachers in incorporating learning strategy instruction into their classes. The time allocated for each lesson and the amount of content expected to be covered in each lesson also leave teachers little time to insert strategy training sessions into the lesson sequence. Better lesson sequences and easily available training materials would better support teachers.

Teachers, within content-based lessons, can help students raise their awareness of language learning strategies and integrate strategy training into the lessons through well-organized activities.

Teachers can also help students gradually reduce anxiety by using mental techniques that make the students feel confident about doing learning tasks. Creating a positive attitude towards making errors in class is another beneficial technique that teachers can do to help their students. Diary and journal writing, and informal sharing sessions, if well-prepared and sequenced, can also be relaxing and helpful ways to help students manage learning and overcome negative affective states.

Limitations of the research and suggestions for further research

First of all, as the results of this study are based largely on responses to questionnaires and interviews, the strategies reported are those that the subjects perceived themselves as using, which may not be the same as what they actually did. While other data-elicitation methods also have limitations, the use of multiple methods (triangulation) hopefully cast more light on the issue.

Another limitation of the research was that the population of the research was rather small (72 participants). Participants were all at the intermediate level of proficiency. The research result, therefore, can hardly be generalized to a bigger population. Later studies with a bigger scope would hopefully bring about a better picture of Vietnamese learners' use of language learning strategies. It would also be interesting for later research to focus on the differences in language learning strategy choices of learners at different levels of proficiency.

In addition, the relationship between gender, language learning strategies, and language proficiency should be studied more thoroughly and systematically to provide better details of the picture. The suggestions offered would, thus, be more sensible.

Strategy training is also an interesting area for later studies. By focusing on specific categories of strategies, actually trying out different techniques with learners, and evaluating the effectiveness of each strategy, hopefully later research will come up with more specific frameworks and procedures for strategy training.

Cao Thuy Hong is currently teaching English Language Teaching Methodology at English Department, VNU, CFL. She holds an MA in TESOL from Vietnam National University, Ha Noi. Her professional interests are psycho-linguistics and Second Language Acquisition issues.

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Appendix 1

Oxford's (1990) learning strategy inventory for language learners – English version

For each of the statements below, decide whether it is true of you or not by choosing the most suitable option: *Never true of me, Usually not true of me, Somewhat true of me, Usually true of me, or Always true of me.*

To be able to answer accurately, please refer to the information below:

- *Never true of me*: also includes 'almost never true of me' - it doesn't happen very often in your learning behavior
- *Usually not true of me*: it happens occasionally in your learning behavior
- *Somewhat true of me*: it happens in a fairly regular pattern in your learning behavior
- *Usually true of me*: it happens regularly and represents an obvious pattern in your learning behavior
- *Always true of me*: also includes 'almost always true of me' - it happens almost all the time and represents a strong pattern in your learning behavior

Part A: Memory Strategies

1. I think of the relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.
2. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.
3. I connect the sound of an English word and an image or picture of the world to help me remember the word.
4. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.
5. I use rhymes to remember new English words.
6. I use flashcards to remember new English words.
7. I physically act out new English words.
8. I review English lessons often.
9. I remember the new words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.

Part B: Cognitive Strategies

1. I say or write new English words several times.
2. I try to talk like native English speakers.
3. I practice the sounds of English.
4. I use the English word I know in different ways.
5. I start conversations in English.
6. I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.
7. I read for pleasure in English.
8. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.
9. I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.
10. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.
11. I try to find patterns in English.
12. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.
13. I try not to translate word-for-word.
14. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.

Part C: Compensation Strategies

1. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.
2. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.
3. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.
4. I read English without looking up every new word.
5. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.
6. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.

Part D: Metacognitive Strategies

1. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.
2. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.
3. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.
4. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.

5. I plan my schedule so I have enough time to study English.
6. I look for people I can talk to in English.
7. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.
8. I have clear goals for improving my English skills.
9. I think about my progress in learning English.

Part E: Affective Strategies

1. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.
2. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.
3. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.
4. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying English.

5. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.
6. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.

Part F: Social Strategies

1. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.
2. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.
3. I practice my English with other students.
4. I ask for help from English speakers.
5. I ask questions in English.
6. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.

Appendix 2

Oxford's (1990) learning strategy inventory for language learners – Vietnamese version

CÂU HỎI ĐIỀU TRA CHO SINH VIÊN

SILL - Version 7.0 (ESL/EFL)

Bản câu hỏi điều tra sau đây được thiết kế dựa trên nguyên gốc của giáo sư Rebecca Oxford, trường Đại học Columbia, New York với mục đích tìm hiểu chiến lược học tập của người học.

Chúng tôi muốn tìm hiểu xem bạn **thực sự đã sử dụng những cách thức nào** sau đây trong khi học tiếng Anh (đối với tất cả các kỹ năng: nghe, nói, đọc, viết; trong mọi hoàn cảnh: ở trường, ở nhà, v.v.) và **với mức độ thường xuyên như thế nào**.

Bản câu hỏi có 6 phần (A- F). Mỗi phần sẽ bao gồm một số cách thức học tập nhất định. Với mỗi câu sẽ có 5 mức lựa chọn từ 1 đến 5 như sau:

1 = Tôi (hầu như) không bao giờ làm điều này.	0% - 20%
2 = Tôi thường không làm điều này.	20% - 40%
3 = Tôi thỉnh thoảng làm điều này.	40% - 60%
4 = Tôi thường xuyên làm điều này.	60% - 80%
5 = Tôi (hầu như) luôn luôn làm điều này.	80% - 100%

Bạn hãy cho biết bạn đã từng áp dụng những phương pháp dưới đây chưa và với mức độ thường xuyên như thế nào bằng cách đánh dấu (✓) vào cột mà bạn cho là phù hợp với bạn nhất.

PHẦN A: Bạn đã sử dụng cách thức nào sau đây để ghi nhớ kiến thức?	1	2	3	4	5
1. Tôi ghi nhớ các kiến thức mới học bằng cách liên hệ chúng với những gì tôi đã biết.					
2. Tôi học từ mới bằng cách đặt câu có sử dụng những từ đó.					
3. Tôi nhớ một từ mới bằng cách liên hệ cách phát âm của từ đó với một hình ảnh hay một khung cảnh nào đó.					
4. Tôi học một từ mới tiếng Anh bằng cách hình dung ra tình huống trong đó tôi có thể sử dụng được từ ấy.					
5. Tôi học từ mới bằng cách đặt các từ mới đó trong các câu, hay cấu trúc có vần điệu để ghi nhớ chúng.					
6. Tôi học từ mới bằng cách ghi từ vào các phiếu ghi từ/ các mẫu giấy nhỏ. (flashcard)					
7. Khi học từ mới, tôi sử dụng hành động để tái hiện lại từ mới đó.					
8. Tôi thường xuyên ôn lại các bài học để ghi nhớ.					
9. Tôi nhớ từ hay cụm từ bằng cách ghi nhớ vị trí của từ/ cụm từ đó trên trang giấy, trên bảng hay trên các biển hiệu trên đường.					

PHẦN B: Trong khi học tiếng Anh bạn thường thực hành sử dụng tiếng Anh như thế nào, bạn làm thế nào để hiểu các văn bản tiếng Anh.	1	2	3	4	5
1. Tôi nói/viết các từ mới nhiều lần để thực hành sử dụng chúng.					
2. Tôi cố gắng tập để có thể nói tiếng Anh như người bản ngữ.					
3. Tôi thực hành phát âm tiếng Anh.					
4. Tôi sử dụng các từ tiếng Anh mà tôi biết theo nhiều cách khác nhau.					
5. Tôi là người khởi xướng các cuộc hội thoại sử dụng tiếng Anh.					
6. Tôi xem các chương trình tiếng Anh trên TV hoặc đi xem phim Tiếng Anh.					
7. Tôi đọc sách báo, truyện để giải trí bằng tiếng Anh.					
8. Tôi viết ghi chú, tin nhắn, thư từ, báo cáo bằng tiếng Anh.					
9. Khi đọc một đoạn văn bản, tôi đọc qua một lượt trước sau đó quay lại đọc cẩn thận.					
10. Với mỗi từ mới trong tiếng Anh, tôi cố gắng tìm từ tiếng Việt tương ứng.					
11. Tôi cố gắng để ý tìm ra các đặc trưng, các quy luật (patterns) trong tiếng Anh.					
12. Tôi đoán nghĩa của một từ tiếng Anh bằng cách phân chia từ đó thành những thành tố mà tôi đã biết hoặc có thể đoán được nghĩa.					
13. Tôi cố gắng tránh không dịch theo kiểu từng từ một (word for word)					
14. Tôi tóm tắt các thông tin mà tôi nghe hay đọc được lại bằng tiếng Anh.					

PHẦN C: Gặp khó khăn trong khi sử dụng tiếng Anh (không biết, không nhớ từ mới, không tìm được cách diễn đạt), bạn làm thế nào?	1	2	3	4	5
1. Khi gặp từ mới, tôi đoán nghĩa của từ.					
2. Nếu tôi không nhớ được từ tiếng Anh cần dùng trong khi nói chuyện, tôi sử dụng cử chỉ để diễn đạt.					
3. Nếu tôi không biết một từ chính xác trong tiếng Anh là gì, tôi tự nghĩ ra một từ khác để thay thế.					
4. Khi đọc bằng tiếng Anh, tôi thấy không cần thiết phải tra tất cả các từ mới.					
5. Khi nghe người khác nói, tôi cố gắng đoán xem người đó định nói gì tiếp theo.					
6. Nếu tôi không nhớ ra một từ tiếng Anh, tôi sử dụng một từ hoặc một cụm từ có nghĩa tương tự để thay thế.					

PHẦN D: Bạn kiểm soát quá trình học tập (lên kế hoạch và tìm các cơ hội để nâng cao kiến thức) như thế nào?	1	2	3	4	5
1. Tôi cố gắng tận dụng các cơ hội có thể để sử dụng tiếng Anh.					
2. Tôi chú ý các lỗi mà tôi mắc phải trong khi sử dụng tiếng Anh và cố gắng tự nâng cao khả năng tiếng Anh của mình.					
3. Khi người khác nói tiếng Anh, tôi chú ý lắng nghe.					
4. Tôi cố gắng tìm ra cách học tiếng Anh hiệu quả hơn.					
5. Tôi sắp xếp thời gian của mình để có thời gian học tiếng Anh.					
6. Tôi tìm cơ hội để nói chuyện bằng tiếng Anh.					
7. Tôi tìm cơ hội để đọc tiếng Anh càng nhiều càng tốt.					
8. Tôi có các mục tiêu rõ ràng để nâng cao các kỹ năng tiếng Anh của mình.					
9. Tôi theo dõi sự tiến bộ trong quá trình học tiếng Anh của mình.					

PHẦN E: Khi bạn căng thẳng, mệt mỏi hay không tự tin khi phải sử dụng tiếng Anh bạn đã làm gì?	1	2	3	4	5
1. Tôi cố gắng thư giãn khi tôi thấy sợ phải sử dụng tiếng Anh.					
2. Tôi cố gắng khích lệ bản thân sử dụng tiếng Anh ngay cả khi tôi thấy sợ mắc lỗi.					
3. Tôi tự thưởng cho mình khi tôi đạt kết quả tốt trong việc học tiếng Anh.					
4. Tôi để ý xem tôi có cảm thấy căng thẳng hay sợ hãi khi đang học tiếng Anh không?					
5. Tôi ghi lại những cảm xúc của mình vào một cuốn nhật kí học tập.					
6. Tôi chia sẻ với người khác về việc tôi cảm thấy thế nào khi học tiếng Anh.					

PHẦN F: Bạn sử dụng tiếng Anh trong giao tiếp như thế nào?	1	2	3	4	5
1. Nếu tôi không hiểu một điều gì đó bằng tiếng Anh, tôi yêu cầu người khác nói chậm lại hoặc nhắc lại điều đó.					
2. Khi nói chuyện với người khác bằng tiếng Anh, tôi đề nghị những người đó chữa lỗi cho tôi khi tôi nói.					
3. Tôi nói chuyện bằng tiếng Anh với các sinh viên khác trong lớp.					
4. Tôi nhờ những người nói tiếng Anh giúp đỡ tôi với việc học tiếng Anh					
5. Tôi đặt câu hỏi bằng tiếng Anh					
6. Tôi cố gắng tìm hiểu về văn hoá của những người nói tiếng Anh.					

Cuối cùng xin bạn cho biết thông tin về giới tính của mình bằng cách đánh dấu (✓) vào ô tương ứng:

1. Nam

☐

2. Nữ

☐

Xin chân thành cảm ơn bạn đã hoàn thành bản câu hỏi điều tra!

Appendix 3

Questions for the informal interview - English version

Memory Strategies

1. Do you often have to memorize information when studying English?
2. If you do have to memorize information, what kind of information do you often have to memorize? (Vocabulary, structures, details, etc.)
3. What do you often do in order to memorize information? Which of those ways do you find most effective?
4. Have you ever had difficulty in trying to memorize information?
5. Are any of the memory strategies in the questionnaires new to you?
6. Are you going to employ the new strategy(ies) in your studies?

Affective Strategies

1. Do you often notice that you are anxious while studying English?
2. Do you think that anxiety may affect your study?
3. What do you usually do when you are stressed?

4. Do you often reward yourself for good results in your studies? If the answer is yes, how do you usually reward yourself?
5. How do you feel after rewarding yourself?
6. Have you ever noted down your feelings in a diary?
If yes, how do you feel after writing the diary?
If no, why don't you write a diary? What do you often do to relieve stress?

Social Strategies

1. Do you usually use English to communicate with other friends in your classes?
2. Do you often use English with your friends outside class?
3. Do you often comment on or correct each other's mistakes during the lesson? Do you like that? Why? How do you feel when your friends correct you during the lesson?
4. While talking to friends, teachers, or foreigners, do you often ask them to slow down, repeat what they have said, or correct your mistakes? Why?
5. Do you often attempt to find out more about the culture of English-speaking countries? Is that kind of knowledge useful to you?

6. When you meet foreign teachers or friends, do you often initiate conversation or not? Why?

Appendix 4

Questions for the informal interview – Vietnamese version

Memory Strategies

1. Khi học tiếng Anh các em có thường xuyên phải ghi nhớ thông tin không?
2. Nếu có thì thông thường các em phải ghi nhớ những thông tin gì? (từ vựng, cấu trúc, thông tin chi tiết, v.v.)
3. Các em thường ghi nhớ thông tin bằng cách nào? Em thấy cách ghi nhớ nào hiệu quả nhất với em?
4. Có khi nào em thấy mình gặp khó khăn trong việc cố gắng ghi nhớ một thông tin nào đó?
5. Có cách ghi nhớ nào trong bản câu hỏi điều tra mà em chưa từng được biết không?
6. Em nghĩ là em sẽ sử dụng những cách thức ghi nhớ mới đó chứ?

Affective Strategies

1. Em có để ý mình bị căng thẳng trong khi học tiếng Anh không?
2. Em có nghĩ sự căng thẳng ấy có ảnh hưởng đến việc học tiếng Anh của em không?
3. Em thường làm gì những lúc thấy căng thẳng?
4. Có nhiều bạn thường tự thưởng cho mình khi đạt kết quả tốt trong việc học tiếng Anh.

- Em có bao giờ tự thưởng cho mình không?
Nếu có em thường tự thưởng như thế nào?
5. Sau khi tự thưởng cho mình thì em cảm thấy thế nào?
 6. Em đã bao giờ ghi lại cảm xúc của mình vào một cuốn nhật ký không?
Nếu có: em cảm thấy thế nào sau khi viết nhật ký?
Nếu không: tại sao em lại không viết? Em thường giải tỏa những bức xúc, căng thẳng của mình bằng cách nào?

Social Strategies

1. Trong lớp học em có thường xuyên sử dụng tiếng Anh để giao tiếp với các bạn khác không?
2. Ngoài lớp học em có luyện tập, trao đổi với các bạn khác bằng tiếng Anh không?
3. Các em có hay góp ý, chữa lỗi cho nhau trong giờ học không? Em có thích việc đó không? Tại sao? Em cảm thấy thế nào nếu bạn chữa lỗi cho mình trong khi nói?
4. Trong khi nói với bạn bè, thầy cô, hoặc người nước ngoài em có yêu cầu người đó nói chậm, nhắc lại hay chữa lỗi cho mình không? Tại sao?
5. Em có tìm hiểu để biết thêm về văn hoá của người dân các nước nói tiếng Anh không? Theo em những kiến thức văn hoá ấy có cần thiết hay không?
6. Khi gặp các giáo viên hoặc bạn người nước ngoài, em có thường chủ động bắt chuyện không? Tại sao?

Can CLT be successful without a match between teaching and testing practices?

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Abstract

In the context of EFL teaching, testing can have serious backwash (or washback) effects on teaching practices (McNamara, 2000). This paper reports the findings of a study on these effects. Using the triangulation technique from social science research, the study reviewed the teaching and testing practices in 2005 at the best Lower Secondary School (LSS) in Khanh Hoa, a province in central Vietnam. Findings indicated that language-based term papers had distorted the teaching practice at the school, generating grammar-based or test-oriented extra-curricular classes. Unsurprisingly, students' performance of both oral and written English, as tested by the researcher's communicative test, was extremely limited. The study, therefore, made practical suggestions to all the stakeholders of provincial education, from the teaching staff to the local Department of Education and Training (DOET) and the local Teacher Training College, for a reform in language testing practices.

Introduction

Since 1995, the English language curriculum in Lower Secondary Schools (LSS, graded 6 to 9 in a system of 12 grades) in Vietnam has undergone a process of change and reform. This process has involved the promotion of a new teaching methodology and the recent development of a new curriculum with new course books: English 6 since 2002, English 7 since 2003, English 8 since 2004, and English 9 since 2005. The overall approach in the course books is eclectic. As claimed by the authors, though, there is a move towards a more communicative approach, which is exemplified by, for example, the use of pair work and group work, the emphasis on language skills, and the view of grammar and vocabulary as means of communication and information exchange, not as the objectives of the teaching-learning process (Loi, Dung and Nhan, 2002, pp. 8, 11). All these strides have been made to motivate the students to competently use the target language.

It is hoped that this reform in teaching has been well-backed by the way student progress and

achievement are tested, i.e. competence in using English must be the supreme goal of any test, whether formal or informal. No longer can there be tests that only attempt to measure the students' linguistic knowledge. For one reason, it is unfair to the students to teach them one thing and then measure their ability at another. More importantly, it is essential for the success of the new teaching methodology that test content and testing techniques be fully congruous with the aims and objectives of the new curriculum. Studies have shown that testing always has some washback effect (or 'backwash' as defined by Hughes, 1989) on teaching and learning. When well-matched tests are given, learning can be enhanced by the learners' awareness of the course objectives and the areas of emphasis in the course. Such tests can also help teachers to see how effective the process of teaching and learning is.

This congruence is especially crucial when we consider the setting of English language learning in Vietnamese LSSs, where informal and formal tests in class put great pressure on both the student and the teacher, for test results provide the stakeholders

with the only information about the students' competence and the teachers' professional skills. In such a situation, success in tests is the supreme aim of every student and teacher. Therefore, if the tests continuously fail to measure what the students have been asked to learn, all the teaching and learning efforts that precede the tests become meaningless. As a result, the course objectives as quoted in the course books will soon be abandoned to give way to test content. That is why Weir (1993, p. 5) insists that language testing in the classroom cannot be divorced from the course syllabus and the course objectives. Testing, which can even play the role of a navigator for the teachers and the learners, is really an important part of every teaching and learning experience.

Important as it is defined, testing in LSSs in Khanh Hoa is still now a low-ranking matter, even in the view of the authorities. To our knowledge, although the Department of Education and Training (DOET) has held a training course in testing for LSS teachers during the teaching renovation, they have failed to find ways to check if the teachers can put the theory into practice. No specialists have been asked to look into this aspect of teaching. In addition, since the promotion of the new course books, the annual teaching contests in the province have honored numerous demonstration classes for good teaching with emphasis on teaching techniques such as how to present new language items, how to manage pair work and group work, or how to exploit visual aids to boost teaching and learning, but never on testing techniques or test designing. Even worse, the effectiveness of the lessons in the teaching contests has always been evaluated by student performance on mini tests designed by the judges themselves, not by the teachers. Taken seriously, this can be understood to imply that it is not the LSS teachers' duty to develop tests that can reflect the degree of effectiveness in their lessons; it is the duty of experts outside the class. In a more friendly interpretation, the teachers can learn a message: as long as other teaching techniques have not been mastered, it is not time for us to think too much about testing techniques. Both of these views, though, may lead to neglect in test development.

The natural questions for every professional in this situation are: Has there been neglect? Or to put it differently, how is testing in the province characterized? How communicative, valid, reliable, and appropriate are the tests administered to students? In particular, is the assessment system related directly to the aims and objectives of the course? To what extent have the tests administered reflected student achievement in the course objectives?

Reliable answers to these questions are clearly of great importance and general interest to every stakeholder in the situation: the DOET, the teaching staffs of LSSs, and the students' parents. In addition, such a study of the problem has implications for two other forces. One is the syllabus designers. The study can grant them a chance to look back into their course books from another perspective to see how much the course content is consistent with the course objectives. This is possible because test writers are asked by course designers to 'base achievement tests *directly on the course* content without skipping the course objectives and course level at the time of testing' (Loi et al., 2002, p. 13). Therefore, if the test content is inconsistent with the course objectives, or if the course objectives are unrealistic, the tests will reveal a failure to achieve the objectives. The last, but not the least beneficiaries are the teacher trainers at Nha Trang Teacher Training College. They can use the study results as valuable empirical facts to tailor their pre-service training courses, especially the testing course, for greater practicality. With such an adaptation, not only can they fill the gap between the theory learnt at college and the real tasks to be practiced at LSSs, but they can also make a great contribution to the province's renovation of English language teaching by producing new generations of teachers with better qualifications in testing.

Aims and design of the research

As an initial attempt to investigate the reality of English language testing in the province, the study in this article was carried out to examine the testing of English 6 at Thai Nguyen LSS, the best LSS in Khanh Hoa and where teacher trainees are often

sent for their practicum, to see how congruent it is with the course objectives.

The aim of the research was to seek empirical evidence to support the researcher's presuppositions on the nature of English language testing at Grade 6 of Thai Nguyen LSS, i.e.:

1. traditional testing practice is still dominant due to the authorities' neglect of the testing aspect in the course of the teaching renovation;
2. there is a mismatch between test focus and the course objectives because traditional language testing emphasizes the importance of linguistic knowledge, not communication skills;
3. traditional language testing may have distorted communicative language teaching; and
4. Grade 6 students at this school lack English communication skills.

The nature of the research made it necessary to use a flexible *multimethod* design, or *triangulation* as proposed by Denzin (1978), so that the research issues could be considered from different perspectives since, as was assumed by Jick (1979, p. 604), "[t]he effectiveness of triangulation rests on the premise that the weaknesses in each single method will be compensated by the counterbalancing strengths of another." That was why both qualitative and quantitative instruments such as questionnaires, documentation, observation, diagnostic tests, and statistics were used to collect data. Data were collected from four sources:

1. the guiding documents from the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and DOET on the course orientation and objectives, particularly on testing;
2. the teaching staff, including their demographic data (i.e., gender, age, training institutions, teaching experience), their opinions of the new teaching syllabus, their perceptions of language teaching and testing, and their implementation of the perceptions (i.e., their real lessons);
3. the content characteristics of the progress and final achievement tests administered

during the first semester of the academic year 2004-2005; and

4. samples of students' performance on a communicative test designed by the researcher.

The subjects of the study were 11 teachers of English at Thai Nguyen School, including the three who were in charge of Grade 6 at the time and 60 students randomly taken from the twelve Grade 6 classes

Instruments administration

Examination of the documents for the course objectives and teaching-testing orientations initiated the study. After that, the administration of the questionnaires, the class observation sheets and the communicative tests were carried out in the following steps.

Step one

A four-part questionnaire was given out to each of the teaching staff. Parts One and Two requested the subjects to provide background information about their age, gender, qualifications, in-service training, and teaching experience. This information was needed to investigate the possible sources of bias in their teaching-testing practices. Part Three consisted of three questions about the teachers' evaluation of their own teaching practices and of the new teaching program. The nine questions in Part Four focused on the testing aspect of teaching, with questions about the teachers' perceptions of communicative testing, as well as their description and self-evaluation of their testing practices. Most of the questions in Parts Three and Four were in multiple-choice format and based on the teaching-testing principles of both the Communicative and traditional approaches so that the teachers' responses could reveal their perceptions and beliefs of the new teaching-testing approach. Finally, in order to limit the issue of bias associated with questionnaires with given responses (i.e., the subjects having no other options other than the ones provided), space was provided for each questionnaire item so that the subjects could give a different response from the ones included in the questionnaires if they so wished.

Step two

After the teacher questionnaires were administered, the classes of the three randomly-chosen Grade 6 teachers were observed during the practicum of the student teachers from Nha Trang Teacher Training College. To ensure reliability, an observation sheet was specifically tailored to make explicit the observation foci and evaluation criteria. The sheet was divided into two parts: the description and the evaluation. Information about the classroom activities in the description section was needed to crosscheck the evaluation in part 2. The evaluation consisted of two sub-sections: (1) judgment of the teacher's teaching techniques and class management, and (2) judgment of the teacher's testing and evaluating techniques. The content of each observation item in the two sub-sections corresponded with the questionnaire items previously answered by the teachers. This correspondence between the questionnaires and observation sheets allowed a comparison between the teachers' perceptions and their actual practice of communicative teaching and testing principles.

Step three

The following was carried out in parallel with the class observations. All the current test papers were collected for analysis of content validity using Bachman's CLA (Communicative Language Ability) and TMF (Test Method Facets) frameworks (Bachman, 1990). The two frameworks were used as the basis to examine:

1. test content/focus: the language competence tapped;
2. test methods (also called "test formats" in Weir [1993, p. 46]; or "test types" in Bachman & Palmer [1996, p. 45]): the variety of task types used to measure the test taker's language ability; and
3. the weighting of the test components in the teacher's scoring.

The sources of information above helped to identify the characteristics of the tests and thus, the testing approach the school teachers were following.

Step four

The final instrument used in the study was a communicative test designed by the researcher to

measure the students' achievement in terms of language and skills learnt after finishing Grade 6 at school. The focus was on testing the four skills, which thus helped the researcher to test her hypothesis on the students' communicative competence. The test materials were compiled from the 16 units in the new *Tieng Anh* (English) 6. It was a test of two modules: first, a written test weighting for 80% of the total score, which tested grammar, vocabulary, listening, reading, and writing; second, an oral test weighting for 20% of the total score, which tested the students' speaking skills. The purpose of the test was to seek information about the students' communication skills. The test was administered in the same school year to sixty students randomly chosen from the current twelve classes.

The thorough consideration given to the situation, from course objectives to teacher perception and testing practice, combined with the careful allocation of the instruments as discussed, ensured the validity and reliability of the research.

Summary of findings from each research method

Findings from documents on the new orientation of English language teaching

In reference to different kinds of guiding documents by course book writers, the MOET, and the Khanh Hoa DOET, the researcher was able to see a strong determination towards Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Teachers were asked to follow the CLT teaching principles to train students in communication skills. The objectives of every lesson must, therefore, focus on how to improve students' communication skills. As for testing principles, the English Course Specifications (Ministry of Education and Training [MOET], 2000, p. 7) emphasize that:

1. students' *communication skills* (both receptive and productive) must be the only criteria for assessment;
2. *test content must match the course objectives and course level*;
3. communication skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with the first three

taking priority) ought to be *measured through communicative activities*.

Language elements should be measured through skills performance; and

4. *various modes of assessment* should be applied - progress tests, summative tests, and student self-assessment.

In brief, contemporary language teaching must be skills-based, not language-based.

Findings from teacher responses to the questionnaire items

The results from the questionnaire on the teachers' opinions of their own teaching-testing practice showed that 87.5% believed they were following CLT to a high extent, which was demonstrated by student-centredness and communicative, skills-based classroom activities. Their testing practice was also self-assessed as meeting the requirements of good testing, with tests that reflected the course content, course focus, and course objectives, as well as tests that could pinpoint the students' strengths and weaknesses for the teacher's adjustment of future lesson plans. In fact, the teachers' responses to the questionnaire proved that they had a strong belief in the CLT approach and that their perception of the CLT's principles towards teaching and testing was quite good. It was possible to suppose that things were working smoothly and correctly with the school's Grade 6 English language teaching and testing.

Findings from class observation

The teachers' actual teaching and testing practices were not as good as they had claimed in the questionnaires. No real communication could be found in the classes; the focus was on linguistic knowledge:

- The listening, reading, and writing activities failed to allow for language use; only the forms and sometimes the meaning of the language were exploited through recognition and substitution exercises.
- All grammatical mistakes were corrected promptly. Meanwhile, no attempt was made to test the truthfulness of the students' messages or to see if the students could really convey the meaning they wanted to

share with the class. Neither were the students' pronunciation mistakes corrected.

- The teachers had no skill in testing the students' speaking ability. Quite probably they thought that speaking skills could always be assessed if the students were asked to work orally on dialogues. The typical test type they chose was dialogues with gap-fill items. Unfortunately, each gap could only be filled with one functional word or one noun, one verb, etc. There was no doubt that they were just testing the students' grammar and vocabulary, not the students' speaking performance. Such speaking skills like turn taking, attitude showing through facial expressions and intonation, conversation initiation, etc., were neglected.

Findings from the analysis of the school's test papers

Statistics from Figure 1 clearly show an imbalance between skills and language tested. In all the tests, the focus was on language elements, with vocabulary (vocab.) and language structures taking the priority. More seriously, the good intentions of the tests were sometimes completely destroyed by the way the teachers marked the test. In sections that were supposed to test students' skills, grammatical mistakes could eliminate every of the students' efforts to communicate. This way of marking was obviously anti-communicative, and thus ruined the test objectives. The situation was no better for the most important test paper – the term-ending test. Of the test items, 72.5% were designed to test students' grammar and vocabulary; the 27.5% left was divided unequally between reading (20%) and writing (7.5%). Neither speaking nor listening skills were tested, even indirectly. It is necessary to emphasize that a test so unsuited to the communicative approach is unacceptable. For one reason, the test was designed by the provincial education administrators to apply to all LSSs in the province. It would be thus regarded by school teachers as an implicit guideline by the provincial authorities on teaching, as well as testing focus. Whether the teachers liked it or not, they would

Figure 1. Weighting distribution of skills and language elements

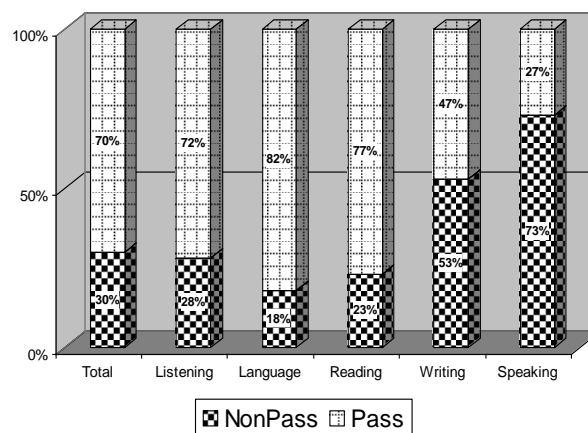
Test paper	Weighting distribution of skills in percentage				Weighting distribution of language in percentage			Proportion of skills to language
	S	L	R	W	Structure	Vocab	Function	
15-minute test 1	0	0	0	0	0	95	5	0:100
15-minute test 2	0	0	0	10	5	25	60	10:90
45-minute test	0	10	15	15	20	25	15	40:60
1 st - term test	0	0	20	7.5	22.5	40	10	27.5: 72.5

adjust their teaching and testing to match the test content and test focus so that their students would be able to get as high a result as possible. Anyway, this high stakes test has been the greatest motivation for both the teachers and the students. On the other hand, students whose teachers insisted on teaching and testing in the communicative approach with a focus on skills development would likely suffer when facing such a language-based test. In both cases, the consequence would be negative and badly affect the success of the teaching renovation. If this happens, the Khanh Hoa DOET must be the first unit to take responsibility.

In short, after observing classes and analyzing test papers in circulation at the school, the researcher came to the final conclusion that although the school had managed to follow CLT, there had been very little, if any, communicative testing practice at the school. In other words, there was a mismatch between the course objectives and those of the tests. The main focus of all the tests was on grammar and vocabulary. Listening, reading and writing skills were only tested to a limited extent while speaking skills were completely ignored. This testing focus had, as a result, placed negative washback effects on the teaching practice, distorting the teaching and making it bear a form of CLT with the nature of the traditional language-based teaching approach. It is thus quite reasonable to doubt the quality of the products generated from this teaching: they must be students with good knowledge about the English language but very limited communication skills.

Findings from the students' performance on the communicative test

The sample's performance on the communicative test was generally satisfactory with 62% of the subject scores above average (Figure 2). However, statistics on section scores proved that most students passed the test thanks to their good performance on the language, listening and reading sections (with 82%, 72% and 77% respectively). On the other hand, the majority failed in writing and speaking. Only 47% passed in writing and 27% failed in speaking. It was quite obvious that the students could perform well on what they had been well trained in and frequently tested on by their teachers before.

Figure 2. Sample section scores on a pass-nonpass basis

In a further analysis of the sample's language competence, it was found that their knowledge in language functions was not very good. They just reached a fair level in this aspect of the language. Still, this meant they had some speaking competence. Theoretically, a person with good receptive skills and good linguistic knowledge can

be expected to perform quite well on productive skills. However, there was evidence that the students were rather bad at writing and very bad at speaking. In the writing section, most of them were able to write grammatically correct and meaningful sentences, but failed to communicate the necessary information for the writing task. The communication purpose was thus unfulfilled, leaving little hope about the students' ability to communicate in real life. From the poor performance of the students on the communicative tasks, it can be concluded that the course objectives had not been fulfilled.

Towards a conclusion

The evidence from all the sources above has provided the researcher with adequate grounds for characterizing the reality of English teaching renovation at Thai Nguyen LSS.

- The school was making an effort to renovate its teaching of English;
- The course books lack essential sections for communicative teaching, i.e. phonetic, sociolinguistic, and discourse aspects;
- The school's testing practices were still traditional, with emphasis on language and competence rather than skills and performance;
- The traditional testing focus left a negative washback on the school's teaching, causing the latter to be language-based and test-oriented, not in the communicative approach as it should be;
- The students lacked communicative language ability as a result.

Limitations of the study

The results of the study cannot be validly interpreted without a clear understanding of its limitations. On one hand, the number of classes observed was limited. Although all the teachers were observed, they had no chance to teach different kinds of lessons. Conclusions about their teaching and informal testing would, therefore, be restricted. The conclusions also cannot be generalized to every member of the teaching staff. Another limitation is in the administration of the communicative test by the researcher. Due to the

position of the researcher at the school and to limited time, only one test could be administered on one sample group. If the test had been re-administered on another sample or if the same sample had been tested twice, there would have been more convincing evidence of the students' communicative language ability.

Suggestions and recommendations

In spite of the limitations discussed above, the study has uncovered a number of findings that have important implications for the renovation of English language teaching in general and for renovation in the field of English language testing in particular. The findings in this study have pinpointed the weaknesses of language testing at the school investigated. They have also highlighted the importance of testing in the teaching-learning process through the analysis of the washback effects that traditional testing practice has left on the teacher's teaching and the student's learning. It is recognized that testing today should no longer be intuitive, or subjective, or dependent on the personal impressions of the teachers. We are now in a communicative stage, a time when we emphasize evaluation of language use rather than language form. According to Madsen (1986), the best exams today are those that combine various subskills as we do when exchanging ideas orally or in writing. In particular, communicative tests need to measure how well a person can function in his second language. Therefore, it is now high time language testing is changed towards a more communicative approach. The knowledge tests must be replaced by the performance tests, which show how well a student can use the language.

Thus, to answer the question of upgrading language testing at a particular school or region, as was the case in this research, all the related stakeholders have to be involved.

- First, the province should have more studies done on the testing aspect of their schools to get a general view of the testing reality, because it is clear that when one of the best schools in a province fails to assess their students in the right way, the condition may worsen in other schools, where less attention is received from the authorities.

From the result of the surveys, proper decisions should be made to sustain the province's teaching renovation.

- Second, while waiting for the results of more studies, if any, the provincial education authority needs to look seriously into their present administration. More care and attention should be paid to the design of term-ending tests so that they can be good samples of communicative language tests. The present problem with the provincial education authority is that although they are supposed to do administrative work, they are involving themselves too much in the professional work of teachers. They *should not* write the term-ending tests themselves. Admittedly, the provincial English language specialist in the research has high qualifications in language teaching and testing, but no one can deny the fact that he is not teaching any classes. Moreover, the heavy workload of designing term-ending tests for different grades (from Grade 6 to Grade 12) of different programs can confuse even the best qualified specialist. Tests designed by an inexperienced and over-loaded specialist cannot be as good as those designed by experienced and qualified practitioners. One solution for the problem is to establish an examination board with members including the provincial education specialist, the best practitioners from LSSs, and the language testing specialists from Teacher Training units. The examination board would have two functions: first, to make specifications for all the formative and summative tests for every grade, taking into account the testing of the currently abandoned language skills, especially speaking and listening; and second, to design term-ending tests or revise them if they are to be assigned straight to the schools. The provincial authority just has the duty to administer the exams. It is our strong belief that the establishment of such an examination board together with a proper decentralized administration can improve the situation of provincial English language testing.
- Third, although formal oral tests are impossible in teaching-learning contexts of large classes, oral tests can be flexibly inserted into the syllabus in the form of the informal oral tests that can take place at the beginning or during the communicative practice stage of the class time. Time can be saved and efficiency increased if pairs or groups of students are asked to make conversations based on the requirements each individual gets from their situation card. The marks each student gets from these oral tests should then be weighted for 20% of their final grade. This way of oral testing has, in fact, been applied at Nha Trang Teacher Training College, and a number of advantages have been recorded. For one thing, it raises the student's awareness of the phonetic and phonological aspects of the language. The students can be trained for better pronunciation, intonation, stress, etc. In addition, they can recognize the different techniques contributing to the success of a communication event, namely, how to initiate a conversation, how to take turns, how to interrupt, how to fill the gaps, and so on. Last but not least, by assigning pair work and group work, the teacher can boost student cooperation, of which most Asian students lack.
- Fourth, teaching contests should shift their focus to the testing aspect of language teaching. For example, next year's contest can focus on informal assessment with teacher performance on questioning techniques or error correction skills. In two years, there should be a contest on test paper or oral test design, and so on. It is believed that a change in the focus of these contests will renew the state of language teaching in general and language testing in particular.
- Fifth, for the success of both the teaching contests and the schools' everyday teaching, in-service training programs need to be modified. More efforts should be made to improve the quality of the training program so that school teachers can

understand the nature and the rationale behind classroom activities and test item types, instead of having surface knowledge about various kinds of activities that can appear in a CLT class and about the form of a good communicative test. In other words, the teachers should have access to more practice and feedback on the meaning of the classroom activities and the test item types, not just their forms. An improvement in the in-service training programs will help enhance teacher perception of and belief in CLT.

- Sixth, teacher training colleges should make greater contribution to the renovation. Pre-service methodology courses should include more thorough analyses and feedback on real English classes and tests at schools. The objectives should be for the student teachers to recognize real mistakes they may make in their teaching and not just learn CLT theory. With such recognition, they are likely to work more efficiently in their practice and in their future teaching careers.
- Finally, course book writers should also revise their workbooks and teacher's books to include more skill-developing exercises, especially those that can help develop speaking performance.

An improvement in language testing can generate a comprehensive reform in the Vietnamese teaching reality and help to solve the problem of excessive extra-curricular classes. Therefore, it is hoped that this study and these recommendations in particular can have significant implications for the teaching and testing renovation in Vietnam as well as other countries with similar teaching contexts.

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Task-based language assessment: Developing an integrative task (IT) model with Iranian EFL learners

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Abstract

A recent move towards tasks in language performance assessment might be extremely rewarding, but in practice, the assessment models have not interfaced easily with enough power to predict language learner performance on real-world tasks such as oral and written skills or problem solving activities. An Integrative Task (IT) model, therefore, was developed as an attempt to grade language tasks and to predict EFL learner performance on tasks at a similar level of difficulty. In the IT model, two psychometric and information-processing theories contributed as two-factor constructs underlying 48 integrative tasks: first, the core operations identified in the eight categories of Multiple Intelligences Theory (Gardner, 1983), and second, the behavioral objectives elaborated in the six hierarchical levels of the cognitive domain identified in the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Bloom, 1956). In this paper, the validity of predictions made on Iranian EFL learner performance is discussed in terms of exploratory factor analysis and two-factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) as current measures of construct validity.

Introduction

As language instruction increasingly focuses on educational outcomes, likewise does language assessment on evaluating what learners can do with language. Similarly, language testing research has recently turned its attention to the development of various approaches to second language performance assessment (Brown, Hudson, Norris, & Bonk, 2002; Harley, 1998; Skehan, 2002).

Fundamental to second or foreign language performance assessment is the direct observation and evaluation of learners using the target language when engaged in extended acts of communication. In general, as outlined by Broadly (1996), two primary interpretative purposes motivate performance assessment within most language classrooms and programs: first, to establish whether or not learners can accomplish specific target tasks

that are directly related to learner, curricular, or professional objectives, and second, to evaluate various qualities of learner language ability, including specific criteria such as accuracy, fluency, and complexity of second language production, as well as such holistic criteria as general proficiency and communicative competence (Skehan, 2002).

Nowadays, some educator attention has turned to task-based approaches to language performance assessment which provide new types of information about learner abilities to use a second or foreign language (Brown et al., 2002; Robinson, 2002; Skehan, 2002). Task-based language assessment, a cutting-edge topic, focuses on the elicitation of examinee performance on relevant language tasks under conditions that approximate the real world as much as possible, as well as on the evaluation of

task performance according to real-world criteria (Spools, 1992). As such, the identification of real-world criteria for task accomplishment poses the most important step in the development of task-based assessment procedures (Robinson, 2001; Yuan & Ellis, 2003). However, in addition to making interpretations about abilities to accomplish language proficiency tasks, test users often wish to make several other interpretations such as whether performance on one target task can be used to inform interpretations on the examinees' abilities to accomplish tasks at similar difficulty levels.

Recent research on second language task difficulty has begun to realize an urgent need for generalizing among tasks in the same domain, as well as for better understanding of the relationship between the underlying abilities of language users and their performance on different tasks (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, 2007). For assessment purposes, then, if the relationship between cognitive abilities and task characteristics can be understood and modeled, developing a framework for grading tasks according to performance difficulty would be possible. This framework may thus provide a scaffold for making predictions from performance on one task to future performance on other tasks with similar degrees of difficulty. Such a framework might also enable test users to investigate the extent to which learners possess the underlying abilities needed to accomplish a range of related tasks.

Consequently, the need for an accountable set of criteria in grading language assessment tasks in terms of estimated difficulty has motivated this research project. The IT model attempts to portray the assessment event in a more comprehensive way, clarifying how an assessment model might work most effectively to give an empirical basis and predictive power for the claims which are made about an individual's language ability (Ghal-eh, 2007). A number of motives that eventually led to the development of the IT model were outlined.

First, due to several drawbacks and inefficacies of meta-linguistic theories underlying current language testing frameworks (for a full discussion, see Faraday, 2005), it seemed reasonable enough to utilize a psychometric theory of human intelligence.

In the IT model, Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory (1983), therefore, was adopted to devise a number of assessment tasks.

According to the MI theory, intelligence is the ability to apply one or more of the intelligence categories in ways that are valued by a community or a culture (Armstrong, 2003). The current MI theory outlines eight intelligence categories: verbal-linguistic, rhythmic-musical, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, social-interpersonal, solidarity-intrapersonal, and naturalist. Central to each category is the existence of one or more basic mechanisms dealing with specific behaviors. These basic information-processing operations are called "core operations" (Gardner, 1993). The Integrative Task language contents were tailored based on the core operations of the eight MI categories. The MI theory, therefore, provided the researcher with "a sort of biogenetic syllabus to design 48 Integrative tasks" (Ghal-eh, 2007, p. 2).

Moreover, the IT model benefited from a cognitive information-processing theory, that is, the well-known Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Cognitive Domain (Bloom, 1956) that provided the researcher with a well-suited set of criteria for grading her Integrative Tasks. The Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, often called Bloom's Taxonomy, is a classification of different objectives and skills that educators set for their students. Bloom's Taxonomy has divided educational objectives into three domains: Cognitive, Affective, and Psychomotor. Within each domain there are different levels of learning, with higher levels considered more complex and closer to the complete mastery of the subject matter. Cognitive Domain consists of six hierarchical levels of thinking: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation (Lynch & McLean, 2001).

Second, contrary to current approaches to task-based language assessment that mainly utilize linguistic grading criteria for scaling tasks (Skehan, 2007; Skehan & Foster, 2001), Integrative Tasks were graded with respect to the processing components involved in task performance, which

was a sort of *task-independent criteria*; Integrative Task Scales, designed in this study, adopted the hierarchical levels of Cognitive Domain as cumulative subscales to predict the difficulty levels of Integrative Tasks.

The IT model was examined with a group of 200 English translation undergraduates at Islamic Azad University, Karaj Branch, Iran for its predictive power and degree of construct validity.

Method

Participants

Initially, in order to pilot the content quality of Integrative Tasks and their administration procedure, a number of female English translation undergraduates, (n=37) ranging from 20 to 39 years of age, voluntarily participated in a trial run on April 20, 2007. The sampling procedure was performed at Islamic Azad University.

Later, a total of 200 English translation undergraduates were selected non-randomly to participate in this research project as the researcher's main sample. Since Integrative Tasks were specifically designed for the university-level non-native speakers of English (NNSs), the examinees in this study were deliberately recruited from an Iranian university-level population studying in Iran. Moreover, three raters from Islamic Azad University, Karaj Branch, and Allameh Tabatabai University, all experts in foreign language testing and research methodology in social sciences, cooperated with the researcher in this study.

Instruments

As a prototype language assessment framework, the IT model required some statistical evaluation to support the dependability of the scaling criteria for scoring Integrative Tasks. To this end, *The Comprehensive English Language Test* (CELT), and *The Multiple Intelligences Developmental Assessment Scales* (MIDAS) were initially administered as two external criterion tests of language proficiency and multiple intelligences.

A standard language proficiency test, CELT consists of two sections: (a) a Structure Section with

75 multiple-choice items that measure English sentence structures and language use in terms of short conversations in which one or more words were missing; and (b) a Vocabulary Section with 25 multiple-choice items that measure English vocabulary control and use.

As the other standard test, *The Multiple Intelligences Developmental Assessment Scales* (MIDAS) questionnaire was used in this study to provide a multiple intelligences profile for each individual. The results of MIDAS were intended to provide a reliable estimate of an EFL learner's intellectual disposition in the eight intelligence domains.

Next, 48 Integrative Tasks, meticulously designed by the researcher, were rated for their content quality by the three raters, and pre-tested with the 37 participants in the pilot sample in this study (Appendix 1). The designed tasks were called *Integrative* due to the nature of factors integrated into their underlying constructs. Virtually speaking, the language contents in Integrative Tasks were vertically tailored based on eight categories of Multiple Intelligences, while they were horizontally graded based on six levels of Cognitive Domain in Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.

In the IT model, therefore, every category of intelligence, say Musical Intelligence, is the content domain - or the biogenetic syllabus - for a group of eight Integrative Tasks which are graded based on the six levels of Cognitive Domain in terms of their difficulty levels, that is:

- (1) Scale 0-1: Integrative Musical Task at Knowledge Subscale;
- (2) Scale 0-2: Integrative Musical Task at Comprehension Subscale;
- (3) Scale 0-3: Integrative Musical Task at Application Subscale;
- (4) Scale 0-4: Integrative Musical Task at Analysis Subscale;
- (5) Scale 0-5: Integrative Musical Task at Synthesis Subscale; and
- (6) Scale 0-6: Integrative Musical Task at Evaluation Subscale.

As examples of the 48 Integrative Tasks in the IT Model, the six Integrative Musical Tasks are presented and briefly discussed.

Musical Task at Knowledge Subscale

How many syllables are in the word engineer?
a. 2 b. 3 c. 4 d. 5

As a multiple-choice type of task, this item asks the examinees to recognize the number of syllables and choose the correct response. This item measures the knowledge of a language's (English, in this case) sounds which is identified as a core operation in Musical Intelligence (Gardner, 1995). Meanwhile, "the ability to demonstrate the knowledge of a subject matter" is a behavioral objective identified in the Knowledge Level of the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Cognitive Domain (Bloom, 1956, p. 39).

Musical Task at Comprehension Subscale

Paraphrase the following lines by John Keats:

*A thing of beauty is a joy forever,
Its loveliness increases, it will
Never pass into nothingness.*

As an open-ended task, this item requires examinees (a) to use their knowledge of English vocabulary to read the poem; and (b) to re-word the English verse into prose. The task content is an excerpt of a poem which tests the examinee's ability to understand rhythmical language, identified as a core operation in Musical Intelligence (Gardner, 1995). Meanwhile, "the ability to paraphrase" is a behavioral objective identified in the Comprehension Level of the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Cognitive Domain (Bloom, 1956, p. 43).

Musical Task at Application Subscale

In poetry, "iambic" is a line in which an unstressed syllable is followed by a

stressed one. Read the following line by S. T. Coleridge. Is it an iambic line?
My way is to begin with the beginning.

An open-ended task type, this item requires the examinees (a) to demonstrate knowledge of English sounds and syllable patterns; (b) to comprehend the text; and (c) to apply the given definition to the text in order to respond the item. As a core operation in Musical Intelligence (Gardner, 1995), the familiarity with the English sounds and syllables is assessed in this item. Meanwhile, "the ability to apply a given rule" is a behavioral objective identified in Application Level of the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Cognitive Domain (Bloom, 1956, p. 57).

Musical Task at Analysis Subscale

Black and white, up and down, left and right are examples of juxtaposition. Complete the following poem with appropriate juxtapositions so that the rhythm in each line is reserved.

*I am the, you are the arrow.
You are the, I am the night.
I am, you are the wheel.
You're never wrong, I am*

As an open-ended task type, this item demands the examinees (a) to demonstrate knowledge of English sounds and syllable patterns in order to maintain the rhythm in the poem; (b) to comprehend the poem; (c) to apply juxtaposition to the poem; and (e) to analyze the relationship among words necessary for finding the appropriate words missing in the lines. Similar to Musical Tasks at previous subscales, familiarity with English sounds and syllable patterns is identified as a core operation in Musical Intelligence (Gardner, 1995), while "the ability to examine the given information and to break down the relationship among the components" (which here are the words) is mentioned as a behavioral objective in Analysis Level of the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Cognitive Domain (Bloom, 1956, p. 65).

Musical Task at Synthesis Subscale

Following the directions, complete this haiku so that the poem reflects your definition of “jealousy” to the readers.

Jealousy, (a noun)
....., *ferocious,*
(two adjectives)
Destroying,,,
..... ,
(four present participles)
Makes everything become
.....,
(a four-word phrase with a past participle)
..... .
(a synonym for the noun in Line 1)

As an open-ended task type, this item requires the examinees (a) to demonstrate knowledge of English sounds and syllable patterns; (b) to understand the theme of the poem; (c) to follow the directions in order to complete the poem; and (d) to create their own meaning. As was previously mentioned, knowledge of sounds and syllable patterns is identified as a core operation in Musical Intelligence (Gardner, 1995). Likewise, “the ability to produce personal meaning which uniquely communicates with the reader” is considered a behavioral objective in Synthesis Level of the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Cognitive Domain (Bloom, 1956, p. 70).

Musical Task at Evaluation Subscale

Meg urgently argues for the effective roles of music on TV programs. Can you complete her comments with three advantages of using music in TV programs?

Andy: “Why do they have music in TV news programs? To me it sounds totally unnecessary!”
Meg: “Most probably they want to create a sense of drama! I think music is believed to”

An open-ended task type, this item requires the examinees (a) to demonstrate a general appreciation for music and its potential to touch feelings; (b) to comprehend the theme and topic of the conversation; (c) to collect positive attitudes towards music and to assert them in a series; (d) to discriminate between positive and negative attributes; (e) to itemize the positive attributes; and finally (f) to support a position by using effective language in terms of convincing examples and explanations.

As general knowledge, examinee appreciation of music is apparently dissociated from knowledge of language sounds and sound qualities. However, “the ability to understand the relationship between music and human feelings” (Gardner, 1995, p. 62) is identified as a core operation in Musical Intelligence. Similarly, “the ability to judge the value of material based on one's personal values or opinions” is considered a behavioral objective in the Evaluation Level in the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Cognitive Domain (Bloom, 1956, p. 198). For detailed lists of Multiple Intelligences Core Operations and Behavioral Objectives in the Cognitive Domain levels, see Appendices 2 and 3, respectively.

The final version of the Integrative Tasks was administered to the 200 English translation undergraduates who participated as the main sample in this study.

Procedures

In order to rate learner performance on the designated Integrative Tasks, the researcher needed to develop a checklist for Integrative Task specifications. To do so, the levels of two variables in this study—the categories of Multiple Intelligences and the hierarchical levels of Cognitive Domain—were integrated into two-factor constructs underlying Integrative Tasks (Appendix 4). Integrative Tasks at higher subscales, say Synthesis or Evaluation subscales, were expected to be more difficult than tasks at lower subscales since they would require all the abilities listed in the preceding subscales as well as additional cognitive demands.

Next, in order to scale Integrative Tasks for their degree of difficulty, a cumulative scaling system was designed. In the six-point Integrative Task Scale, as the difficulty level of the subscales increases from Knowledge to Evaluation, so do the credits given to task accomplishment (Appendix 5).

Finally, in order to qualitatively support the data which were quantitatively collected, completion of a type of self-rating scale seemed necessary on the examinees' part. Therefore, a three-point Likert scale was designed that permitted a range of responses to the self-rating questions on individual Integrative Tasks: one (disagreement), two (moderate agreement), and three (agreement) (see Appendix 6). The examinees were asked to express the degree of their familiarity with individual Integrative Tasks (Self-Familiarity), the extent to which they evaluate their performances on individual Integrative Tasks (Self-Performance), and the ease with which they performed on individual Integrative Tasks (Self-Ease).

Results

As one of the researcher's main concerns in this project, the validity of predictions made on participant performance on 48 Integrative Tasks was estimated in terms of exploratory factor analysis and two-factor analysis of variances (ANOVA). The statistics obtained were qualitatively supported by examinee responses to self-rating items.

Exploratory factor analysis

In SPSS 15.0, a matrix of correlation coefficients was computed for all the variable combinations found in the IT model, that is, the eight MI categories at six subscales (n=48). Theoretically, an individual Integrative Task was claimed to operationally define a two-factor construct: (a) a MI core operation and (b) a behavioral objective in Cognitive Domain.

The 48 Integrative Task ratings, therefore, were analyzed for exploring the number of loaded factors. Consequently, computing the Varimax Rotation Test with 17 reiterations, the researcher came up with nine factors which were selectively loaded by the correlation coefficients of 48 Integrative Task ratings.

As Table 1 displays, exploratory factor analysis indicated the presence of (a) eight factors which corresponded to the number of eight MI categories, and (b) a ninth factor, or the *IT Factor*, which seemed critical in this study. While factor loading values on the first eight factors were determined by the MI categories of Integrative Tasks, factor loading values on the IT Factor were determined by the subscale at which an Integrative task was located. In other words, the IT Factor was loaded in descending order by Integrative Tasks at subscales of ascending order. It seemed, therefore, the lower a

Table 1. The principal component analysis

Component Transformation Matrix									
Component	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	.674	.236	.131	.384	.345	.091	.253	.012	.525
2	.257	.485	.585	.225	-.506	.149	.141	.079	.505
3	-.400	.298	.620	-.307	.244	.368	.238	-.127	.757
4	-.077	-.020	-.278	.771	-.039	.186	-.286	.009	.631
5	-.420	.061	.285	.289	.634	-.290	-.339	.015	.462
6	-.172	-.576	-.193	.207	.192	.563	.547	-.057	.700
7	.298	-.374	.233	-.319	.519	.013	.517	.094	.495
8	-.075	.060	-.015	-.100	.040	.007	.194	.737	.492
9	-.103	.078	-.063	.027	-.092	-.023	.194	.244	.687

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

task at a subscale, the less difficulty the examinees faced in performing that task.

Two-Factor analysis of variances (ANOVA)

The validity estimate of the data obtained in exploratory factor analysis usually needs further support through an Analysis of Variances or ANOVA (Hatch & Farhady, 1981). In other words, with a test of two-factor ANOVA, the researcher could prove that:

- The variances among the scores on Integrative Tasks located in one MI category, say eight Integrative Musical Tasks at six subscales, were homogeneous.
- The individual MI categories ($n=8$) and subscales of Cognitive Domain ($n=6$) were *independent* from one another. In other words, the researcher needed to prove that variations in examinees' performance on Integrative Tasks at different subscales were not enhanced or suppressed due to possible interaction or interdependence among MI categories and/or subscales of Cognitive Domain.

Statistically, the independence of the levels in two factors and the absence of possible interactions among them were investigated through measures of two-factor Analysis of Variances (ANOVA). In the current study, therefore, two-factor ANOVA was conducted to examine:

- Homogeneity of variances (or sphericity) among the eight MI categories (referred to as the Intelligence Factor)

- Homogeneity of variances among the six subscales of Cognitive Domain (referred to as the Cognitive Level Factor)
- Significant interaction between the Intelligence Factor and the Cognitive Level Factor (referred to as the Int*Cog Factor).

As Table 2 shows, the SPSS 15.0 output for the Mauchly's Test and the other three conservative tests indicated the Mauchly's F for the Intelligence and Cognitive Level Factors were $F^1=.121^*$, and $F^2=2.015^*$, both statistically significant at a two-tailed $p<.01$.

The $F^3=1.036$, however, was not statistically significant at a two-tailed $p<.01$, indicating no significant interaction in the Int*Cog Factor which supported the desired independence of the two factor levels in the IT model.

Self-Ratings

The statistics for examinee self-ratings demonstrated the means ranging across much of the three-point scales (from an overall low mean of 1.09 to an overall high mean of 2.80), while the standard deviations, minimum, maximum, and skew statistics showed that the examinees tended to use the entire scales in evaluating their performances on the Integrative Tasks. The lower means (in combination with relatively high positive skew statistics) belonged to the items for which the examinees rated their Self-Familiarity, Self-Performance, or Self-Ease relatively as low and vice versa. The standard deviations ranging from .36 to .49 indicated that perhaps the self-rating subscales were producing

Table 2. The Mauchly test of homogeneity

Within Subjects Effects	Mauchly's	Approx Chi-Square	df	Sig	Epsilon ³		
					Green-house e-Geisser	Huynh-Feld	Lower-bound
INTELLIGENCE	.121	414.279	27	.000	.572	.582	.143
COGNITIVE	2.015	824.469	14	.000	.316	.318	.200
LEVEL	1.036	10719.093	629	.063	.048	.048	.029
INT*COG							

* $p<.01$

less variance, even proportionally, than Integrative task ratings. At the same time, the minimum and maximum statistics indicated that the examinees had utilized most of the one to three scales for all items. The skew statistics, also, showed that none of the scores were markedly skewed.

As Table 3 summarizes the results for the average ratings across all Integrative Tasks on Self-Familiarity, Self-Performance, and Self-Ease, the obtained qualitative data might suggest that the examinees properly and consistently perceived differences in their performance on Integrative Tasks, in terms of the familiarity with the tasks, the ease with which each task was performed, as well as their own performances on individual tasks.

Next, the researcher computed the correlation statistics for both measures of examinee performance, that is, Integrative Tasks and self-ratings, in order to find the extent to which these two sets of quantitative and qualitative data were significantly correlated.

As Table 4 shows, the performance measures in this study - Integrative Tasks and self-ratings - exhibited strong correlations with one another, ranging from $r=.64$ (between IT Ratings and Self-Ease) to $r=.96$

(between IT Ratings and Self-Performance).

Average examinee self-ratings correlated quite well ($r=.64$ to $r=.96$) with IT Ratings as well as with each other. In addition, the average examinee self-ratings for their own performances (Self-Performance) correlated consistently higher than the average self-ratings for familiarity with the tasks (Self-Familiarity) or the ease in performing the tasks (Self-Ease). In short, the overall correlation among two sets of ratings in this project was quite better than expected.

Discussion

The call for a valid and theory-founded assessment model that sets language learners free to demonstrate their language competence by performing on a variety of graded tasks and to reflect on their own performance was the researcher's first and foremost concern in this research project. The difficulty of predicting future success for language learners who performed differently on different types of tasks led the researcher to the additional question of the predictive adequacy of a language assessment model (Armstrong, 2003; Bachman, 2004; Hancock, 1994).

Table 3. Self-ratings

Variable	M	Min	SD	Max	Skew
Self-Familiarity	1.91	0.14	.36	2.27	0.55
Self-Performance	2.36	0.36	.42	3.00	0.59
Self-Ease	2.80	0.48	.49	3.00	0.80

* $p<.05$

Table 4. Correlation statistics for performance measures

	IT Ratings	Self-Familiarity	Self-Performance	Self-Ease
IT Ratings	1 .00	0.65	0.96	0.64
Self-Familiarity		1.00	0.65	0.82
Self-Performance			1.00	0.90
Self-Ease				1.00

$p<.05$

Addressing the first question, two theories of MI theory (Gardner, 1983, 1995) and Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Cognitive Domain (Bloom, 1956) were integrated into developing the IT model of language assessment. As a psychometric theory of human intelligence, MI theory enabled researchers to design a number of EFL task assessments so that their content quality would be tailored based on eight MI core operations. As an information-processing theory, the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Cognitive Domain provided the researcher a multifaceted scaling system to grade the designed tasks so that the higher the position an Integrative Task had on the scaling ladder, the higher pressure on EFL learners to perform it.

Addressing the second question, the six behavioral objectives identified in the hierarchical levels of Cognitive Domain were incorporated into a number of scaling criteria to grade Integrative Tasks based on difficulty levels. In order to predict examinee performance on further language tasks, the researcher's assumption was that if, for example, a learner could accomplish a task in the Analysis Subscale, then, she would likely be able to accomplish tasks with similar behavioral configurations.

Finally, the IT model was examined for construct validity in terms of quantitative and qualitative data supporting its underlying assumptions. Statistics backed up the psychological reality of the eight MI categories tailored into the content of Integrative Tasks, and the predictive power of the IT model utilizing the six levels of Cognitive Domain to grade Integrative Tasks and to determine their difficulty levels.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding, the development of the IT model implies a number of pedagogical advantages. First, utilizing the IT model, promising outcomes might be best observed on occasions where the primary intention of the language testers lies in generalizing language learner test performances on Integrative Tasks to real-life contexts. Due to the high predictive adequacy of the Integrative Tasks, it

becomes feasible to expect that a comparable performance on Integrative Tasks would be reiterated in real contexts.

Second, the long lasting problem of adopting proper sequencing criteria in grading language tasks, packed as a battery of general language proficiency tests, might be viably removed if the Integrative Task Scales were utilized to develop and rate the tasks at different sections or the subtask items within a task. Finally, as in this study the IT model has been experimentally instantiated for its potential as a supplement framework to the task-based language assessment practice, the Integrative Task contents might be so modified that the IT model would be properly publicized and augmented in the course-specific language testing market.

Regarding the approach to task-based language assessment adopted in this study, however, several issues should be borne in mind when relating the results to task development and use in various other language educational settings. First, it is not suggested that the limited approach to task-based assessment outlined in this study should be replaced with any of the numerous other approaches to test development. Rather, it is openly accepted that the test instruments and procedures in the current project are very much and very intentionally limited in the sense that they should only be applied for certain inferential purposes or may be supplemented to the available test instruments and procedures.

A second limitation in the assessment approach outlined in this project has to do with the contents of Integrative Tasks. Directly tailored based on MI core operations, Integrative Tasks may surely have a high degree of relevance to learners in educational contexts, but it is not claimed that these tasks comprehensively represent the scope, the focus, or the characteristics of the target tasks needed within various language educational settings. Ambitiously, the researcher's purpose all along has been to model what a task developer might do in order to design a task-based framework with respect to a particular domain of target tasks and a particular learner population. Obviously, depending on the target tasks related to any given domain, task-based assessment instruments and procedures may depart radically from the tasks designed in this research

project. Clearly, considerable additional research is called for in different languages, with different subjects, and in different educational settings.

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Appendix 1

Integrative tasks

Integrative Tasks at Knowledge Subscale

Linguistic/Knowledge Task (Ling/K):

1. Which one is an “article” in English?
 - a. but
 - b. then
 - c. the
 - d. to

Mathematical/Knowledge Task (Math/K):

2. How many angles are there in a cube?
 - a. 10
 - b. 20
 - c. 26
 - d. 24

Musical/Knowledge Task (Mus/K):

3. How many syllables are in the word “engineer”?
 - a. 2
 - b. 3
 - c. 4
 - d. 5

Kinesthetic/Knowledge Task (Kin/K):

4. Where is the biggest muscle in your body?
 - a. arm
 - b. leg
 - c. neck
 - d. back

Spatial/Knowledge Task (Spa/K):

5. A geometric shape with five sides is a
 - a. rectangle
 - b. triangle
 - c. square
 - d. pentagon

Intrapersonal/Knowledge Task (Intra/K):

6. As an honest person, do you confess after making a mistake?
 - a. sometimes
 - b. always
 - c. it depends
 - d. never

Interpersonal/Knowledge Task (Inter/K):

7. A person who always disagrees with others' opinions is
 - a. determined
 - b. argumentative
 - c. unsociable
 - d. insincere

Naturalist/Knowledge Task (Nat/K):

8. Which animal is within the mammal family?
 - a. cat
 - b. shark
 - c. eagle
 - d. frog

Integrative Tasks at Comprehension Subscale

Linguistic/Comprehension Task (Ling/C):

9. Write down a synonym and an antonym for the verb “protect” in the following sentence:
Young children need to be protected from physical and mental abuse.

Mathematical/Comprehension Task (Math/C):

10. Rewrite this mathematical statement into English prose:
 $1/3 + 3 > 3 - 1/3$

Musical/Comprehension Task (Mus/C):

11. Paraphrase the following lines by John Keats.
*A thing of beauty is a joy forever,
Its loveliness increases, it will
Never pass into nothingness.*

Kinesthetic/Comprehension Task (Kin/C):

12. What sport does this logo represent? <logo>

Spatial/Comprehension Task (Spa/C):

13. What is a three-dimensional shape which is made of four triangles and one square?

Intrapersonal/Comprehension Task (Intra/C):

14. A friend has insulted you. How do you describe your ambivalence of feelings for cutting off this friendship?

Interpersonal/Comprehension Task (Inter/C):

15. Jenny *doesn't count her chickens before they're hatched*. How do you describe her character?

Naturalist/Comprehension Task (Nat/C):

16. What is the natural disaster described in this sentence?
"It lifted a car about 10 feet off the ground, and then we saw it disappear far from us."
a. thunder
b. hurricane
c. earthquake
d. volcanic eruption

Integrative Tasks at Application Subscale

Linguistic/Application Task (Ling/Ap):

17. Write down a sentence with the following words:
bus/we/up/or/hurry/!/will/the/miss

Mathematical/Application Task (Math/Ap):

18. If your average savings is 90 dollars per month, and this is only 15 percent of your payment, how much are you paid per month?

Musical/Application Task (Mus/Ap):

19. In poetry, "iambic" is a line in which an unstressed syllable is followed by a stressed one. Is this an iambic line?
My way is to begin with the beginning.

Kinesthetic/Comprehension Task (Kin/Ap):

20. Your body needs 1.5 grams protein per pound. Add .3 more if you are a man. What is your ideal daily protein consumption?

Spatial/Application Task (Spa/Ap):

21. Your room is five meters long and four wide. What shape does your room most probably have?

Intrapersonal/Application Task (Intra/Ap):

22. If your friends blame you for lacking self-confidence, how do you defend yourself, bringing some real examples from your life?

Interpersonal/Application Task (Inter/Ap):

23. What would you do in this situation?
A friend borrows your pen and then loses it. When he apologizes, you want to reassure him.

Naturalist/Application Task (Nat/Ap):

24. Animal species in a family share physical characteristics, such as the shape of the head or the quality of movement. Now mention four members in the Insect Family.

Integrative Tasks at Analysis Subscale

Linguistic/Analysis Task (Ling/An):

25. Complete the following sentence with the best choice.
Even the mostflower has thorns.
a. ugly
b. weathered
c. elusive
d. noxious
e. tempting

Mathematical/Analysis Task (Math/An):

26. Which fraction is bigger?
a. The squared sum of the difference between x and y divided by 10.
b. x squared minus y squared divided by 10.

Musical/Analysis Task (Mus/An):

27. Black and white, up and down, left and right are examples of juxtapositions. Complete the following poem with appropriate juxtapositions so that the rhythm in each line is observed.
I am the, you are the arrow.
You are the, I am the night.
I am, you are the wheel.
You're never wrong, I am

Kinesthetic/Analysis Task (Kin/An):

28. John is an athlete. What sport is he most probably talking about?
"I like the noise, the speed, and the danger – there is nothing more exciting to watch, though Jenny is fond of the slow, but smart movements on the board."

Spatial/Analysis Task (Spa/An):

29. Which container would you use for keeping cereal or chocolate?
a. bowl
b. basket
c. bucket
d. bottle

Intrapersonal/Analysis Task (Intra/An):

30. In what situation might you tiptoe around the house?

Interpersonal/Analysis Task (Inter/An):

31. How do you describe a person who is kind of a cold fish?

Naturalist/Analysis Task (Nat/An):

32. Which one is the least like the other three?
- a. horse
 - b. kangaroo
 - c. goat
 - d. donkey

Integrative Tasks at Synthesis Subscale

Linguistic/Synthesis Task (Ling/Syn):

33. Can you write down an idiom about the time a person cannot express himself?

Mathematical/Synthesis Task (Math/Syn):

34. Imagine the ship you're traveling on is sinking and you are allowed to carry only 10 kilograms in your bag off of the ship. Which ones do you choose? Why?
- a. rope, 6 kg
 - b. medical kit, 6 kg
 - c. cans of food, 500 gr each
 - d. bottles of water, 1.5 kg each
 - e. shortwave radio, 4 kg
 - f. ax, 4 kg

Musical/Synthesis Task (Mus/Syn):

35. Following the directions, complete this haiku so that the poem reflects your definition of "jealousy" to the readers.
- Jealousy, (a noun)
....., ferocious, (two adjectives)
Destroying,,,
....., (four present participles)
Makes everything become,
(a four-word phrase with a past participle)
..... (a synonym of the
noun in Line 1)

Kinesthetic/Synthesis Task (Kin/Syn):

36. Can you write down three effects of regular physical exercise on a person's life?

Spatial/Synthesis Task (Spa/Syn):

37. Can you draw four squares sharing at least one side by means of less than 13 toothpicks?

Intrapersonal/Synthesis Task (Intra/Syn):

38. Imagine that you have been elected the manager of a big company like Sony. What do you do on the first day in your new position?

Interpersonal/Synthesis Task (Inter/Syn):

39. Complete the following sentence:
"He is an egocentric person. He can't"

Naturalist/Synthesis Task (Nat/Syn):

40. How can you protect yourself from diseases caused by certain mosquitoes' bites in a tropical area?

Integrative Tasks at Evaluation Subscale

Linguistic/Evaluation Task (Ling/Eva):

41. In the following sentence, underline the ungrammatical words and replace them with the correct ones.
- There a few drugs are today that valued more than penicillin.

Mathematical/Evaluation Task (Math/Eva):

42. Who is the oldest, if these three friends make one true and one false statement?
- Alice:** I'm older than Brenda. Carl is not the oldest.
- Brenda:** I'm the oldest. Carl is younger than Alice.
- Carl:** I'm older than Brenda. Alice is the youngest.

Musical/Evaluation Task (Mus/Eva):

43. Meg urgently argues for the effective roles that music in TV programs plays on the audience. Can you complete her comments with three advantages of using music in TV programs?
- Andy:** "Why do they have music in TV news programs? It sounds totally unnecessary to me!"
- Meg:** "They most probably want to create a sense of drama! I think music is supposed to"

Kinesthetic/Evaluation Task (Kin/Eva):

44. Discuss which one is more suitable for children.
- a. basketball
 - b. swimming
 - c. gymnastics
 - d. skating

Spatial/Evaluation Task (Spa/Eva):

45. Which do you prefer to live in, a big house or a small flat? Explain your reasons.

Intrapersonal/Evaluation Task (Intra/Eva):

46. You have already planned for a short vacation when you suddenly read in newspaper that:
“You may be itching to travel today!” What is your reaction? Why?

Interpersonal/Evaluation Task (Inter/Eva):

47. Discuss this Chinese proverb:
“One person’s meal is another one’s poison.”

Naturalist/Evaluation Task (Nat/Eva):

48. Since ages ago, Eskimos have built their houses in a semi-circle shape. How can you support this old tradition?

Appendix 2

Multiple intelligences core operations

	Intelligence type	Description	Typical roles	Related tasks/tests
1	Linguistic	Good at: words and language, written and spoken; retention, interpretation, and explanation of ideas and information via language; understanding the relationship between communication and meaning	As: writers, lawyers, journalists, speakers, trainers, copy-writers, English teachers, poets, editors, linguists	Ask them to: write a set of instructions, speak on a subject, edit a written piece of work, write a speech, comment on an event, apply a positive or negative 'spin' to a story
2	Logical-Mathematical	Good at: logical thinking, detecting patterns, scientific reasoning and deduction, analyzing problems, performing mathematical calculations, understanding the relationship between cause and effect towards a tangible outcome or result	As: scientists, engineers, computer experts, accountants, statisticians, researchers, analysts, traders	Ask them to: perform a mental arithmetic calculation, create a process to measure something difficult, analyze how a machine works, create a process, devise a strategy to achieve an aim
3	Musical	Good at: musical ability and awareness, appreciation and use of sound, recognition of tonal and rhythmic patterns, understanding the relationship between sounds and feelings	As: musicians, singers, composers, DJ's, music producers, piano tuners, acoustic engineers, entertainers, party-planners, environment and noise advisors	Ask them to: perform a musical piece, sing a song, review a musical work, coach someone to play a musical instrument, specify mood music for telephone systems and receptions
4	Bodily-Kinesthetic	Good at: body movement control, manual dexterity, physical agility and balance, eye and body coordination	As: dancers, demonstrators, actors, athletes, divers, sportspeople, soldiers, firefighters, performance artists, ergonomists, osteopaths	Ask them to: juggle, demonstrate a sports technique, flip a beer-mat, create a mime to explain something, toss a pancake
5	Spatial-Visual	Good at: visual and spatial perception, interpretation and creation of visual images, pictorial imagination and expression, understanding relationship between images and meanings	As: artists, designers, cartoonists, story-boarders, architects, photographers, sculptors, town-planners, visionaries	Ask them to: design a costume, interpret a painting, create a room layout, create a corporate logo, design a building

6	Interpersonal	Good at: perception of other people's feelings, ability to relate to others, interpretation of behavior and communications, understanding the relationships between people and their situations	As: therapists, mediators, leaders, counselors, politicians, educators, salespeople, clergy, psychologists, teachers, doctors, healers	Ask them to: interpret moods from facial expressions, demonstrate feelings through body language, affect the feelings of others in a planned way, coach another person
7	Intrapersonal	Good at: self-awareness, personal cognizance; personal objectivity; understanding oneself, understanding one's relationship to others and the world, and one's own need for and reaction to change	As: anyone who is self-aware and involved in the process of changing personal thoughts, beliefs and behavior in relation to their situation, other people, their purpose and aims	Ask them to: consider and decide one's own aims and personal changes required to achieve them,
8	Naturalist	Good at: classification, nurturing, recognition of animal species, understanding the relationship between humans and other species	As: biologists, botanists, zoologists, science students, science teachers	Ask them to: work in nature, find new species of plants and animals, take a tour into nature

Note: From Chapman, A., & Chislett, V. (2005). *Gardner's Multiple Intelligences*. Available online at <http://www.businessballs.com/freepdfmaterials/MI-test-intelligences-descriptions.pdf>

Appendix 3

Behavioral objectives in the cognitive domain

	Category	Description
1	Knowledge	<p>The knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifics • Terminology • Specific facts • Ways and means of dealing with specifics • Conventions • Trends and sequences • Classifications and categories • Criteria • Methodology • The universals and abstractions in a field • Principles and generalizations • Theories and structures <p>Able to: define, describe, enumerate, identify, label, list, match, name, read, record, reproduce, select, state, view</p>

2	Comprehension	<p>The ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grasp meaning • explain and restate ideas • understand basic information • translate, interpret, and extrapolate information <p>Able to: classify, cite, convert, describe, discuss, estimate, explain, generalize, give examples, make sense out of, paraphrase, restate (in own words), summarize, trace, understand</p>
3	Application	<p>The ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use previously learned information in new and concrete situations • solve problems that have single or best answers <p>Able to: act, administrate, articulate, assess, chart, collect, compute, construct, contribute, control, determine, develop, discover, establish, extend, implement, include, inform, instruct, operationalize, participate, predict, prepare, preserve, produce, project, provide, relate, report, show, solve, teach, transfer, use, utilize</p>
4	Analysis	<p>The ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • break down informational materials into their component parts • examine (and try to understand the organizational structure of) such information to develop divergent conclusions by identifying motives or causes • make inferences • find evidence to support generalizations <p>Able to: break down, correlate, diagram, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, focus, illustrate, infer, limit, outline, point out, prioritize, recognize, separate, subdivide</p>
5	Synthesis	<p>The ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce a unique communication • produce a plan, or proposed set of operations • derivate a set of abstract relations <p>Able to: adapt, anticipate, categorize, collaborate, combine, communicate, compare, compile, compose, contrast, create, design, devise, express, facilitate, formulate, generate, incorporate, individualize, initiate, integrate, intervene, model, modify, negotiate, plan, progress, rearrange, reconstruct, reinforce, reorganize, revise, structure, substitute, validate</p>
6	Evaluation	<p>The ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • judge the value of material based on personal values/opinions • result in an end product, with a given purpose, without real right or wrong answers <p>Able to: appraise, compare & contrast, conclude, criticize, critique, decide, defend, interpret, judge, justify, reframe, support</p>

Note: From Bloom, B. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: Cognitive domain, Handbook 1* (Trans.). New York: David McKay.

Appendix 4

Checklist of integrative task specifications

Task	LING	MATH	MUS	KIN	SPA	INTRA	INTER	NAT	KNO	COM	APP	ANA	.SYN	EVA
Ling/K	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Ling/C	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-
Ling/Ap	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-
Ling/An	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-
Ling/Syn	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-
Ling/Eva	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
Math/K	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Math/C	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-
Math/Ap	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-
Math/An	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-
Math/Syn	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-
Math/Eva	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
Mus/K	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Mus/C	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-
Mus/Ap	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-
Mus/An	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-
Mus/Syn	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-
Mus/Eva	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
Kin/K	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Kin/C	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-
Kin/Ap	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-
Kin/An	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-
Kin/Syn	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-
Kin/Eva	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
Spa/K	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Spa/C	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-
Spa/Ap	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-
Spa/An	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-
Spa/Syn	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-
Spa/Eva	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
Intra/K	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Intra/C	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-
Intra/Ap	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-
Intra/An	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-
Intra/Syn	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-
Intra/Eva	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
Inter/K	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Inter/C	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-
Inter/AP	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	-
Inter/An	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	-
Inter/Syn	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
Inter/Eva	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Nat/K	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-
Nat/C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
Nat/Ap	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
Nat/An	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	-
Nat/Syn	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Nat/Eva	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Total														

Note

KNO: Knowledge Subscale; COM: Comprehension Subscale; APP: Application Subscale; ANA: Analysis Subscale; SYN: Synthesis Subscale; EVA: Evaluation Subscale

Appendix 5

Integrative task scale

	1	2	3	4	5	6
EVA	Able to: define, describe, enumerate, identify, label, list, match, name, read, record, reproduce, select, state, view	Able to: classify, cite, convert, describe, discuss, estimate, explain, generalize, give examples, make sense out of, paraphrase, summarize, trace, understand	Able to: act, administrate, articulate, assess, chart, collect, compute, construct, contribute, control, determine	Able to: break down, correlate, diagram, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, focus, illustrate, infer, limit, outline, point out	Able to: adapt, anticipate, categorize, collaborate, combine, communicate, compare, compile, compose, contrast, create	Able to: appraise, compare & contrast, conclude, criticize, critique, decide, defend, interpret, judge, justify, reframe, support
SYN	Able to: define, describe, enumerate, identify, label, list, match, name, read, record, reproduce, select, state, view	Able to: classify, cite, convert, describe, discuss, estimate, explain, generalize, give examples, make sense out of, paraphrase, summarize, trace, understand	Able to: act, administrate, articulate, assess, chart, collect, compute, construct, contribute, control, determine	Able to: break down, correlate, diagram, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, focus, illustrate, infer, limit, outline, point out	Able to: adapt, anticipate, categorize, collaborate, combine, communicate, compare, compile, compose, contrast, create	
ANA	Able to: define, describe, enumerate, identify, label, list, match, name, read, record, reproduce, select, state, view	Able to: classify, cite, convert, describe, discuss, estimate, explain, generalize, give examples, make sense out of, paraphrase, summarize, trace, understand	Able to: act, administrate, articulate, assess, chart, collect, compute, construct, contribute, control, determine	Able to: break down, correlate, diagram, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, focus, illustrate, infer, limit, outline, point out		
APP	Able to: define, describe, enumerate, identify, label, list, match, name, read, record, reproduce, select, state, view	Able to: classify, cite, convert, describe, discuss, estimate, explain, generalize, give examples, make sense out of, paraphrase, summarize, trace, understand	Able to: act, administrate, articulate, assess, chart, collect, compute, construct, contribute, control, determine			
COM	Able to: define, describe, enumerate, identify, label, list, match, name, read, record, reproduce, select, state, view	Able to: classify, cite, convert, describe, discuss, estimate, explain, generalize, give examples, make sense out of, paraphrase, summarize, trace, understand				
KNO	Able to: define, describe, enumerate, identify, label, list, match, name, read, record, reproduce, select, state, view					

Note: From Bloom, B. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: Cognitive domain, Handbook 1* (Trans.). New York: David McKay.

Appendix 6

Self-rating scale

Self-Rating Sheet			
1. To what extent were you familiar with this task?			
	Very familiar	Somehow familiar	Not familiar
Task 1	3	2	1
Task 2	3	2	1
Task 3	3	2	1
Task 4	3	2	1
.....			Continued...
2. How well did you do on this task?			
	I did very well.	I did okay.	I did not do well.
Task 1	3	2	1
Task 2	3	2	1
Task 3	3	2	1
Task 4	3	2	1
.....			Continued...
3. How easy or difficult was this task?			
	Easy to do	Possible, but not easy	Difficult to do
Task 1	3	2	1
Task 2	3	2	1
Task 3	3	2	1
Task 4	3	2	1
.....			Continued...

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