The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly

December 2008

Volume 10, Issue 4

Conference Proceedings Volume

Innovation and Tradition in ELT in the New Millennium

Senior Editors:

Paul Robertson, Roger Nunn and Darren Lingley

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Foreword

The publication of the 2008 *Asian EFL Journal Conference Proceedings* marks the culmination of an arduous year long process involving conference planning, vetting of presentation proposals, the very successful Pusan Conference itself in April and, finally, the preparation of this year's refereed Proceedings. Much of this work is done behind the scenes and all too often goes unacknowledged. We are especially grateful to the conference planning committee and to the team of readers who provided valuable feedback during the review process. The final scholarly product appearing here in this volume of the *Asian EFL Journal* owes much to their hard work and respect for the voluntary academic process of engaged peer review – thank you and bravo!

This year's 2008 Asian EFL Conference was yet another success in what has come to be known as one of the finest annual meetings in our field. In addition to our three plenary speakers (Rod Ellis, Rebecca Oxford and ZN Patil) we had 18 very well received presentations from a variety of teaching and research contexts throughout Asia and beyond. Our conference theme, "Innovation and Tradition in ELT in the New Millennium," attracted more than 300 participants. These participants were privy not only to the stimulating keynote addresses by leading figures in SLA but also to the important ELT work being done by presenters from such countries as Japan, Thailand, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia, the U.S, China, and Pakistan. For many of the presenters who shared their research, approaches, materials and ideas with participants and peers, the Conference is a springboard for getting the initial feedback needed for drafting the manuscripts for formal publication. It is indeed a very stimulating and important process, and I have taken great pleasure in seeing it through to fruition as this year's Proceedings editor.

For the *2008 AEJ Conference Proceedings*, we are pleased to present twelve papers for this December quarterly issue. The issue is bookended by two of our Conference's plenary speakers. We open with an article from Rod Ellis who has been anchoring our annual conference since 2005. In *Learner Beliefs and Language Learning*, Ellis reminds us that the relationship between beliefs and learning is complex, dynamic and

continually changing, and one that is not always as direct as we might think. Fusing his own research findings with two other studies, he explores the great complexities of learner beliefs as they relate to developing proficiency. Ellis concludes by noting that teachers cannot ignore learner beliefs (or their own!), and that we must work toward understanding and reconciling any differences in belief systems between teachers and learners. Ellis highlights the importance of qualitative research methods such as diaries and interviews as the best way to investigate learner beliefs. We conclude the issue with ZN Patil's written version of his plenary talk on *Rethinking the objectives of teaching English in Asia*. Drawing on his EFL experience in Japan and Vietnam, Patil presents his personal views on the importance of confidence building, fluency and appropriateness over accuracy.

In between these plenary papers, we offer a range of articles from different contexts. Nolan Weil's contribution on *Vocabulary Size, Background Characteristics, and Reading Skill of Korean Intensive English Students* is based on a think-aloud procedure, and yields interesting results for the application of metacognitive strategies for L2 readers - students with larger vocabularies are not always the best readers. Reima Al-Jarf reports on two studies based on her work in Saudi Arabia. In *A Call for New Benchmarks at Saudi Language and Translation Schools*, she provides recommendations in the form of new admissions benchmarks to address shortcomings in the recent open admission policy of Saudi schools. In her second piece, *The Impact of English as an International Language (EIL) upon Arabic in Saudi Arabia*, Al-Jarf investigates how college students in Saudi Arabia perceived the status of English and Arabic. Among her findings was that the position of the English language in higher education, especially in science and technology, places pressure on the Arabic language, and she notes that more needs to be done to protect and develop the Arabic language in the face of modern realities. In a third article based on data collected from Saudi EFL learners, Nora Binghadeer shares the results of her comparative investigation of pitch range in *An Acoustic Analysis of Pitch Range in the Production of Native and Nonnative Speakers of English.*

Reporting on *Language Learning Strategies Used by Students at Different Proficiency Levels*, Ya-Ling Wu finds that students of higher proficiency are more likely to employ learning strategies and identifies cognitive strategies as central to the relationship between language learning strategy and proficiency. This article is followed by a report of successful ESP collaboration between a language teacher and

a physics teacher. In this study, *Collaborative Teaching in an ESP Program*, Ching-ning Chien, Wei Lee and Li-hua Kao found that an experimental class of students taught by both the language and subject teacher demonstrated more positive attitudes and higher motivation toward English than a control class taught only by a language teacher.

In *Speech Acts: A Contrastive Study of Speech Acts in Urdu and English*, Muhammad Akram draws socio-cultural implications for language teachers through his study of the intentions of speakers and their utterances. Sripathum Noom-ura, in *Teaching Listening-Speaking Skills to Thai Students with Low English Proficiency*, shares her findings in working with low-level students, reminding us that progress is possible even in difficult teaching situations given appropriate and manageable intervention. Though a context-specific study, implications can be clearly drawn for those us facing similar EFL realities.

Finally, two co-authored papers from Taiwan offer solutions for engaging learners more fully in language learning. First, in *One Page Plus, One More Character,* Pin-hsiang Natalie Wu and Wen-chi Vivian Wu describe how the study of literature can be enhanced by shifting the interpretive focus to the learner. Then, through analysis of their quantitatively generated data, Wen-chi Vivian Wu and Pin-hsiang Natalie Wu suggest recommendations on how student motivation can be improved through changes to the learning environment in *Creating an Authentic EFL Learning Environment to Enhance Student Motivation to Study English*.

Ultimately, it is the fine work of our contributing presenters and authors on which the quality of the *2008 AEJ Conference Proceedings* depends. We applaud their collective effort, and thank each author for considering the *Asian EFL Journal* as a venue for sharing their insights.

Darren Lingley
2008 Conference Proceedings Editor
Asian EFL Journal

Learner Beliefs and Language Learning

Rod Ellis
*Chang Jiang Scholar of Shanghai International Studies University
and University of Auckland*

Bio Data:
Professor Ellis, a renowned linguist, received his Doctorate from the University of London and his Master of Education from the University of Bristol. A former professor at Temple University both in Japan and the US, Prof. Ellis has taught in numerous positions in England, Japan, the US, Zambia and New Zealand. Dr. Ellis, who is known as the "Father of Second Language Acquisition", has served as the Director of the Institute of Language Teaching and Learning at the University of Auckland. Author of numerous student and teacher training textbooks for Prentice Hall and Oxford University Press, Prof. Ellis's textbooks on Second Language Acquisition and Grammar are core textbooks in TESOL and Linguistics programs around the world.

Abstract
This article explores the nature of learner beliefs, how these beliefs can change over time and how their beliefs relate to learners' developing proficiency. It reports three studies of learner beliefs. Ellis (2002) used metaphor analysis to explore the beliefs of six beginner classroom learners of L2 German. Tanaka (2004) conducted a longitudinal study of Japanese students on a 12-week study abroad programme in New Zealand, using both quantitative and qualitative methods to show how these beliefs changed over time and the relationship between these changes and their developing proficiency. Zhong (2008) conducted a case study of a Chinese migrant learner of English in New Zealand, documenting how her beliefs changed over 10-week period and how these changes were reflected in changes in her English proficiency. These studies suggest that researchers wishing to investigate learner beliefs would do better to rely on qualitative methods such as interviews and diary studies rather than questionnaires. They also point to the situated and dynamic nature of learner belief systems and the indirect relationship between beliefs and learning.

Introduction

Language learners form 'mini theories' of L2 learning (Hosenfeld, 1978) which shape they way they set about the learning task. These theories are made up of beliefs about language and language learning. Clearly 'beliefs' constitute an individual difference variable notably different from the other individual difference factors such as language aptitude or motivation but, like these variables, beliefs influence both the

process and product of learning. Also, like a number of other individual difference variables, they are dynamic and situated.

Investigating learner beliefs

Three different approaches to investigating learners' beliefs can be distinguished (Barcelos, 2003). According to the normative approach, beliefs are seen as 'preconceived notions, myths or misconceptions', which can be studied by means of Likert-style questionnaires such as the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory— BALLI (Horwitz, 1987a). The metacognitive approach views learners' metacognitive knowledge about language learning as 'theories in action' (Wenden, 1999); these are examined by means of the content analysis of learner self-reports in semi-structured interviews. Finally, the contextual approach views learner beliefs as varying according to context; it involves collecting a variety of data types and diverse means of data analysis. Barcelos argued that the contextual approach is superior because rather than viewing beliefs as a 'mental trait', it takes into account the 'experience-based nature of beliefs' (p. 26). A fourth approach can also be identified—metaphor analysis (Ellis, 2002; Kramsch, 2003). This entails analysing the metaphors used by learners to describe their learning and constitutes an indirect means of identifying beliefs.

   Much of the research has been concerned with describing and classifying the types of beliefs learners hold (based on responses to questionnaires), the sources of beliefs, and the situated and dynamic nature of learners' belief systems. Somewhat disappointingly, very few studies have examined the relationship between beliefs and language learning.

Types of learner beliefs

In an early attempt to identify the types of beliefs held by language learners, Horwitz (1987) administered the BALLI to groups of learners. Five general areas of beliefs emerged from the analysis of the responses relating to (1) the difficulty of language learning, (2) aptitude for language learning, (3) the nature of language learning, (4) learning and communication strategies, and (5) motivation and expectations. Wenden (1986, 1987) grouped the beliefs she identified in 25 adults enrolled in a part-time advanced-level class at an American university into three general categories: (1) use

of the language (for example, the importance of 'learning in a natural way'), (2) beliefs relating to learning about the language (for example, the importance of learning grammar and vocabulary), and (3) the importance of personal factors (i.e. beliefs about the feelings that facilitate or inhibit learning, self-concept, and aptitude for learning). Both of these early studies, then, identified a very similar set of learner beliefs. For example, the learners in both Horwitz's and Wenden's studies demonstrated beliefs about the need to study grammar. This dominant belief was also reported by Schulz (2001), who found that both Colombian learners of English in Colombia and American learners of foreign languages in the US placed great store on explicit grammar study and error correction.

Later research attempted to classify rather than simply list types of beliefs and to link them to metacognitive knowledge (Wenden, 1999). Benson and Lor (1999), for example, distinguished higher-order 'conceptions' and lower-order 'beliefs'. They defined 'conceptions' as 'concerned with what the learner thinks the objects and processes of learning are' whereas beliefs are 'what the learner holds to be true about these objects and processes' (p. 464). A number of studies, including that of Benson and Lor, who investigated Chinese undergraduate students at the University of Hong Kong, suggest that learners hold conceptions about what language is and how to learn and that these conceptions fall into two broad categories, which can be glossed as 'quantitative/analytic' and 'qualitative/experiential'. Table 1 indicates the kinds of beliefs related to each. It should be noted that these two general conceptions are not mutually exclusive; learners can and often do hold a mixed set of beliefs. A number of studies (for example, Tanaka 2004) also suggest a third general conception—'self-efficacy/confidence' in language learning. This conception has more to do with how learners perceive their ability as language learners and their progress in relation to the particular context in which they are learning.

Conception	Nature of language	Nature of language learning
Quantitative/analytic	Learning an L2 is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules.	To understand the L2 it must be translated into my L1.
	In order to speak an L2 well, it is important to learn vocabulary.	Memorization is a good way for me to learn an L2.
Qualitative/experiential	Learning an L2 involves learning to listen and speak in the language.	It is okay to guess if you do not know a word.
	To learn a language you have to pay attention to the way it is used.	If I heard a foreigner of my age speaking the L2 I would go up to that person to practise speaking.

Table 1: Types of learner beliefs (based on Benson and Lor, 1999)

The sources of learners' beliefs

An interesting question is what determines learners' beliefs about language learning. Little, Singleton, and Silvius (1984, reported in Little and Singleton, 1990) surveyed random samples of undergraduate and postgraduate students of foreign languages at Trinity College, Dublin. They found that 'past experience, both of education in general and of language learning in particular, played a major role in shaping attitudes to language learning' (1990, p. 14). For example, the students stated that they preferred to learn by production activities (repeating orally and writing) rather than through receptive activities involving listening and reading. Little and Singleton claimed that this belief reflected the general nature of the instruction they had experienced (i.e. was shaped by their instructional experiences).

Another possibility is that beliefs are culturally determined. However, Horwitz (1999) in her review of the research into L2 beliefs concluded that there was insufficient evidence to show that learners' beliefs varied systematically according to cultural background. It is possible, however, that learners' beliefs are more substantially influenced by general factors such as personality and cognitive style but this remains to be shown.

The situated and dynamic nature of learner beliefs

Learner beliefs are situation specific and dynamic. Kern (1995), for example, reported changes in the beliefs of 180 students studying first-year level French at a university in the US over the course of one semester (15 weeks). He administered Horwitz's BALLI to the students during the first and last week of the semester. Analysing the responses of 180 students, Kern reported that 35 per cent to 59 per cent of the responses changed over the 15-week period. A significant change was observed in the response to the statement 'If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on', with 37 per cent of the students reporting greater agreement and 15 per cent lesser agreement. This suggests that many students had become increasingly conscious of their mistakes and were having difficulty in avoiding them. The learners also changed their responses to the statement 'Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules', with 32 per cent showing greater agreement and 20 per cent lesser agreement.

The relationship between beliefs and learning

There have to date been very few studies of the relationship between learner beliefs and learning outcomes. Abraham and Vann (1987) found some evidence that beliefs might affect learning outcomes in a case study of two learners, Gerardo and Pedro. Both learners believed that it was important to create situations for using English outside the classroom, to practise as much as possible, and to have errors corrected. Both also believed it important to participate actively in class. Gerardo, however, believed that paying conscious attention to grammar was important, while Pedro did not and expressed a strong dislike of meta-language. Also, Gerardo thought that it was important to persevere in communicating or understanding an idea, while Pedro considered topic abandonment the best strategy in some cases. Abraham and Vann characterized Gerardo's philosophy of language learning as 'broad' and Pedro's as 'narrow'. They suggested that this might have contributed to Gerardo's better TOEFL score (523 versus 473) at the end of a course of instruction. Pedro, however, did better on a test of spoken English, which might suggest that different views about language learning result in different kinds of success.

Park (1995) investigated 332 Korean university EFL students' beliefs about language learning, their language learning strategies, and the relationships among

their beliefs, strategy use, and L2 proficiency. Park found three variables predicted students TOEFL scores to some extent. One was a belief variable (i.e. beliefs about self-efficacy and social interaction) and two were strategy variables (i.e. independent/interactive strategies and metacognitive strategies). Those learners who reported having confidence in learning English and the intention of speaking to others in English tended to use English actively, especially outside the classroom, and to monitor their progress in English carefully. These behaviours were also related to improvement in L2 proficiency.

Mori (1999) investigated the beliefs of 187 university students enrolled in Japanese at various proficiency levels in the US. She examined the relationship between epistemological beliefs (i.e. beliefs about learning in general) and beliefs about language learning and also the relationship between beliefs and L2 achievement. She found that strong beliefs in innate ability (i.e. the ability to learn is inherited and cannot be improved by effort) and in avoidance of ambiguity (i.e. the need for single, clear-cut answers) were associated with lower achievement. Learners who believed that L2 learning was easy manifested higher levels of achievement. In addition, this study showed that there were belief differences between novices and advanced learners. Advanced learners were less likely to believe in simple, unambiguous knowledge or the existence of absolute, single answers than novice learners. This study also revealed that epistemological beliefs and beliefs about language learning were for the most part unrelated. In other words, learner beliefs about language learning seemed to be task and domain specific.

Tanaka and Ellis (2003) reported a study of a 15-week study-abroad programme for Japanese university students, examining changes in the students' beliefs about language learning (measured by means of a questionnaire) and in their English proficiency (measured by means of the TOEFL). The results showed statistically significant changes in the students' beliefs relating to analytic language learning, experiential language learning and especially self-efficacy/confidence during the study-abroad period. Statistically significant gains in proficiency were also reported. However, Pearson's Product Moment correlations between the students' responses to the Belief Questionnaire and their TOEFL scores both before and after the study abroad period were weak and generally statistically non-significant. There was also no relationship between changes in beliefs after a three-month period of study abroad

and gains in proficiency.

Overall these studies do not show a strong relationship between beliefs and learning/proficiency. However, it is perhaps not surprising that the relationship between beliefs and proficiency is weak, as the fact that learners hold a particular belief is no guarantee they will act on it; conflicts with other strongly held beliefs, situational constraints, or personal reasons may prevent them. If beliefs do impact on learning it is likely that they do so indirectly by influencing the kinds of learning strategies learners employ.

Three studies of learner beliefs

In order to further examine the nature of learner beliefs and their relationship to L2 proficiency three separate studies will now be summarised. These studies addressed the following research questions:

1. What beliefs about language learning do L2 learners hold?

2. To what extent and in what ways do L2 learners' beliefs about language learning change over time?

3. What is the relationship between learners' beliefs and their developing L2 proficiency?

The first study addresses research question (1) only. The second and third studies examined all three questions.

Study 1: Ellis' (2002) metaphor study of learners' beliefs

As pointed out in the introduction, most studies of learners' beliefs use some kind of self-report to investigate them (e.g. questionnaires or interviews). There are two problems with this approach. One is that learners may not always report their beliefs accurately (i.e. they may instead report the beliefs that they think they should hold and that the researcher wishes to hear). The second problem is that self-report assumes that learners are aware of the beliefs they hold and are able to verbalize them. While this may be the case with many beliefs it is also possible that some beliefs lie below the threshold of consciousness or cannot be easily and directly expressed. An alternative approach to investigating approach is to examine the metaphors that learners use when talking about their learning experiences. These provide an indirect

means of examining their belief systems.

Cognitive linguists like Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that metaphor is not 'special' or 'rare' but quite commonplace and also that metaphor is a conceptual phenomenon as well as a linguistic one. That is they reflect, how people represent the world and their experiences of it to themselves. From this perspective, therefore, conceptual metaphors can function as windows to view belief systems – people use metaphors to both construct and constrain thought. It should be noted that metaphor analysis is now an accepted tool in educational and applied linguistic enquiry (see Cameron and Low, 1999).

The participants in Ellis's study were 6 adult learners of German enrolled in beginner German courses in two tertiary institutions in London. Four of the learners were aged 18 years and were native English speakers. One learner was aged 25 and Spanish speaking and one was aged 20 and French speaking. The latter two were also fluent in English. The courses they enrolled in were part of their bachelor degree studies. They were highly intensive and focused to a considerable extent on mastering the grammar of English although there were also opportunities for using German communicatively (e.g. in content based lessons about Germany or through conversing with German speaking visitors to the class).

Five learners were invited and agreed to keep a diary throughout the course. In addition, one other learner volunteered to keep a diary. They were given detailed instruction about the kinds of topics they could comment on in their diary (e.g. their attitudes to German as a language; their response to the instructional activities and to their teacher; their sense of their own progress; the learning difficulties they experienced; their motivation to learn German). However, they were not told to report their beliefs about language learning. The diaries were collected in weekly, photocopied and then returned to the learner. Altogether they kept their diaries for 10 weeks.

The diaries were then analysed to identify and classify the metaphors they used. This involved the following steps:

1. The metaphorical expressions in the texts were identified.

2. The source and target domains of the metaphors were identified.

3. On the basis of this analysis 'main metaphors' were identified.   These

metaphors were considered to be 'conceptual' (i.e. to reflect ways in which the learners viewed and interpreted their world).

4. The entailments of each main metaphor were identified.

5. The key words of each conceptual metaphor were identified and a concordancing programme (Scott and Oxford University Press, 1999) employed to identify the linguistic realisations of each metaphor. These linguistic realizations were then listed under a heading for each conceptual metaphor. Table 2 below provides examples of the key words and linguistic citations for one of conceptual metaphors (LEARNING AS A JOURNEY).

6. Raters (two applied linguists) were asked to read through the lists and to determine whether, in their view, each realization did indeed constitute a metaphor and whether it belonged to the conceptual metaphor it was listed under.

Key word	Citation example
direction	I shot off in the wrong direction.
keep up	No matter how hard I try I just seem unable to keep up.
stuck	I find myself really stuck.
lost	I got hopelessly lost.
advancing	I feel I am advancing in German little by little.

Table 2:   key words and citation examples for the LEARNING AS A JOURNEY metaphor

The analysis yielded six main conceptual metaphors. Table 3 summarizes the six learners' use of these metaphors.

The most commonly used of these was LEARNING AS A JOURNEY (which corresponds closely to the LIFE AS A JOURNEY metaphor commented on in Lakoff and Johnson (1990)). The learners appeared to view learning as a kind of 'Pilgrim's Progress' (i.e. involving a journey where a series of difficulties had to be overcome to achieve the final goal). This metaphor was used to refer to progress overall and to progress in particular lessons. It allowed the learners to discuss both their sense of success and failure. Interestingly, it also enabled them to express both their affective and cognitive beliefs about language. Ellis (2002) suggested that learners might be using this metaphor to distance themselves from their learning experience (i.e. it

served as a kind of metacognitive strategy for evaluating their progress).

The second main conceptual metaphor was LEARNING AS A PUZZLE. This was the second most frequently used metaphor and was employed by all six learners. Learners used it to address both their problems with the German course and the solutions they found. The major problem identified through the metaphor was 'grammar', reflecting the same pre-occupation with this aspect of learning as Kern's (1995) learners. Grammar was seen as a 'puzzle' that needed to be 'cracked'. Unlike the LEARNING AS A JOURNEY metaphor, this metaphor related exclusively to cognitive aspects of language learning.

Another common main conceptual metaphor was LEARNING AS SUFFERING. The learners appeared to believe that some degree of suffering was necessary if they were to be successful in learning German. In the case of some of the learners, the suffering was intense, although it should be noted that this did not appear to have a notably adverse effect on their motivation. Rather it caused them to try harder. The source of the learners' suffering varied; in some cases it was the teachers (e.g. one learner felt anxiety whenever the teacher addressed a question that she had to answer in front of the whole class) but in others learners it arose as a result of their sense of lack of progress or failure to understand some aspect of the language. Clearly, this metaphor relates to the affective side of learning.

LEARNING AS A STRUGGLE was employed by just three of the learners. This metaphor positioned learners as both agents in the 'fight' to learn and also as 'victims' of the struggle to learn.

The final conceptual metaphor was LEARNING AS WORK (i.e. that learning German was like doing a job, requiring the learners to perform certain tasks regularly and rewarding them for their efforts. There were numerous references to 'work' and 'working' but many were probably not metaphorical. The main belief reflected through this metaphor was that learning a language required self-directed effort. However, relatively few possible entailments of the metaphor were exploited by the learners.

Learner	Metaphors				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1. Maria	*	*	*	*	*
2. Monique	*	*	*	*	*
3. Debbie		*	*		*
4. Robert	*	*	*	*	*
5. Caroline	*	*	*	*	*
6. Manuel	*	*	*	*	
Totals	61	22	14	10	18

Key: (1) LEARNING AS A JOURNEY

(2) LEARNING AS A PUZZLE

(3) LEARNING AS SUFFERING

(4) LEARNING AS A PUZZLE

(5) LEARNING AS WORK

Table 3: Summary of the learners' use of the five metaphors

What does this study show us about these learners' beliefs about language learning? First, it reveals that many of the beliefs that learners hold relate to the problems they experience while learning. All six learners found learning German problematic – both cognitively and affectively. It also shows that these learners held beliefs that positioned them as both 'agents' of their own learning and as 'patients' who undergo experiences they could not easily control (i.e. they saw themselves as both self- and other-directed). The study also showed that learner beliefs involve both cognitive and

affective aspects of language learning. In this respect the results of the metaphor analysis do not accord very closely with the beliefs measured by belief questionnaires such as Horwitz's BALLI, which includes no reference to 'hardship', 'suffering' or 'long-term effort'. One reason for this might be that when asked directly about their beliefs learners do not typically respond by mentioning their affective beliefs. To tap these it may be necessary to adopt a more indirect approach such as that afforded by metaphor analysis. Overall, this study suggests that metaphor analysis is a promising tool for examining learners' beliefs although it should also be acknowledged that the identification of metaphor remains somewhat problematic.

Study 2: Tanaka's (2004) study of Japanese learners' beliefs and language proficiency

The second study aimed to examine the changes in Japanese learners' of English belief systems when they came to study in an English-speaking country in a study abroad programme. It also sought to examine the relationship between their beliefs and language proficiency. The study covered a 12 week period from the time they first arrived in New Zealand.

A total of 132 Japanese learners of English were investigated. They were divided into two groups: (1) The New Zealand Group, which consisted of 63 Japanese students studying English in an Auckland tertiary institute for 12 weeks and (2) the Japanese Group, which consisted of 69 Japanese students who were studying English in a Japanese university in Tokyo. This second group served as a comparison group.

Data collection involved both instruments directed at investigating the learners' beliefs and their English language proficiency. All the learners completed a Beliefs Questionnaire consisting of 27 Likert scale items designed to measure beliefs relating to analytic learning, experiential learning and affective factors. Examples of the statements in the questionnaire are as follows:

1. Analytic learning:
e.g.   In order to speak English well, it is important for me to learn grammar.
        I would like my English teacher to correct all my mistakes.

2. Experiential learning:

e.g.   I can learn well by speaking with others in English.

     I can learn well be listening to the radio or watching TV

3. Affective factors:

e.g.   I am satisfied with my progress so far.

     It is possible for me not to get nervous when speaking English.

More qualitative information about the learners' beliefs was collected by means of an interview of selected learners at the end of the 12 weeks and a diary that five students kept about their English learning experiences. The learners' language proficiency was measured at the beginning and the end of the 12 week period by means of the listening and grammar sections of the Oxford Placement Test and by an oral narrative task which was recorded and transcribed and then analyzed in terms of fluency, complexity and accuracy.

No statistically significant changes in beliefs were evident in the questionnaire responses – the learners differed in the direction of the change in their responses with the result that positive and negative shifts cancelled each other out. The interview and diary data were more revealing. Most of the students expressed dissatisfaction with their English proficiency at the beginning of the study, which they attributed to the poor English language education they had received in Japan. Their views about learning English changed in a number of ways over the 12 weeks. In particular, a number of the learners became more balanced (i.e. they identified the need for both experiential and analytic approaches). This was reflected in their changing attitudes to grammar. Initially they were opposed to grammar, a reaction to the grammar-dominated lessons they had experienced in Japan. However, as time passed they came to realise that grammar was important if they were to express themselves effectively. They also became more realistic learners in that they realised that living in an English-speaking country did not lead to automatic proficiency. They came to see that learning English was a long and difficult process. Finally, they recognized over time that they could not just rely on the language lessons they received and saw the importance of their own efforts and aptitude for learning English.

The development in proficiency was not entirely as expected. The NZ group did manifest greater gains in the Oxford Placement Test scores than the Japan group. However, although the NZ showed a significant gain in fluency this was not

statistically greater than that observed in the Japan group. In other words, there was no evidence that living in New Zealand for 12 weeks led to greater improvement in fluency than learning English in communicatively oriented classrooms in Japan.

Overall the relationships between beliefs (as measured by the questionnaire) and the proficiency measures were very weak. The NZ Japanese students who reinforced their beliefs relating to experiential learning during the study abroad tended to advance more in general proficiency but a similar advantage was not observed in speaking ability. The changes in beliefs relating to analytic learning and affective states were not related to either general proficiency or speaking ability.

One clear effect of the NZ experience concerned the attributions that learners gave for their perceived success or failure in learning. They switched from naïve optimism about learning in a natural environment to recognizing the importance of their own efforts. In other words, the study abroad situation afforded them experiences that enabled them to evaluate their own progress more effectively and make changes in the way they approached learning English. However, there were considerable individual differences among the students. Not all were able to 'learn from failure' by adjusting their approach to learning – some just gave up.

Tanaka's study points to the limitations of questionnaires as a means of investigating learners' beliefs. It was clear from the qualitative data that a number of changes did take place in the learners' belief systems yet these were not captured by their responses to the questionnaire. His study also suggests that the relationship between learner beliefs and their developing proficiency may not be a strong one. This is an issue we will return to in the conclusion to this article.

Study 3: Zhong's (2008) study of a migrant ESL learner

This situated case study investigated the beliefs of one Chinese learner of English living in Auckland over a 10-week period. It aimed to examine the developments that occurred in this learner's beliefs and the relationship between her beliefs and changes in her language proficiency.

The learner was Lin (a pseudonym), a 26 year old Chinese-speaking migrant who

was living in Auckland, New Zealand. She had been living in New Zealand about 6 months when the study commenced and had enrolled as a fulltime student in an intermediate course for migrant learners in a tertiary college.

As in Tanaka's study, data relating to both beliefs and language proficiency were collected. Two interviews (one at the beginning and one at the end of the 10 week period) were conducted to elicit information about her beliefs. In an attempt to how the learner behaved in a classroom context, three observations were carried out, each complemented with a stimulated recall session where Lin was invited to comment on her behaviour in different episodes taken from the lessons. Her language proficiency was measured by means of the Oxford Placement Test and Nation's vocabulary level tests, both of which were administered at the beginning and end of the 10 week period. Also, Lin completed an oral narrative twice. This was recorded and transcribed and then analysed to provide measures her fluency, complexity and accuracy.

The main change in Lin's beliefs concerned self-efficacy – Lin gained in both her confidence to learn English and in her ability to manage her own learning. There were also a number of other changes. She became less convinced in the value of rote learning. She came to see the value of working in pairs and groups with other students. She placed less emphasis on the importance of being corrected. She broadened her belief in the importance of 'using English' to include not just practising words in contrived sentences but in actual communication. Overall, Lin developed a strong belief in the importance of self-direction and in using language and learning experientially. However, overall most of Lin's beliefs remained unchanged – e.g. her belief in the importance of vocabulary.

Zhong used the classroom observations and information gleaned from the interviews to consider the learning strategies that Lin employed. Notable strategies included keeping a vocabulary book, always sitting next to non-Chinese students in class, seeking out opportunities to communicate in English outside the classroom and constantly monitoring her own progress. These constituted a mixture of cognitive, social and metacognitive strategies.

The most notable change in Lin's proficiency was evident in vocabulary – she showed considerable gains in the 3,000 and 5,000 levels. She also made a sizable gain (12%) in the Oxford Placement Test. Like Tanaka's Japanese learners, Lin showed a

clear gain in fluency when performing the oral narrative but there was no change in complexity and the accuracy of her spoken English actually decreased.

The study suggests a relationship between Lin's changing beliefs and her developing proficiency. The greater importance she attached to communicating is reflected in the increase in fluency. However, this involved a trade-off with accuracy, which clearly became less important to her over time. Her belief in the importance of vocabulary was also reflected in large gains in this aspect of language. Methodologically this study again points to the value of collecting qualitative data to investigate learner beliefs. It also suggests that to understand how beliefs are related to developing proficiency it is helpful to examine the learner's choice of learning strategies and how these do or do not reflect beliefs. In the case of Lin there was a close relationship between her beliefs and the actions she carried out to learn English.

Conclusion

The three studies reported in this article suggest a number of important points about the nature of learner beliefs, methods for researching them and their relationship to language learning. It is clear that learners hold beliefs not just about the cognitive aspects of language and language learning (i.e. whether a language is best learned analytically or experientially) but also about affective aspects (e.g. how to manage their emotional response to their learning experiences). In particular, they hold beliefs about their own self-efficacy (i.e. how well equipped they are personally to succeed in learning the language). The distinction between cognitive and affective beliefs is an important one because it would seem that although changes in cognitive beliefs can occur (e.g. Lin changed her views about the best way to practise vocabulary) changes in affective beliefs are common. As a result of their learning experiences, learners may express greater or lesser confidence in their ability to succeed.

Learners' beliefs about language learning derive from a variety of sources – their past experience, both of education in general and of language learning in particular, their cultural background and their personality (which, in particular, may affect self-efficacy beliefs). But, as these three studies have shown, learners' beliefs are both situated and dynamic. They change as a product of new situational experiences and, in

particular, the attributions that learners make for their successes and failures. Learners who engage deeply and seriously with language learning come to recognize that learning is a slow and difficult process, involves adopting a variety of analytic and experiential strategies, and, crucially, that it depends more on them than the teacher or instructional context.

Only one of the three studies (Tanaka's) made use of a beliefs questionnaire. The results obtained from this were somewhat disappointing. In particular, the questionnaire failed to show any changes in beliefs over time. Ellis' study demonstrated the value of examining learners' beliefs indirectly through metaphor analysis. Such an analysis revealed how central affective beliefs (e.g. 'learning involves suffering') were to the beginner learners that Ellis investigated. Both Tanaka's and Zhong's studies made use of a variety of qualitative data collection methods (interviews, diaries and stimulated recall) where learners self-reported their beliefs. These methods provided clear evidence of both the dynamic and situated nature of learner beliefs. Overall these studies point to a limitation in what Barcelos (2003) referred to as the normative approach to investigating beliefs and to the need for a more contextual approach. There is also need to examine the extent to which learners act on their beliefs (i.e. the learning strategies that they employ). However, only one of the three studies (Zhong's) attempted this, showing a clear relationship between beliefs and actions in the learner this study investigated.

Overall, however, the relationship between beliefs and learning/proficiency evident in these studies does not emerge as very strong. The relationship is necessarily an indirect one. That is beliefs do not have a direct effect on language learning but are mediated by the actions that learners perform. Thus, the strength of the relationship depends on the extent to which individual learners are able or are prepared to act on their beliefs - conflicts between beliefs, situational constraints, cultural background (see Schulz 2001) or personal reasons may prevent them. Thus, in the case of some learners (such as the learner Zhong studied) beliefs can have a clear effect on learning because the learners are able and prepared to act on their beliefs. In the case of other learners (such as some of the Japanese learners in Tanaka's study), beliefs have little effect on learning because learners do not engage in learning activities compatible with them. What has emerged as especially important in these studies is the extent to which learners develop beliefs related to self-efficacy and self-directed learning as

these govern the extent to which they are prepared to work on opportunities for learning in their particular learning context.

Finally, a few comments about learner beliefs and teaching. If beliefs influence the actions that learners perform to learn an L2, they cannot be ignored by teachers. Little learning is likely if there is a mismatch between the teacher's and the students' belief systems. This suggests the need for teachers to make their own beliefs about language learning explicit, to find out about their students' beliefs, to help their students become aware of and to evaluate their own beliefs and to address any mismatch in their and their students' belief systems.

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Vocabulary Size, Background Characteristics, and Reading Skill of Korean Intensive English Students

Nolan Weil
Utah State University, USA

Bio Data:

Nolan Weil is Assistant Professor of ESL at Utah State University (USU) where he teaches courses in academic reading, writing, and oral discourse, as well as various content-based topics courses. His current research interests include vocabulary learning and individual differences in language learning.

Abstract

This study examines the relationship between breadth of vocabulary, background experiences in learning English and student skill in the reading of an academic text. The author used the Swansea Levels Tests to estimate vocabulary sizes and collected information on background characteristics via questionnaire from eleven Korean students enrolled in an Intensive English program and five Korean undergraduate students at Utah State University. Eight of the Intensive English students were subsequently trained in a think-aloud procedure and then completed a research task in which they read a 960-word essay. The task required the students to think aloud as they attempted to work out the meaning of the text. Their performances were video-recorded and their verbal reports were transcribed, and these were subjected to quantitative and qualitative analyses. Students with more total hours of high school English instruction tended to score higher on the vocabulary measure, and students with more vocabulary tended to process the text more quickly and rely less on a dictionary. However, students with larger vocabularies did not always appear to be the more skillful readers. The author finds some evidence that the better readers demonstrated superior syntactic knowledge that enabled them to rely more on the text and less on compensatory strategies.

Key Words: Reading ability, vocabulary size, individual differences, and student background

Introduction

This study arose out of my desire as a teaching professor to understand the individual differences in reading abilities of students taking an academic reading course in a university-based Intensive English Program (IEP). While grounded in a familiarity with both first and second language reading research, the current study is not primarily focused on resolving any of the ambiguities, theoretical or methodological, reported anywhere in that literature. My more modest aim has been instead more personal—that is to closely examine, in order to better understand, a specific group of readers, with whom I have had extensive experience as a reading teacher. In so doing, I have sought to inquire whether there are any discernable connections between (a) the body of literature that I have thought of as theoretical grounding for my practice as a reading teacher and (b) students with whom I am familiar as individuals whose personal and academic development has been my primary professional commitment.

As this paper will suggest, second language readers (at least as exemplified by a group of Korean students in one IEP), even when they are presumed by virtue of placement procedures and promotion standards to be at roughly the same general level of reading development, often have widely divergent reading capabilities. While it is often difficult to pin these down within the context of the activities and routines of a reading classroom, this research demonstrates how the use a think-aloud technique can make a student's reading processes somewhat more transparent, revealing much about the student's strengths and weaknesses as a reader.

Background

The ability to read is a critical academic skill, and efforts to understand reading have yielded a prodigious literature. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to conduct an extensive review of this literature, it is not hard to find such reviews (e.g., Bernhardt, 2005; Grabe, 1991; 2004; Pang, 2008). By virtue of a cursory overview, however, it is probably fair to say that most reading researchers concerned with understanding the cognitive underpinnings of reading now agree that skillful reading is a complex process in which comprehension results from the integration of bottom up/data driven processes and top down/knowledge based processes although just how this works is not well understood (Carrell, 1988; Eskey & Grabe, 1988).

Increasingly detailed specifications of what the lower level and upper level processes might include have emerged over the last thirty years. Koda (2005) has

published an impressive synthesis of much of this work, noting that the earliest attempts to explain second language reading relied almost exclusively on work in first language reading. Typical of this work is that it often strove to propose some sort of abstract model that might explain competent reading. Other research strands have sought to contrast how competent readers differ from less competent readers. As Koda makes clear, these agendas were effectively advanced through the widespread adoption of a component skills approach following the work of Carr and Levy (1990). In her review, Koda advocates strongly for competency dissection via a component skills approach as particularly well suited for advancing our knowledge of second language reading, noting in particular the increasing attention that researchers have devoted to the influences of L1 reading processes on L2 reading development. At the risk of gross oversimplification, the large body of work that Koda (2005) has analyzed generally demonstrates that fluent reading is accomplished largely by virtue of automatic word recognition, a reasonably large vocabulary, automatic syntactic parsing, and knowledge of text structure and discourse organization. Moreover, a reader's background knowledge is also a major factor in determining how well a reader will be able to comprehend a text.

In addition, we are coming to recognize the important role that cross-linguistic factors play in explaining second language reading ability (Koda, 2005). Indeed, research has consistently shown that while factors related to a reader's second language knowledge (especially lexical and syntactic knowledge) account for about 30% of the variance in proficiency among second language readers, first language reading ability accounts for about 20%, a small yet not easily discounted proportion, leaving 50% of the variance unexplained (Berhardt, 2005). Based on these findings, Bernhardt has proposed a compensatory model of second language reading in which the unexplained variance is explained by reference to factors such as motivation, interest, content and domain knowledge, and ability to use comprehension strategies. The model suggests that L2 reading competence rests on the three sources just indicated: L1 literacy, L2 language knowledge, and other sources outside of L1 and L2 specific knowledge. These three sources operate interactively such that deficiencies in certain knowledge sources, for example, L2 vocabulary, may be compensated by other resources, such as background knowledge or strategic action.

That effective readers are not merely efficient processors of perceptual and linguistic information encoded in text is indicated by studies that have employed

think-aloud methods to observe readers' strategic interactions with text. As Pressley and Afflerbach (1995) have shown in an analysis based on many of these studies, good readers typically engage in a great variety of strategic activities before, during, and after reading in order to facilitate optimal comprehension. According to Pressley and Afflerbach, strategic reading is particularly in evidence when the text is challenging and the reader has a vested interest in making meaning of the text (as for example when academic or professional goals may be at stake). Good readers, for example, approach a text with purpose, setting goals, sizing up a text, and deciding how to read it. They sometimes engage in traditionally recognized reading behaviors such as previewing, skimming, scanning, selective reading, and activating prior knowledge. During reading, they do such things as adjust reading speed according to text difficulty, reread, paraphrase ideas, make inferences, interrogate the writer's purposes and assumptions, and critically evaluate arguments and conclusions. Good readers continually monitor their comprehension. They develop hypotheses about the meaning of the text, and they continually evaluate their understanding, noticing discrepancies between previously constructed meanings and developing meanings. Good readers evaluate the relevance of unknown words and phrases, taking measures to resolve their meanings when these seems crucial, but often skipping over them when doing so will not seriously impede understanding. These examples do not exhaust the range of activities that characterize strategic readers, as a perusal Pressley and Afflerbach's extensive review of the matter suggests.

Research context

The current study was inspired in large part by my experience over several consecutive semesters as instructor of record for a level-three reading course within a four-level pre-university program at Utah State University. The course, entitled *Reading Authentic Texts,* is an intermediate level course that meets three times a week over a fifteen-week semester. It is designed to help learners of English develop the reading skills and strategies that they will build upon in level four, where the reading becomes increasingly academic in nature. Text types introduced at level three, while they include some textbook excerpts, consist primarily of texts written in a less academic style which are nevertheless likely to be encountered by entry-level college readers in general education courses (e.g., popular magazine articles, and book excerpts, newsletters, and web pages).

In designing the course, I attempted to take into account the probable implications of contemporary theory and research in reading as highlighted in the previous section: the importance of building background knowledge where it may be lacking, the role of vocabulary development and word knowledge, the facilitative effects of knowledge of text structure and discourse cues, the benefits of strategic knowledge, and so on. As befitting a reading class, a considerable proportion of class time was devoted to silent reading. In-class reading activities were, moreover, often coupled with various tasks designed to accomplish two purposes: 1) to focus readers' attention on some particular aspect of text and/or reading process, and 2) to make the students' interactions with the text more visible as a way of trying to assess student performance while gaining feedback to facilitate the pacing of instruction.

The impetus for the current study arose out of observations gathered while trying to implement this plan of instruction. Indeed, given what seemed to be a well-specified reading task, some students were extraordinarily slow, even apparently disengaged, prompting me to puzzle over the possible reasons. Was the task too challenging? Was student nonperformance merely a reluctance to make a mistake that the teacher might see as he went around glancing over shoulders? Was it simply a lack of motivation? Was it resistance due to a mismatch between the teacher's instructional style and the students' expectations of what ought to go on in a reading class?

During informal discussions, students frequently mentioned lack of vocabulary as the primary source of difficulty in dealing with course readings, and I began to be quite interested in the possibility of measuring the vocabulary size of students. I was also curious regarding their strategic capabilities, particularly the extent to which they were able to compensate for limited vocabulary knowledge, and finally, it seemed natural to inquire as to the extent of preparation students had had prior to their enrollment in USU's Intensive English program.

Since a good deal of what we know about strategic aspects of reading has come through the use of think-aloud reports (e.g., see Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995), the current study was designed to employ a think-aloud methodology as the principal component. A think-aloud report involves having a human subject solve a problem (in the case of reading that problem might be comprehending a text) and to verbalize whatever thoughts come immediately to mind while working on a problem solution, i.e., working out an understanding of a text, in the case of reading. While think-aloud methods have shown themselves to be robust, they are not without problems

(Ericcson & Simon, 1993). One difficulty in using them with second language learners is that limited fluency in the second language can preclude getting good data unless the researcher can accommodate verbal reports in the participants' first language (Cohen, 1998). Consequently, I decided to focus exclusively on Korean students since Korean language support was readily available at Utah State University and since Koreans represent a consistently substantial proportion of students in the Intensive English program.

Given this situated research perspective, the following questions were set forth as the focus of this study:

1. What are the vocabulary sizes of intermediate Korean readers in the program?
2. How do these compare with Korean undergraduate students of junior or senior standing?
3. What are the background characteristics of intermediate Korean readers in the program?
4. Are there any systematic relationships between background characteristics and vocabulary size?
5. How do intermediate Korean readers go about making meaning of a challenging text with unknown vocabulary?

Methods

Participants

Participants were solicited from among all Korean students attending level 3 classes at the Intensive English Language Institute at Utah State University during the 2006-2007 academic year. Korean undergraduates having at least junior or senior standing at USU were also invited as a comparison group. Participants received a cash compensation of $50 if they participated in all of the research tasks. Nineteen students agreed to participate in the study (14 Intensive English students and 5 undergraduate students). Eleven of the Intensive English students produced usable data; three were eliminated because they elicited concern on at least two out of three counts: 1) they had error scores higher than 10 on the vocabulary measure, 2) they did not provide answers to all questions on the background questionnaire, 3) they failed to return for the think-aloud training and reading task. (Three of the eleven students remaining did

not participate in the think-aloud phase of the study, but completed the vocabulary assessment and produced complete data on the general background questionnaire, so these data were retained and used for quantitative analyses.

Questionnaire

Students completed a general background questionnaire inspired by one created by Kim and Margolis (2000) to estimate Korean students' exposure to spoken English. Additions were made to the original questionnaire in order to obtain an estimate of the total number of hours of English instruction that participants had received in their high schools in Korea. In addition, because L2 reading proficiency is partially predicted by L1 reading proficiency (Bernhardt, 2005), the questionnaire was expanded in order to explore exposure to written English, which the Kim and Margolis questionnaire did not do. The intent of these additions was to gather indirect evidence regarding the degree to which the study participants were avid readers in Korean. The assumption, for which there is some empirical evidence, was that participants who were more avid readers in Korean might be more likely to possess superior L1 reading skills that might transfer to the L2 context. (See, for instance, Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995). The adapted questionnaire also included several questions regarding how participants spent their time outside of Intensive English classes. While the questionnaire was written in English, a native-Korean speaking colleague explained and administered the questionnaire and was available to clarify any questions if necessary. (The adapted questionnaire appears in Appendix A.)

Estimation of vocabulary size

Students' vocabulary sizes were estimated by means of the Swansea Vocabulary Levels Test (Meara, 2005) and the Swansea Advanced Vocabulary Levels Test (Meara & Miralpeix, 2006). These two tests, from a suite of tests known collectively as the Lex Tests, are computer-based tests (downloadable from http://www.swan.ac.uk/cals/calsres/lognostics/) and designed to run on a Windows platform. The user interface is simple and data from the test is stored in ASCII format, so it can be read using any word-processor. The test employs a YES/NO strategy for assessing vocabulary knowledge in a context-free setting and is designed to estimate recognition vocabulary across ten 1000-word frequency bands (K1-K10).

Each program presents a selection of 20 words from five different frequency bands along with four pseudo-words. For each word the student has to decide whether or not he or she knows the meaning of the word and to click on a yes button or a no button. On each of the tests, the program automatically estimates the proportion of real words that the test-taker "knows" in each frequency band and displays a total raw score for the test. The program also calculates an adjusted vocabulary score for each frequency band by subtracting the rate of false-claims (i.e. error scores) from the hit-rate (i.e., the number of real words claimed). In the current research vocabulary size refers to adjusted vocabulary scores.

Think-aloud training

Participants were trained in the think-aloud technique (Ericsson & Simon, 1993). First they observed one of the researchers demonstrating the think-aloud method with a text in the researcher's second language (Spanish). They were then given an unfamiliar text to read in English and asked to verbalize what was going through their minds as they tried to work out an understanding of the text. Participants were initially put in pairs and took turns reading and verbalizing their thoughts to their partner. They were instructed to think-aloud, particularly when they encountered difficulty understanding. After the initial training task, participants individually performed a second training task identical to the research task. As the participants performed this task, a researcher coached them by periodically reminding them to verbalize their thoughts, especially if the participant lapsed into silence for more than 30 seconds. Training continued until each participant felt comfortable with the protocol.

Reading task

Study participants were asked to read an authentic text of about 960 words, imagining that they had been asked to read it as a course requirement and that they needed to be able to pass a test on the content of the reading. The text, entitled *Invisible Women* (Choi, 1999), was from *The Bedford Guide for College Writers,* a writing textbook with a wide selection of readings that college freshman are likely to encounter in general education courses in an American university. (The full text appears in

Appendix B.) Participants were instructed to use whatever method they would ordinarily use to work out the meaning of a difficult text. They were told that they could highlight, underline, annotate, take notes, or use a dictionary (bilingual or English only) - whatever they would ordinarily do. They were asked to think aloud as they proceeded, and it was emphasized that they should say whatever was going through their mind, particularly at times when they encountered difficulties understanding the text. They were further instructed that upon reaching the end of a paragraph, they should summarize the paragraph. It was made clear that they could think aloud in Korean or in English, or that they could alternate as they pleased.

Students had access to both a Korean-English dictionary and an English dictionary if they chose to use one in order to determine the meaning of unknown vocabulary. On-line dictionaries were accessed by way of a front-end-GUI (Graphical User Interface) system using C# programming language running on a Microsoft.Net platform. When using the dictionary, students entered the word they wished to lookup in the text box provided by the GUI system which passed the word to an existing English-Korean or English-English dictionary web site (http://kr.dic.yahoo.com/search/eng/). Looked up words were also stored in a Microsoft Access database as a way of monitoring the students' use of the dictionary during reading.

Throughout the performance of the task, a video camcorder, positioned over the participant's right shoulder, captured physical interaction with the text (e.g., annotation) and recorded the participant's verbalizations. Due to scheduling constraints, time allotted for the reading task was held to 25 minutes, and students were interrupted after 25 minutes, regardless of whether or not they had completed the entire reading.

Data analysis

Adjusted scores on both Swansea Levels Tests were combined to yield an estimate of each participant's total vocabulary. These and all quantifiable data from the background questionnaire were input into a database and descriptive statistics were generated, including correlations between vocabulary size and other variables of interest.

Videos of each subjects' performance on the reading task were burned to DVD. I

viewed each video several times to get an overall impression and then reviewed each task carefully to produce a narrative description of task performance. The videos were also viewed by a Korean native-speaker who transcribed any utterances made in Korean and translated these into English. A second Korean native-speaker checked the transcripts for accuracy and completeness. The transcripts were coded based on categories derived from Pressley & Afflerbach (1995). There was only one rater, the author, so unfortunately the objectivity of the ratings was not verified by inter-rater reliability measures. The video-recordings and coded transcripts were used to provide a description of each participant's performance on the reading task.

Results and discussion

Vocabulary size

Results of the Vocabulary Levels Tests were used to estimate the vocabulary sizes of the Intensive English students and the Korean undergraduate students. Adjusted vocabulary scores and error scores for each subject were compiled by summing the scores for all ten frequency bands of the tests. Means and standard deviations for each group were computed. (These results are summarized in Table 1.) As anticipated, the mean vocabulary score for the undergraduate students was substantially greater than that of the Intensive English students. (This difference was statistically significant (t (13) = -2.58, p = .011). The high error scores for Intensive English Participants 1 and 3 raised concerns regarding the validity of the estimate for these two participants, since adjusted scores are calculated by reducing the total words that a subject claims by a proportion derived on the basis of false-claims. Participant 1, for instance, actually claimed knowledge of an incredible 8,050 words, which was reduced to a bare 2,800 based on her 21 false claims. Participant 3, while not quite as extreme is a similar case. Their later performances on the reading tasks, however, tend to reinforce the inference that the breadth of their vocabularies is indeed probably lower than any of their peers.

Table 1. Adjusted Vocabulary Scores and Error Scores: Intensive English vs. Undergraduates

Intensive English Students			Undergraduate Students		
Participant	Adjusted Score	Error	Participant	Adjusted Score	Error
1	2800	21	2	5200	0
3	3600	15	1	5550	5
6	4100	2	3	6150	4
2	4600	6	5	6400	4
8	4800	7	4	6600	5
11	5000	7			
7	5600	8			
9	5600	1			
5	5700	2			
10	5750	2			
4	6400	7			
Mean	4905	7.1	Mean	5980	3.6
SD	1070	6.11	SD	588	2.07

To determine whether the results of the Levels Tests conformed to the test's basic assumption that learners are likely to know relatively fewer words at each successive frequency band, trend lines were drawn for each participant across the ten frequency bands (K1-K10). A visual inspection of these trend lines suggested that while there are some obvious irregularities, on the average, estimated vocabulary tends to decrease across frequency bands. An argument can therefore be reasonably made for accepting the test as a valid, albeit, rough measure of the vocabulary levels for most of the participants, except perhaps Intensive English Participants 1 and 3 as discussed previously.

Background characteristics of Korean intermediate intensive English students

Among the Intensive English students that volunteered for this study, women outnumbered men 9 to 2. The youngest was 18 and the oldest 37; most were between 22-24 years old. Time in the U.S. ranged from 3-11 months. Nine had previously attended college in Korea. The average years of attendance among those who reported college attendance was 3.1 years.

The questionnaire covered many different aspects of the students' previous instruction and general exposure to English, as well as questions related to types and extent of reading in their first language (i.e., Korean). Of particular interest is the relationship between estimated vocabulary size and some of these variables. Table 2

summarizes selected categories of information related to instructional experiences and reading practices in the one year prior to enrollment in the Intensive English Language Institute. As the table shows, variables that one might suspect to be associated with vocabulary size vary widely between subjects. For example, total hours of high school English instruction ranged from a low of 20 hours to a high of 2160. Indeed, each of the variables summarized in the table shows considerable variation.

Table 2. Hours of Instruction in English and Time Spent Reading

Vocabulary	High School (total hrs)	Hakwon* (total hrs)	Private (total hrs)	Reading/ English (hrs/mo)	Reading/ Korean (hrs/wk)	Textbooks (Korean) (hrs/wk)
2800	32	1440	192	4.0	12.5	0
3600	384	36	0	8.0	1.5	0
4100	216	132	0	1.5	25.5	1.5
4600	384	116	32	1.5	11.0	4.0
4800	540	1660	888	0	11.5	4.0
5000	540	936	0	4.0	8.5	8.0
5600	1600	576	256	4.0	49.5	12.0
5600	2160	1008	800	8.0	25.5	12.0
5700	20	24	24	4.0	48.0	8.0
5750	2160	0	16	1.5	7.0	12.0
6400	1152	324	0	12.0	5.5	8.0

* (A hakwon is a private after-school institute, often referred to in English as a 'cram school.')

To explore whether there were any statistical relationships between vocabulary size and the variables displayed in Table 2, correlation coefficients were calculated (see Table 3). These suggest a moderate relationship between vocabulary size and total hours of high school English instruction ($r = .62$) as well as a strong relationship between vocabulary size and textbook reading in Korean ($r = .86$).

Table 3. Correlations between Vocabulary Size and Selected Background

	High School (total hrs)	Hakwon (total hrs)	Private (total hrs)	Reading/ English (hrs/mo)	Pleasure Reading/ L1 (hrs/wk)	Textbooks Reading/L1 (hrs/wk)
Vocabulary	.62	-.26	.07	.28	.29	.86

Characteristics

Another interesting analysis involves an examination of vocabulary size in relation to how Korean Intensive English students spend their time outside of class. These data are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Hours Per Week Studying and Socializing Outside of Class with Various Groups

Vocabulary	Studying	Americans	Non-Korean Internationals	Koreans
2800	1.5	0	0	8.0
3600	8.0	0	0	0
4100	12.0	0	1.5	12.0
4600	4.0	2.0	0	12.0
4800	4.0	1.5	0	8.0
5000	0	0	0	1.5
5600	8.0	1.5	0	12.0
5600	12.0	4.0	1.5	4.0
5700	4.0	2.0	8.0	8.0
5750	1.5	1.5	1.5	12.0
6400	8.0	12.0	8.0	2.0
Totals	**63.0**	**24.5**	**20.5**	**79.5**

From this table, it is evident that as a group, Korean Intensive English students reported spending more hours per week (79.5) socializing with other Koreans than in any other activity. Hours spent studying (63.0) ranks second. As a group, study participants reported spending only about 24 hours a week socializing with Americans and about 20 hours a week socializing with non-Korean international students. A visual inspection of this data, however, suggests that students with higher vocabulary scores were more likely to socialize with Americans and/or non-Korean international students. In fact, vocabulary size is moderately correlated with the tendency to socialize with Americans and/or non-Korean international students (as indicated in Table 5). It is tempting to hypothesize that Korean students who socialize with non-Koreans benefit from more opportunities to pick up new vocabulary. On the other

hand, it could also be the case that students with more vocabulary are in general more proficient and therefore, more confident in their ability to socialize effectively.

Table 5. Correlations between Vocabulary Size and Outside-of-Class Socializing

	with Americans	with non-Koreans	with Americans and/or non-Koreans
Vocabulary	.64	.58	.68

Quantitative analysis of reading task

Eight Intensive English students participated in the think-aloud reading task. Analyses of their performances, based on close examinations of video recordings and audio transcripts, are illuminating. What follows is first a quantitative analysis of the relative effectiveness of each participant, after which I will present a qualitative analysis.

   One measure of reading effectiveness is speed. Given two readers equally invested in understanding a text, one might reasonably suppose that if one reader finishes more quickly than another, then the faster reader is the more effective reader (ignoring for the moment differences in degree of comprehension). Under this assumption, how do the Intensive English students compare with one another? One way to answer this question is to ask which participant finished the task most quickly and to use this time as the index against which to compare all the other participants. Table 6 illustrates these relationships.

Table 6. Summary data for reading task

Participant	Vocabulary	Approx # words read	% Read 18 minutes	# Words looked-up	Look-up rate
1	2800	268	28%	18	1/15
3	3600	384	40%	19	1/20
6	4100	508	53%	6	1/85
2	4600	384	40%	6	1/64
7	5600	495	52%	8	1/62
9	5600	700	73%	9	1/78
5	5700	960	100%	1	-
4	6400	806	84%	11	1/81

   As Table 6 shows, Participant 5 (with a vocabulary of 5700 words) was the fastest reader, finishing the 960-word text in 18 minutes. On the other hand, Participant 1

(with a vocabulary of only 2800) was the slowest, reading only 268 words or 28% as much in the same time. Overall, Table 6 suggests a systematic relationship between vocabulary size and the relative proportion of the text each reader was able to finish in 18 minutes. This is confirmed by the correlation coefficient (r = .82) and a scatter plot showing a strong linear relationship between the two variables (See Figure 1). In general, the larger a participant's vocabulary, the more of the text the participant was able to read in 18 minutes.

Figure 1: Relationship Between Vocabulary Size and Proportion of Text Completed
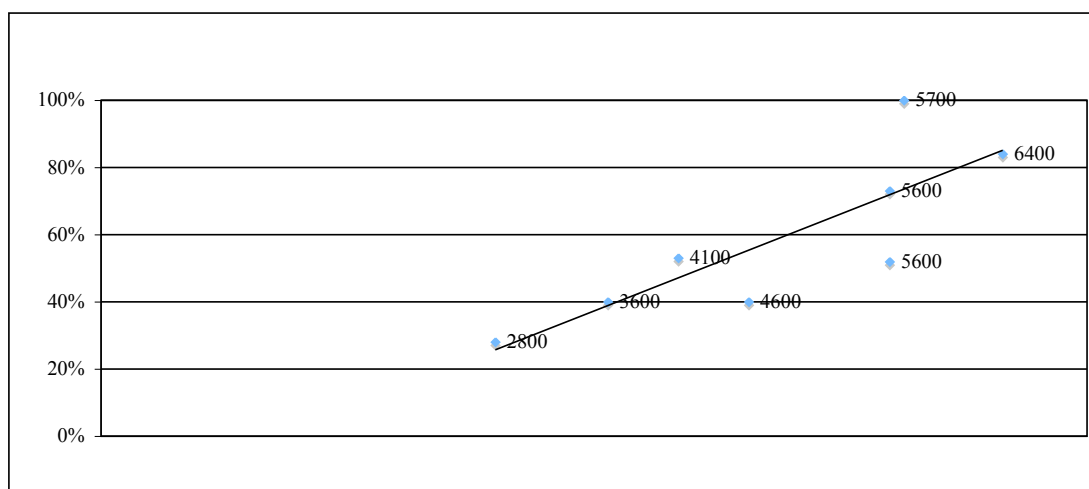

Table 6 also illustrates the degree to which each participant relied on a dictionary in his/her effort to comprehend the text. This tendency is indicated by the lookup-rate, or the average number of words each participant looked up per running word of text read. The participant with the lowest vocabulary size (2800) looked up, on average, about one in every fifteen words, followed by one in twenty words for the participant with the next to lowest vocabulary size (3600). In contrast, the participant with the largest vocabulary (6400) looked up only one in every eighty-one words, and the participant with the second largest vocabulary (5700) looked up only one word in the entire 960-word text. While the relationship between vocabulary size and look up rate is highly correlated (r = - .81), the relationship is not a linear one, and there are several exceptional examples. For example, Participant 6 with a vocabulary of only 4100 looked up only one word in every eighty-five, a look up rate much lower than all but Participant 5, who looked up only one word out of the entire 960-word text. Indeed, a qualitative analysis of each participant's performance on the reading task suggested

that Participants 5 and 6 were the most skillful readers. I turn now to a consideration of the characteristically different ways in which participants managed the reading task.

Qualitative analysis of reading task

While vocabulary size was closely associated with more rapid reading, as discussed above, vocabulary size alone did not distinguish the more skillful from the less skillful readers. For instance, the reader with the largest vocabulary did not appear to be the strongest reader while one of the strongest readers had a rather small vocabulary. Close examination of eight of the Intensive English students by means of video recordings and verbal reports suggested that the most effective readers approached the text in a qualitatively different way. Specifically, the readers that came across as most competent were better able to: 1) compensate effectively for vocabulary limitations, 2) use the text's syntactic structure to make meaning, and 3) make connections between what they were immediately focused on in the text and the overall argument to which it related. What follows are narrative descriptions and discussion of the performances of four different readers, each with apparently distinctive capabilities. (The readers have all been given pseudonyms.)

So-jeong

So-jeong had the lowest adjusted vocabulary score (2800) of all the participants. Viewing her video-recorded efforts to work out the meaning of the text, *Invisible Women,* one cannot help being struck by the impression of floundering that her efforts convey.

  She begins immediately with no previewing of the text. She reads the first two sentences aloud:

> For me, growing up in a small suburb on the outskirts of Seoul, the adults' preference for boys seemed quite natural. All the important people that I knew–doctors, lawyers, policemen, and soldiers–were men.

  As she encounters the phrase *"growing up,"* she says its equivalent in Korean and continues reading aloud in English. She underlines *suburb* and *preference* as she goes. It takes one minute to complete this. Immediately upon getting through these first two sentences, she looks up *suburb,* finds the Korean translation and annotates her text.

Next, she turns her attention to the word *outskirt*; she pronounces it many times and seems to be trying to figure out what it means from the context, but after nearly 30 seconds at it, she finally resorts to the dictionary. Again, she finds the Korean translation and annotates her text.

She continues trying to work out the meaning of the first sentence, looking up preference in the process. She concludes (thinking aloud in Korean) that preference has the same meaning as like. She repeats "preference for" several times, seemingly aware of the collocational importance of the preposition for. She asks whether preference is an idiom, and then hits upon the dictionary entry that enables her to resolve the mystery. "Ah-ha, to prefer. Preference for means to prefer something." Having now worked on this bit of text for about 3 minutes 45 seconds, she ventures the following interpretation:

> So, growing up in a small suburb on the outskirts of Seoul, I like it more after I get older. Preference?

She still seems puzzled about what preference refers to. Next, she asks: "What does natural mean?" She looks up natural. Then, she concludes, "So, the adults seemed to prefer boys," finally indicating some understanding of a key proposition. By now 4 minutes 40 seconds have passed. Still, she does not move on. She asks whether natural has another meaning. Noting that natural is an adjective, she then ventures the following:

> They prefer natural law. It seems clear for them to follow the natural law. It is important for everyone, doctors, lawyers—ah-ha, this is it.

It does not seem that she has at all gotten the writer's point, or rather she passes right over it without recognizing that she has stated it. By this time, 6 minutes have elapsed.

It takes another 6 minutes 42 seconds to finish the first paragraph. By the time she finishes the paragraph, she has looked up 9 of the words in the paragraph. Strategically, she has relied primarily on questioning, followed by guessing, then confirming by consulting a dictionary. It is not clear whether her guesses are instances of retrieval from memory or inferences based on context, but it does not appear that she has understood enough of the text to effectively construct meaning from context.

Her comments at the end of the paragraph are supposed to summarize the ideas of the paragraph, but this summary suggests an idiosyncratic understanding of the passage that does not reflect the writer's argument:

> Men want to live in Seoul. I believe doctors, lawyers, and policemen definitely want to live in Seoul. However, lots of girls want to stay at home, obey and be housekeepers. Daughters have to do housekeeping. They have to help. Nonsense! We have to get rid of this.

These last two remarks appear to be personal responses to what she has understood. So-jeong seems to have understood the writer's message to be that men and women have different preferences regarding where they live and that girls prefer to stay at home—a situation that she finds unacceptable. Her interpretation contains elements of content from the passage, but she fails to grasp the argument.

So-jeong's performance continues in much the same way. In 22 minutes, she struggles through only 2 paragraphs (or 266 out of the 960 word essay). The primary activities evident in her transcript are queries related to the meanings of words and observations about words, e.g., meanings, parts of speech, whether a word is a compound, whether a word has been previously encountered, or whether it is new. She looks up a total of 18 words (9 from the first paragraph and 9 from the second), and yet there is almost no evidence of genuine comprehension. The video and think-aloud suggest that her reading is constrained not only by a limited vocabulary, but also by a limited syntactic knowledge, which prevents her from coming to a clear understanding of even isolated propositions. It is no wonder then that she misses the broader argument.

Mi-ae

At 5700, Mi-ae's vocabulary score, while not the highest, is significantly above the mean (4905) for Intensive English students. Moreover, her handling of the reading task conveys none of the laboriousness observed with So-jeong. In fact, Mi-ae was by far the most efficient reader, finishing the reading task in 18 minutes while no other reader finished in less than 25 minutes.

Mi-ae does not preview the text. She dives right in, reading aloud in English, occasionally rendering portions in Korean. She circles the word men; she underlines housekeepers and housewives. She underlines the word consolation near the end of the paragraph, commenting, "Consolation? I don't know this word." However, she does not seem concerned about the unknown word, and simply continues reading. Within 1 minute 50 seconds, she has completed the first paragraph of 162 words. She then immediately paraphrases the paragraph in Korean:

> This paragraph says men were able to be important people, but women had to be housekeepers. So the author wanted to be the wife of a president.

At 2 minutes 10 seconds, she is beginning paragraph 2:

> These attitudes toward women, widely considered the continuation of an unbroken chain of tradition, are, in fact, only a few hundred years old, a relatively short period considering Korea's long history.

Her reading of this first sentence involves some backtracking and rereading. The sentence is cluttered with modifying phrases, and she appears to use a processing strategy to separate the main clauses from the long string of modifying phrases.

By 3 minutes 50 seconds, she has finished paragraph 2 and has moved on to paragraph 3:

> Throughout the Koryo period, which lasted from 918 to 1392, and throughout the first half of the Yi dynasty, according to Laurel Kendall in her book *View from the Inner Room*, women were important and contributing members of the society and not **marginal** and dependent as they later became.

Paragraph 3 prompts her to slow down and reread several times. She underlines portions as she works. For the first time, she looks up a word—"marginal." First, however, she reads past the word. Then, she backtracks and reads portions of the text before the word. She appears to be looking for clues that will allow her to infer the meaning from context. Finally, she arrives at the word marginal once again, underlines it, and stops to look it up. She then continues without annotating marginal. (This is the only word in the entire text that she looks up.)

Mi-ae moves quickly through the text (compared with all other readers) finishing in just a little over 18 minutes. There is little verbal evidence of strategic activity. The transcript consists mostly of alternations between quiet reading in English and direct paraphrasing (in Korean), punctuated by end of paragraph summaries. Paragraph summaries are succinct and to the point. The impression is of automatic processing of the text, with instructions to think aloud interpreted as a request for translation. (It is not clear how well the process actually conforms to Mi-ae's usual approach to reading in this respect, and the researchers failed to probe this issue after the reading.) In summary, the video-recording of her performance and the think-aloud report clearly reveal that Mi-ae reads fluently, monitors comprehension carefully and efficiently, judges the importance of unknown words, skipping over them when they do not seem critical to her developing understanding of the text, uses a dictionary as a last resort,

rereads as necessary, recalls where previously encountered information is located and reviews it as necessary (even when it requires turning pages to locate it). In other words, she exhibits many of the characteristics attributed in the reading literature to good readers.

Yeon-mi

Yeon-mi was an interesting case, and one of the most revealing by virtue of her ability to perform the think-aloud procedure in a natural and unselfconscious way. Much of the verbal reporting is in English with occasional switching between English and Korean. Although Yeon-mi's adjusted vocabulary score is only 4100 (well below the mean of 4905), careful analysis of her video-recorded performance and think-aloud report suggest a skillful reader, able to overcome limitations in vocabulary knowledge with little apparent difficulty.

As Yeon-mi begins the reading task, she takes note of the title, quickly checks on the length of the reading, and then begins at the beginning, ignoring the statement of objectives preceding the reading. She reads aloud quietly in English, underlining outskirts and preferences as she passes over them. She finishes the second sentence within one minute and circles men. She proceeds through the third sentence underlining housekeepers and housewives as she goes, and she circles obey. Yeon-mi pauses briefly after the third sentence, apparently reflecting on the credibility of the claims, then says, "Yeah, in Korea."

As she continues, she underlines two phrases as she comes upon them: birth of a boy was a greatly desired and celebrated… and girl was a disappointing… Reaching the word accompanied (on the next to last line of the paragraph), she stops: "Accompany, accompany. I know company." She circles ac- and announces that she will look this word up. She does so and annotates her text. She then asks: "What is the meaning of this sentence?" Continuing from accompany, she reads: "…accompanied by the frequent words of consolation for the sad parents." She adds to her annotation an additional note, saying, "This meaning is used with 'with or by;' there's by…" noticing the collocation accompanied by. She goes onto the last sentence apparently in an attempt to find a context clue for the meaning of the phrase containing "accompanied by." She identifies consolation as a problematic word, and looks it up in the dictionary, checking the pronunciation by playing a sound clip, and annotating her text in Korean. The meaning suddenly becomes clear to her; she expresses it in

Korean. "Oh, I see. So after the birth of a girl, parents consoled themselves." Then she reviews the final sentence. This has taken about 4 minutes 40 seconds (considerably longer than Mi-ae, the fastest reader). However, Yeon-mi summarizes the paragraph effectively in English drawing attention to the distinctions between what the writer felt men became and what women became (in Korean society) and how the writer wanted to be the wife of a president, ending again on what happens when parents have a girl. She notes that the parents "consolate" suggesting an attempt to generate a verb. She returns to the dictionary—perhaps to try to find "consolate." (Unfortunately, her action is not captured, but she utters a puzzled, "Mmmm;" perhaps she did not find what she was looking for.)

Going on to the second paragraph, Yeon-mi reads quietly in English, pausing over the word continuation to remark (in Korean), "It is a noun." Perhaps she recognizes that she knows another form of the word. She continues until the end of the sentence, and remarks, "That's too long sentence." Going back to the beginning, she shows evidence of isolating the subject of the sentence and skips over the long modifying phrase to find the main verb phrase. Then, she continues right on to the next sentence. She shows recognition of the historical references in paragraph two and immediately picks up on the significance:

> So women were treated as equals during the Koryo period and Yi dynasty. This is the main idea of the paragraph.

Throughout her reading, Yeon-mi encounters a number of problematic words and passages, and she demonstrates a variety of strategies for dealing with them. The transcript reveals many instances where she makes decisions that seem to be based on an evaluation of a word's importance for understanding the text. Several times, she says, "I don't know this word; just pass it…" Sometimes she queries, "Do I need the meaning? Yeah, maybe it's important." She remembers unknown words that she has passed, and when they recur, she decides that their meaning should be resolved. For instance, when she encounters *"privileges"* in paragraph 2, she passes it without looking it up. However, when she encounters it again in paragraph 4, she laughs quietly and looks it up.

She seems to use a dictionary only when necessary. When she uses a dictionary, she uses it strategically. When there are several meanings for a word, she attempts to find the one that fits the context, using structural cues when possible (as in the example of "accompanied by" described above). She seems to appreciate the value of using a

dictionary selectively; she usually uses Korean-English although in one instance, she makes a judgment that the English dictionary might be more useful).

When there are clear rhetorical clues to the meaning of a word, she relies on them. For instance, she quickly generates an inference for the word "abased" in the sentence, "Men are honored, but women are abased," by noticing that they are contrasting ideas. It is not clear whether she has a precise understanding of the word "honored," but she quickly concludes that "abased is bad meaning." Within long, complex sentences, she makes judicious decisions regarding where the important information resides, and she abandons what she has decided is unimportant and focuses on trying to understand what she has determined to be important. Despite a fairly limited vocabulary, her knowledge of English syntax seems more than adequate for the task. Moreover, she is good at honing in on the key points.

Watching Yeon-mi read, one gets the impression of a skillful reader, somewhat slowed down by vocabulary limitations, but with an arsenal of skillfully managed compensatory strategies for effectively and efficiently processing a text. She handles the text slowly and deliberately, and while she is not always able to come to a precise understanding of each idea in a paragraph, she appears to know how to simplify a complicated sentence and get to the crux of an argument. Her interpretations are congruent with the main ideas the writer expresses and are not merely idiosyncratic associations to content words or isolated propositions within the text.

Min-cheol

While Yeon-mi demonstrated that vocabulary limitations can be overcome by skillful reading, Min-cheol is a reminder that skillful reading requires much more than a large vocabulary. Of all the Intensive English students tested, Min-cheol had the largest adjusted vocabulary (6400). However, despite a superior vocabulary, he does not appear to be a more effective reader than Yeon-mi (at 4100). He is quicker, to be sure, but there is a vagueness in his verbal report that makes one doubt his grasp of the author's precise argument.

He begins by taking note of the stated objectives for the reading. He spends about 40 seconds reviewing these. He seems to be clear about what he needs to get from the text. He comments that the text is an essay. He announces that he will skim the text first and goes through a process that resembles previewing—reading the first and last

sentences of each paragraph. In other words, he applies many of the general strategies typically introduced in reading courses. This takes about 2 minutes. Upon finishing, he reviews the objectives and concludes in answer to the first question on whether, historically speaking, the position of women in Korean society has changed or remained much the same. Min-cheol concludes, based on his preview of the text, that women's status has changed. Then, he announces his intention to begin a "thorough reading."

During this more careful reading phase, vocabulary-related strategies are in evidence, e.g., querying words, using word structure to try to infer meaning, using a dictionary. Min-cheol also raises queries regarding the meanings of particular sentences. For example:

> Does this sentence mean that daughters help their mothers' careers and things changed overall?... Does this mean that women who were mimicking the stereotype were considered the best?... Does this mean that women lost their identity, and once they were married, they became natal?

Min-cheol's verbal reports, when they are not word queries or sentence queries, often give evidence merely of recognition of topic or purpose as opposed to precise comprehension of the writer's arguments:

> This is to overview the history. Yi dynasty. Koryo dynasty and Yi dynasty are presented….The highest achievement. An unbroken chain of tradition. It is talking about the past. I believe 'these attitudes' are key in this sentence.

He sometimes responds with a personal opinion, or an explanation as to why the author makes a particular assertion:

> The author thought that the highest status for a woman was a president's wife because the author lived in countryside… Women should obey men. This is right.

There is rarely evidence of any attempt to carefully parse syntax in the same way that Mi-ae or Yeon-mi do, but when he does, he gets it wrong. Relevant portions of paragraph 3 appear below:

> Throughout the Koryo period… women were important and contributing members of the society and not marginal and dependent as they later became. Women were, to a large extent, in command of their own lives. They were permitted to own property and receive inheritances from their fathers. Wedding ceremonies were held in the bride's house, where the couple lived, and the wife retained her surname…

Min-cheol gives the following interpretation:

> Marginal? I knew what 'margin' was, but I didn't know this. Oh, this is an adjective. Women's most important contributions in the society were not as marginal but as dependent. They were influenced most by their fathers.

He misses the contrastive "but," concluding that during the time periods in question women were dependent rather than independent, and he seems to grant "their fathers" more weight than the author's argument warrants. In general, Min-cheol rarely appears to go beyond local, word and sentence-level queries to try to establish more global, text-level coherence.

Overall, the sense that one gets from observing Min-cheol is that of a perplexed reader, as captured in an exclamation about two-thirds of the way through the task: "What is this? What is this all about?" It is hard to avoid the impression that Min-cheol's dominant strategy is to search for a connection between his word knowledge and his personal knowledge of the topic. It is as if he understands the key content words and the least complex propositions of the text, and from these, he pieces together a probable interpretation, based on his assumptions regarding the topic. This is a strategy that may belie limitations in syntactic processing ability and possibly more global discourse processing skills. For this reason, Min-cheol comes across as a poor reader with highly developed, top-down compensatory skills.

Conclusion

This study highlighted the important role of recognition vocabulary as a critical component of effective second language reading and revealed that Korean students in the third level of a four-level Intensive English program varied widely in a breadth measure of English vocabulary. The students, all in the U.S. for less than a year, had come to their Intensive English program experience from a largely EFL preparation in Korea. The moderately high correlation between vocabulary size and number of hours of high school English instruction suggests that a substantial investment of time in high school English classes may give some students a lexical advantage over those who receive less high school instruction. It is not clear from this study, however, how far this advantage extends beyond laying the lexical foundation needed for fluent reading.

Video analysis and content analysis of student's verbal reports during their reading

of an essay from a popular college writing text suggest a clear relationship between a student's vocabulary size and the time the student required to complete a think-aloud reading task. The greater time-investment and heavier reliance on a dictionary exhibited by students with smaller vocabularies is not inconsistent with analyses as those of Nation (1990) and Laufer (1992, 1997) suggesting that students whose vocabularies do not meet a certain minimum threshold are unlikely to be able to read with a high degree of fluency or comprehension.

More subjectively perhaps, I also found some indications of individual differences in syntactic knowledge. Although the research protocol did not include a formal measure of syntactic knowledge, the two readers who conveyed the most convincing impressions of skillful reading, Mi-ae and Yeon-mi, showed through visible action (pointing within the text) and verbal comment what could be inferred as clear evidence of superior syntactic knowledge. In the case of Yeon-mi, this appeared to help her circumvent her vocabulary limitations so that she actually outperformed students with larger vocabularies. Min-cheol, on the other hand, despite having the largest measured vocabulary, appeared to be a "top-down" reader lacking in the "bottom-up" syntactic processing skills needed for truly skillful reading. These observations are also congruent with scholarly opinions regarding the importance of syntactic skill as an essential component for successful second language reading (Barnett, 1986; Eskey, 1988).

The current research is not, of course, without its limitations. The challenges inherent in collecting and interpreting think-aloud reports have been widely discussed (Ericcson & Simon, 1993; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995), and I have certainly encountered many of them in this limited study. Just as some participants were clearly better readers, some were better able to think aloud. While most participants did seem able to forget about the camera and the presence of a researcher, several never did seem to overcome their self-consciousness. As a result, some participants produced considerably more elaborate reports than others. It is difficult to know the extent to which self-consciousness, verbal reserve, or mere absorption in the problem may have caused a participant to seem less skillful.

However, the use of video recording in combination with think-aloud reports proved fruitful in giving a reading teacher a privileged glimpse of those aspects of student performance during reading that usually remain invisible and are not really fully revealed through post-reading assessments. The process has helped the author

appreciate that the sometimes painfully slow reading (and the difficulty grappling with in-class reading tasks) among some students in his intermediate reading course may not be merely a symptom of boredom or reluctance, but may highlight limitations due to lack of lexical and syntactic resources.

In conclusion, while the class-room setting that motivated this study included a wide range of elements and activities, including instruction on comprehension strategies and text structure, close observation of study participants during reading in a laboratory setting tends to lend support to Pang's (2008) argument that "L2 readers need to cross the so-called language threshold to be able to develop and apply cognitive and metacognitive strategies in the L2 reading context." Pang's assertion implies that second language readers may not be able to make the most effective use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies if they lack sufficient lexical and syntactic resources. This recognition should disabuse reading teachers of any unrealistic notions regarding the possibility of raising students to significant levels of competence in reading merely by trying to equip them with compensatory strategic abilities.

Finally, I believe the teacher who pursues this kind of research, if only as an aid to professional development, is likely to gain a greater awareness of the individual differences in the abilities of readers ostensibly at the same level in a program.

Acknowledgments

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Appendix A

Background Questionnaire. *Please circle the appropriate response(s) and/or fill in the blanks.*

1. **Age**: ___   2. **Sex**: Male / Female   3. Check one: USU undergrad   IELI student

Before you came to USU

4. Did you attend another university in an English-speaking country?   Yes   No
    If yes, for how long _____

5. Did you attend a university in Korea?   Yes   No
    If yes, for how long _____

6. Did you take university English classes in Korea?   Yes   No
    If yes, how many courses? _____

7. Did you receive instruction in English in elementary school?   Yes   No

8. Did you receive instruction in English in middle school?   Yes   No

9. Did you receive instruction in English in high school?
    a.   From a **native** English-speaking instructor   Yes   No
    How many months _____   How many hours/week _____
    b.   From a **non-native** English-speaking instructor?   Yes   No
    How many months _____   How many hours/week _____

10. Did you ever receive instruction in English at a **hakwon**?
    a.   From a **native** English-speaking instructor   Yes   No
    How many months _____   How many hours/week _____
    b.   From a **non-native** English-speaking instructor?   Yes   No
    How many months _____   How many hours/week _____

11. Did you ever receive instruction in English from a **private tutor**?
    a.   From a **native** English-speaking instructor   Yes   No
    How many months _____   How many hours/week _____
    b.   From a **non-native** English-speaking instructor?   Yes   No
    How many months _____   How many hours/week _____

12. In the one year before you came to USU, **how many hours/month** did you spend doing the following **in English**…? Check the appropriate columns.

	Hours/month	Almost Never	1-2	3-5	6-10	More than 10
a.	Watching tv					
b.	Watching movies/dvds/video					
c.	Listening to radio					
d.	Listening to tapes, cds, other sound recordings					
e.	Conversing with a native english-speaker					
f.	Conversing with another non-native english speaker					
g.	Reading (newspapers, magazines, books, comic books, webpages)					
h.	Chatting via Internet					
i.	Writing e-mail or letters					
j.	Writing essays or school related assignments					

13. In your own honest opinion, how motivated are you to improve your English?

Very motivated   So-so   Not at all motivated

  1   2   3   4   5

14. In the one year before you came to USU, **how many hours/week** did you spend **reading** each of the following **in Korean**…? Check the appropriate columns.

	Hours/week	Almost Never	1-2	3-5	6-10	More than 10
a.	Newspapers					
b.	Magazines					
c.	Comic books					
d.	Novels					
e.	Short Stories					
f.	Poetry					
g.	Non-Fiction books					
h.	Textbooks					
i.	Internet news articles					
j.	Webpages					

Here at USU

15. How long have you been here at USU? _____

16. Outside of university classes, how do you spend your time?

	Hours/week	Almost Never	1-2	3-5	6-10	More than 10
a.	Studying					
b.	Socializing/doing activities with Korean friends					
c.	Socializing/doing activities with non-Korean Internationals					
d.	Socializing/doing activities with American students					
e.	Other					

Appendix B

Invisible Women

Yun Young Choi

1. For me, growing up in a small suburb on the outskirts of Seoul, the adults' preference for boys seemed quite natural. All the important people that I knew– doctors, lawyers, policemen, and soldiers–were men. On the other hand, most of the women that I knew were either housekeepers or housewives whose duty seemed to be to obey and please the men of the family. When my teachers at school asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up, I would answer, "I want to be the wife of the president." Because all women must become wives and mothers, I thought, becoming the wife of the president would be the highest achievement for a woman. I knew that the birth of a boy was a greatly desired and celebrated event, whereas the birth of a girl was a disappointing one, accompanied by the frequent words of consolation for the sad parents: "A daughter is her mother's chief help in keeping house."

2. These attitudes toward women, widely considered the continuation of an unbroken chain of tradition, are, in fact, only a few hundred years old, a relatively short period considering Korea's long history. During the first half of the Yi dynasty, which lasted from 1392 to 1910, and during the Koryo period, which preceded the Yi dynasty, women were treated almost as equals with many privileges that were denied them during the latter half of the Yi dynasty. This turnabout in women's place in Korean society was brought about by one of the greatest influences that shaped the government, literature, and thoughts of the Korean people–Confucianism.

3. Throughout the Koryo period, which lasted from 918 to 1392, and throughout the first half of the Yi dynasty, according to Laurel Kendall in her book *View from the Inner Room*, women were important and contributing members of the society and not **marginal** and dependent as they later became. Women were, to a large extent, in command of their own lives. They were permitted to own property and receive **inheritances** from their fathers. Wedding ceremonies were held in the bride's house, where the couple lived, and the wife retained her surname. Women were also allowed freedom of movement-that is, they were able to go outside the house without any feelings of shame or embarrassment.

4. With the introduction of Confucianism, however, the rights and privileges that

women enjoyed were confiscated. The government of the Yi dynasty made great efforts to incorporate into society the Confucian ideologies, including the principle of <u>agnation</u>. This principle, according to Kendall, made men the important members of society and relegated women to a dependent position. The government succeeded in Confucianizing the country and encouraging the acceptance of Confucian proverbs such as the following: "Men are honored, but women are abased." "A daughter is a 'robber woman' who carries household wealth away when she marries."

5. The unfortunate effects of this Confucianization in the lives of women were numerous. The most noticeable was the virtual **confinement** of women. They were forced to remain unseen in the <u>anbang</u>, the inner room of the house. This room was the women's domain, or, rather, the women's prison. Outside, a woman was carried through the streets in a closed sedan chair. Walking outside, she had to wear a veil that covered her face and could travel abroad only after nightfall. Thus, it is no wonder that Westerners traveling through Korea in the late nineteenth century expressed surprise at the apparent absence of women in the country.

6. Women received no formal education. Their only schooling came from government textbooks. By giving instruction on the virtuous conduct of women, these books attempted to fit women into the Confucian stereotype–meek, quiet, and obedient. Thus, this Confucian society acclaimed particular women not for their talent or achievement but for the degree of perfection with which they were able to **mimic** the stereotype.

7. A woman even lost her identity in such a society. Once married, she became a stranger to her natal family, becoming a member of her husband's family. Her name was omitted from the family <u>chokpo</u>, or genealogy book, and was entered in the <u>chokpo</u> of her in-laws as a mere "wife" next to her husband's name.

8. Even a desirable marriage, the ultimate hope for a woman, failed to provide financial and emotional security for her. Failure to produce a son was legal grounds for sending the wife back to her natal home, thereby subjecting the woman to the greatest humiliation and to a life of continued shame. And because the Confucian ideology stressed a wife's devotion to her husband as the greatest of womanly virtues, widows were forced to avoid social disgrace by remaining faithfully unmarried, no matter how young they were. As women lost their rights to own or inherit property,

these **widows**, with no means to support themselves, suffered great hardships. Thus, as Sandra Martielle says in *Virtues in Conflict*, what the government considered "the ugly custom of remarriage" was slowly eliminated at the expense of women's happiness.

9. This male-dominated system of Confucianism is one of the surviving traditions from the Yi dynasty. Although the constitution of the Republic of Korea proclaimed on July 17, 1948, guarantees individual freedom and sexual equality, these ideals failed to have any immediate effect on the Korean mentality that stubbornly adheres to its belief in the superiority of men. Women still regard marriage as their prime objective in life, and little girls still wish to become the doctor's wife, the lawyer's wife, and even the president's wife. But as the system of Confucianism is slowly being forced out of existence by new legal and social standards, perhaps a day will come, after all, when a little girl will stand up in class and answer, "I want to be the president."

A Call for New Benchmarks at
Saudi Language and Translation Schools

Reima Al-Jarf
King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Bio Data:
Reima Al-Jarf is a professor at King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia where she has taught courses in EFL, ESP, linguistics, and translation to graduate and undergraduate students. She has four books and 66 articles published in refereed international and national journals. She has given 100 presentations and attended about 150 conferences in 25 countries (USA, UK, Italy, France, Germany, Spain, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Greece, Iran, Ukraine, Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey, Cyprus, Morocco, Jordan, Egypt, UAE, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia). She is a member of 22 professional organizations and serves on international and national committees.

Abstract
Since the year 2000, Saudi universities have cancelled all admission tests and have adopted an open admission policy that depends on high school GPA only. Many high school graduates in Saudi Arabia, especially females, show a great interest in joining colleges of languages and translation and admission to those colleges has been highly competitive. Despite the fact that the lowest GPA for high school graduates admitted to the College of Languages & Translation (COLT) in Fall 2007 was 98.3%, results of the fall 2007 final exams were exceptionally shocking with only 21.8% passing the reading course. The attrition rate in Fall 2003 was 20% and it went up to 30% in Spring 2004. Few students drop each week and many re-register in the following semester adding up to the total number of enrollees. This status quo shows a need for adopting new admission benchmarks at Saudi language and translation schools. Recommendations for improving the current status are given.

1. Introduction

In almost all countries, college admission has become competitive. Students wishing to join English, translation or linguistics departments in non-English-speaking countries, or those wishing to join other majors in English-speaking countries or English-medium universities must meet the English-language requirements for college admission. English language requirements vary from country to country and from school to school within the same country. These include one of the following:

(i) *At least two years of foreign language classes in high school*. For example, Carleton, Georgia Tech, MIT, UCLA, University of Illinois and University of Michigan require at least two years of foreign language classes in high school, Stanford University requires 3 years, and Harvard requires 4 years.

(ii)   *Proof of English language proficiency* in any of the following ways: Six credits of post-secondary English, English 12 and two years of high school in Canada, Advanced Placement English Language/Composition or English Literature/ Composition, International Baccalaureate English Language, Language Proficiency Index Level 4, four years of full time study in English in Canada at a high school or post secondary institution.

(iii) *A satisfactory standard in a university-approved English test* such as IELTS (International English Language Testing Service), TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate, CAE (Certificate in Advanced English), ESOL (Pitman English for Speakers of Other Languages), GCSE or O-Level, Edexcel (London Test of English), UCLES International (GCSE English as a Second Language), ELA (English Language Assessment Test), CAEL (Canadian Academic English Language Assessment Test). This procedure has been used in the UK, Australia and New Zealand.

(iv)   *Competency-based admissions policies and procedures*. These criteria were used by the California's Transitions project, the University of Wisconsin's Competency-Based Admissions System, Oregon's Proficiency-Based Admissions Standards System and Washington's competency-based admissions plan (Pribbenow, Phelps, Briggs & Stern, 1999).

(v)   *The alignment of high school graduation requirements with college entry requirements*. For example, the Achieve Organization reviewed New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards in language arts literacy (Cohen, Gandal & Slattery, 2004). *Achieve* (2005) also reviewed the degree of alignment between the courses students must take to earn a high school diploma and the courses required for admission to the University of Delaware and Delaware State University, as well as for placement into a degree program at Delaware Technical and Community College. To be prepared for postsecondary education and work, every high school student should take four years of grade-level English, with courses that–include literature, writing, reasoning, logic and communication skills. The courses students take must reflect college- and work ready standards and must be part of a required college- and work-ready course of study.

Unlike the restricted college entry policies in the USA, Canada, UK, Australia, New Zealand and other countries, college entry to tertiary education in Saudi Arabia has been open to all high school graduates since the year 2000, when the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education mandated that all Saudi state universities adopt an open admission policy that depends on high school GPA only. Admission tests used before the year 2000 were cancelled with the exception of those for the Colleges of Medicine and Dentistry. Colleges of Engineering and Architecture use an aptitude test for their prospective students. In the year 2000, the total number of freshman students seeking

admission to higher education institutions was 70,000 as opposed to 20,631 in 1982. Saudi state universities were facing mounting pressure from parents and high school graduates themselves and there were many complaints in Saudi newspapers by those who could not get admission to college.

Since the year 2000, many Saudi high school graduates, especially females have shown a great interest in joining colleges of languages and translation (where students are trained to become English-Arabic and Arabic-English professional translators and interpreters). Admission to those colleges especially the College of Languages and Translation (COLT) at King Saud University (KSU) has been highly competitive. The number of admitted students to those colleges is continually increasing. For example, the total number of female freshman students increased from 84 students in Fall 2000 to 393 students in Spring 2005. In 4 years, female freshman students' enrollment figures have quadrupled. Since Fall 2003, each semester has been witnessing an increase of at least 50 students over the previous semester. High school graduates are admitted to COLT based on their high school GPA, regardless of their actual English proficiency level. No admission tests are given. Only students who transfer from other departments at KSU or other Saudi universities to COLT are given an English Admission Test. The percentage of transfer students who pass the admission test is between 10%-15%.

In the past 8 years, the open admission policy, that depends on the high school GPA only as an admission standard, has proved to be inadequate and some critical issues about English language education such as student success rates, the percentage of graduate and dropout rates, and allocation of resources and shortage of teaching staff, have emerged, which require a re-consideration of an English college entrance exam as a new measure for admission to COLT. The present study aims to establish the case for a college entrance examination at Saudi English departments in general and colleges of languages and translation in particular. It aims to show the need and/or give a rationale for adopting new benchmarks at Saudi English departments by examining the effects of current open admission policies to COLT on section enrolment, teaching load, program staffing, classroom instruction, and students' progress through the translation program.

Although Saudi English departments are open to all students graduating from high school, all students must demonstrate that they are ready for college-level academic work in English and for studying specialized literature, linguistics and translation

courses by passing a COLT's admission test once they enroll. Because the Saudi Ministry of Education does not explicitly define college English language readiness standards for high school students, the admission exams would function as the de facto entry-level standards for English departments and colleges of languages and translation at Saudi universities. Re-introducing a college entrance exam, as a benchmark for admission to Saudi English departments and colleges of languages and translation would enhance student preparation for college, would improve student performance in college, would result in greater student success, lower student dropout rates and increase the graduation rate, and would help decision and policy makers at the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education discern the consequences of the absence of such an entrance exam, and make sure admissions decisions match institutional goals for student characteristics.

2. Subjects

A random sample of 100 female students in semesters 1-10 at the College of Languages and Translation (COLT), King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia participated in the study. In addition, participants included a sample of 20 instructors who have taught English language courses to freshman students (Level I students) at COLT. Ten percent of the instructor sample have a Ph.D. degree, 20% have an M.A. degree and 70% have a B.A degree. Finally, the department head and two program coordinators at the Department of European Languages and Translation at COLT were also interviewed. The department head and coordinators have worked at COLT for 20 years.

3. Instruments

(a) *Students' questionnaires and Interviews*: The student questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions such as: (i) Do you think prospective freshman students should take an admission test before being admitted to COLT? (ii) What are the advantages/disadvantages of admitting students to COLT without an admission test? (iii) What are the advantages and disadvantages of limiting admission to COLT to students who pass the Admission Test? (iv) Describe the English textbooks you had in high school compared to those of COLT; (v) Describe the English exams you had in high school compared to those of COLT?

(b) *Instructors' interview-questionnaire*: It consisted of the same open-ended questions as the students' questionnaire, and it was administered to all of the instructors, language course coordinators, and department head.

4. Data collection

(a) *Student data:* Female freshman student enrollment statistics at COLT, freshman students' high school GPA, the number of sections, section enrollment, number of withdrawn students, number of repeating students, the listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary building course final exam scores for Fall 2007, and grammar final exam scores for six semesters were obtained.

(b) *Course data:* The number of sections and total number of credit hours offered at each of the ten college levels were obtained.

(c) *Students' questionnaires:* A questionnaire was e-mailed to the 100 students and 80% were returned.

(d) *Instructor, coordinator and department head interviews:* Instructors, language course coordinators, and department head were individually interviewed and responses of each subject were recorded on her interview-questionnaire form.

5. Data analysis

To describe the annual increase in female freshman student enrollment at COLT, the percentage of withdrawn students, the percentage of repeating students and frequencies of section enrollment were computed. To find out the effect of open admission policies on academic achievement, the percentage of passing students in the grammar course was calculated for six semesters (as an example). To find out the effect of open admission policies on program staffing and on faculty teaching load, the total number of hours offered to all the sections of the ten college levels and the teaching load of all the female faculty was calculated in hours. Instructors, coordinators and department head's responses to the open-ended interview-questionnaire were sorted out and analyzed. Quantitative as well as qualitative analyses are reported below.

6. Results

All of the students, instructors, coordinators and department head (100%) surveyed indicated that high school students wishing to join COLT should pass an Admission Test. They gave several reasons for demanding such an admission test. These are summarized below.

6.1 Inadequacy of the high school GPA as a sole admission standard

All of the instructors, coordinators and department head (100%) reported that the

general English proficiency level of students graduating from high school is deteriorating. Most freshman enrollees are not qualified enough to make it through the COLT program. The current admission standards that depend on the high school GPA only are inadequate and insufficient and do not reflect the students' actual level in English. High school grades are generally inflated and high GPA's do not necessarily reflect a high proficiency level in English and a good aptitude for English and translation studies. Freshman class instructors complain of their students' poor English aptitude and their inability to make it through the listening, speaking, reading, writing and vocabulary building and grammar courses that students are required to take in their freshman year as a prerequisite to their training in translation.

All of the students (100%) surveyed indicated that at the high school level, one textbook is used to teach reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary building skills (4 hours per week). The high school English curriculum is easy and most high school students memorize questions and answers, grammar rules and compositions. High school midterm and final exams depend on rote memorization, as the same text and questions studied in the textbook and practiced in class are reproduced on those tests. By contrast, freshman students at COLT take 20 hours of English language course per week: listening (3 hours), speaking (4 hours), reading (4 hours), writing (4 hours), grammar (2 hours), vocabulary building (3 hours) courses. All of the students (100%) indicated that the midterm and final exams at COLT focus on application of rules and skills and unseen texts are used on listening and reading exams. About 90% of the subjects felt a big gap between high school and college English in terms of the amount of material covered, range and types of skills to be acquired, and midterm and final exam length and difficulty level.

6.2 Percentage of failing freshman students

Despite the fact that the lowest GPA for high school graduates admitted to COLT in Fall 2007 was 98.3%, results of the fall 2007 semester final exams were exceptionally shocking. Final exam results were alarming for students, instructors and administration. For example, 21.8% passed the reading course, and 45% passed the vocabulary-building course. In grammar, Table (1) shows that the pass rate has been declining: 66% passed in Fall 2000; 87% passed in Spring 2001; 43% passed in Fall 2003; 56% passed in Spring 2004; 30% passed in Fall 2004; and 35.8% passed in spring 2005.

Table 1: Student Enrollment, Withdrawals and Pass Rates in Freshman Grammar between Fall 2000 and Spring 2005

Semester	# sections	Students per section	Grand Total	Withdrawn Students	Took Final Exam	Passing Students
Fall 2000 (Semester 1)	2	40-42	82	28%	59	66%
Spring 2001 (Semester 2)	2	37-40	77	11.7%	68	84%
Fall 2003 (Semester 3)	5	47-48-51-51-54	251	20%	200	42.5%
Spring 2004 (Semester 4)	5	57-65-66-67-70	325	30%	237	56%
Fall 2004 (Semester 5)	5	72-72-74-74-76	368	25%	275	29.8%
Spring 2005 (Semester 6)	6	39-65-68-73-74-74	393	27%	287	35.8%

Table 2: Percentages of Withdrawn Freshman Students in All Language Courses Offered at COLT in Fall 2007

Freshman Courses	% of Withdrawn Students
listening	19%
speaking	24%
reading	19%
writing	19%
grammar	21%
vocabulary	20%

Table 3: Percentages of Students Repeating the English Freshman Language Courses in Fall 2007

Freshman Courses	Total Enrollment	Number of Repeaters	% of Repeaters
listening	159	39	24.5%
speaking	126	6	4.8%
reading	192	72	37.5%
writing	232	112	48%
vocabulary	197	77	39%
grammar	198	78	39%

6.3 Percentage of withdrawn and repeating freshmen

The median percentage of students who take courses over is between 19% to 24% in the listening, speaking reading, writing, vocabulary building courses in the Fall 2007

(See Table 2), and was between 11.7%-30% in the grammar course (see Table 1), either because they fail or because they drop and re-register it in the following semester and 4.8% and 48% with a median of 38% in all freshman courses in Fall 2007 (See Tables 2 and 3), adding up to the total number of enrollees. This involves a waste of resources such as teacher and student time, budget, and lab and classroom facilities.

6.4 Struggling students in upper levels

All of the instructors, coordinators and department head indicated that students who barely pass and are pushed from one level to the next, get stuck when they reach semester 5, where they start to take content courses such as linguistics, semantics, stylistics and text linguistics. Some of those struggling students take the course between 3-5 times and cannot transfer to another college because of their inability to meet the transfer college standards. Thus some end up graduating two years after their classmates in the freshman semester who made it through the program.

6.5 Percentage of graduating seniors

The percentage of freshman students who are actually capable of reaching semester 10 and successfully completing the program is between 20%-25% of the number of enrollees in their freshman class. All of the instructors, coordinators and department head indicated that if the best 25% of high school graduates interested in joining COLT are selected based on their performance on an admission test, COLT will have 1-2 freshman sections rather than 4-5 sections. The number of students enrolled in each section would drop by 50%, thus the number of instructors needed to cover the freshman courses would drop by 50%-70%. Instructors would be teaching a homogeneous group of students with better English proficiency level. Instruction would be directed towards good and excellent students rather than paying more attention to poor and struggling students and less attention to good and excellent students when classes are large with many sections. The attrition rate would be below 5%, the percentage of passing students would increase to 95%-100%. The percentage of repeaters would be less than 5%. More seats would be available for better quality students. Between 50%-75% of the college budget and resources would be saved.

   All of the instructors, coordinators and department head reported that students with a low proficiency level in English, i.e. those who do not pass the Admission Test, will

be directed to other majors where the medium of instruction is Arabic and in which they can do better. They added that this would save them time and effort and they will graduate in time rather than struggling at COLT and graduating one or more semesters later than their peers with a low GPA.

6.6 Large freshman course and section enrollment

Table (1) shows that with the absence of an Admission Test, there is an ongoing increase in the total number of enrolled students, number of sections and number of students per section in the grammar1 course. In Fall 2007, the total number of enrolled students, number of sections and number of students per section were as follows: The listening course had a total of 159 students with individual section sizes of 30, 30, 31, 33, 35; the speaking course had a total of 126 students with individual section sizes of 37, 37, 38, 39, 41; the reading had a total of 192 students with individual section sizes of 33,39, 39, 41, 45; the vocabulary course had a total of 197 students with individual section sizes of 33,39, 39, 41, 45; the writing course had a total of 232 students with individual section sizes of 41, 43, 44, 44, 51; the vocabulary course had a total of 136 students with individual section sizes of 23, 25, 28, 30, 30; the grammar course had a total of 198 students with individual section sizes of 33, 38, 42, 42, 43.

Table 4: Total Numbers of Sections and Teaching Hours Required for All the Sections at All the Levels in Four Semesters

Levels	Fall 2003		Spring 2004		Fall 2004		Spring 2005	
	Sections	*Hrs*	*Sections*	*hrs*	*Sections*	*Hrs*	*Sections*	*hrs*
One	5	100 (26.8%)	5	100 (27.7%)	5	100 (23%)	6	120 (26%)
Two	4	80 (21.5%)	4	80 (22%)	5	100 (23%)	5	100 (22%)
Three	3	42	3	42	4	56	4	56
Four	3	36	2	24	3	36	4	48
Five	2	34	2	34	3	51	3	51
Six	2	36	2	36	2	36	2	36
Seven	1	10	1	10	2	20	1	10
Eight	1	12	1	12	1	12	1	12
Nine	1	12	1	12	1	12	1	12
Ten	1	10	1	10	1	10	1	10
Total	23	372	22	360	27	433	28	455

6.7 Staffing burden

Table (4) shows that about 50% of the teaching hours are offered to Levels One and Two sections and requires teaching or instruction by half the faculty. With the increase in COLT student enrollment as a result of the open admission policies and lack of screening by an Admission test, there is a continual increase in the number of teaching hours to be covered.

6.8 Effects on classroom instruction

Open admission results in large class sizes, which in turn results in lack of small group activities and individualized instruction. There are also too many poor students, little time to check each student's work in class and class time is wasted on working with poor students, while good students are ignored.

7. Discussion and conclusion

The students, instructors, coordinators and department head surveyed in the present study feel that many Saudi high school graduates are not well prepared for postsecondary English language study despite the fact that the lowest GPA of students admitted to COLT was 98.3%. Findings of the present study are consistent with findings of a study by Olson (2006), who found that California State University (CSU) draws its students from the top third of the state's high school graduates and applicants have at least a B average in a college-preparatory curriculum; yet placement tests identified 47% of incoming freshmen in 2004 as needing remedial instruction in English. In another study, Ronco (1995) analyzed the risk factors associated with graduation, transfer, or withdrawal based on the cohort of 1,635 first-time-in-college students entering the university in fall 1987 and followed through spring 1994. Results showed that the risk of transfer to a two-year college was almost as high as the risk of dropout throughout the enrollment period. Provisionally admitted students and those with low GPAs were at greatest risk. Almost one-third of the cohort graduated and almost as many dropped out.

Findings of the present study revealed that high school GPA as a main criterion for admission to COLT is inadequate for predicting success in college, for reducing attrition rates and for limiting the size of enrolment and results in some problems. Costrell (1993) found that a lower admission standard reduces performance among

students exceeding the graduation standard by impairing their preparation for college work.

The students, instructors and department head surveyed in the present study also recommended that an admission test be given to all high school graduates wishing to join COLT. Use of an admission test is supported by the literature. Studies of first-year college GPA (ACT, 1998; Allen, Robbins, Casillas, & Oh, 2007) suggest that the combination of ACT (American College Testing, a standardized college admission test) composite score and high school GPA provides greater accuracy of admission decisions for most groups of students than using either measure alone. High school GPA and ACT scores were also found to be the best predictors of freshman academic performance and success (Noble & Sawyer, 2002; 2004); and Garton, Dyer & King, 2000). ACT scores and class ranking were important predictor variables for success in college (Mulvenon, Stegman, Thorn & Thomas, 1999).

Instructor, coordinators and department head surveyed in the present study stressed the need for introducing an admission test as a second admission requirement to COLT. The need for using an admission test to screen students before entering college was stressed by findings of a study by Rodriguez (1995) who reviewed 10 admission policies and practices in 10 states: California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, and Wisconsin. Rodriguez found that those universities needed to clearly communicate to high school students expectations for college-level work to foster greater collegiate retention and graduation. They needed to strengthen the quality of the high school curriculum, to reduce remediation in postsecondary education, to improve the levels of access and academic achievement of underrepresented students, to manage enrollment within constrained budgets and to align high school student outcomes and college expectations.

A review of the literature also showed that some universities that had similar problems with student admission reviewed their current policies and established new admission benchmarks which were proved to e effective. For example, in the late 1980's the Oklahoma state higher education system had a problem of lagging performance, as indicated by data showing poor performance compared to similar institutions, inadequate college preparation of college-bound students and college freshmen, and mismatches of students and colleges. The state adopted a comprehensive policy approach and specific policy steps to strengthen quality and

broaden access by enhancing student preparation for college and improving college student performance. Some current indicators show positive student outcomes. These included better student preparation for college (e.g., more high school students are taking the 13-unit core academic curriculum and freshmen are better prepared for college level work) and greater college student success (as indicated by lower student dropout rates and higher graduation rates). The California state legislature, through Senate Bill 664, requested examination of admission policies and attrition rates in California community college RN programs. Specifically, the authors ask whether admission policies affect attrition, what other program characteristics affect attrition, and whether these things affect first-time pass rates on the national nursing board exam. Based on their predictive models, on-time completion, delay, and attrition rates were better in programs that had fewer students (Brown & Niemi, 2007).

The instructors, coordinators and department head suggested that the COLT admission test should consist of the following subtests: An English Language Proficiency subtest, a Translation subtest, an Arabic Language Proficiency subtest, a General Knowledge subtest and a Computer and Internet Literacy subtest. The admission test should be first administered to a sample of high school graduates before it is implemented. Several parallel versions of the Admission Test must be constructed, tried out and used alternately to avoid disclosure of the test content. Those admitted to COLT must score 60% and above on the English Language Proficiency test, on the Arabic Language proficiency Test, on the Translation, on the Computer Literacy and on the General Knowledge Tests.

To implement the COLT admission test, a report on the current admission status, and consequences of the absence of admission test, together with statistics showing the percentage of students passing final exams, percentage of withdrawn students, percentage of struggling students, percentage of the freshman class graduating from COLT, freshman section enrollment, and total teaching hours required for covering semesters 1 and 2 classes must be presented to decision and policy makers at the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education. To take effect, the report must be processed through the department and college councils and Council of Deans. Screening students before admission to COLT will save the university money, students and teachers' time and effort.

Finally, faced with hundreds of incoming students with a very low proficiency level

in the English language and wishing to join colleges of languages and translation, educators at all levels must begin a sustained and serious dialog about the overall goals of the education system and the need for screening students before entering college. Pilot projects should be launched to try out new approaches to admission and ultimately to develop a set of model admission criteria. The Saudi Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education and higher education institutions should try to increase public awareness and dialog by offering visible support to admission reform efforts. They must also launch an effort to provide high school seniors with an early signal of whether they have the English language skills necessary for colleges of languages and translation and/or English departments to provide guidance for those who do not.

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Language Learning Strategies Used by Students at Different Proficiency Levels

Ya-Ling Wu
National Chin-yi University of Technology, Taiwan

Bio Data:
Ya-Ling Wu is an Associate Professor in the Department of Applied English at National Chin-Yi University of Technology. Her research interests include language learning strategies, English for Specific Purposes and learning styles. She teaches classes in English composition, English conversation and ESP (English for business, English for administration and management, English for Journalism, English for Tourism).

Abstract

This study is designed to determine: (1) whether a statistically significant difference exists in the extent of language learning strategy use between higher proficiency and lower proficiency EFL students; (2) the strength of the effect of language learning strategy use on English proficiency. The study finds that higher proficiency EFL students use learning strategies more often than lower proficiency EFL students, especially cognitive, metacognigive and social strategies. On the other hand, there is no difference in the use of memory strategies between higher and lower proficiency EFL students. Regarding the relationship between language learning strategy and English proficiency, it was found that cognitive strategies had the strongest influence. Findings indicate that compensation strategies are most often used by EFL students.

Keywords: Foreign Language; Learning Strategy; Language Learning Strategy

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to probe the difference of language learning strategy use between higher and lower English proficiency level EFL students. Moreover, the relationship between language learning strategy and English proficiency is revealed. This paper includes four parts: literature review (including definition of learning strategies, classification of learning strategies, studies of language learning strategies), research questions and hypotheses, research method, results and conclusions.

Literature review

Within the area of foreign language research, a number of studies indicate that learning strategies play a significant role in successful language learning. Politzer and McGroarty (1983) claimed that learning strategies are positively associated with language acquisition. They may improve learners' learning in the forms and functions which are required for comprehension and production (Rubin, 1981). Moreover, learners utilize learning strategies to aid the acquisition, storage, or retrieval of information (Rigney, 1978). In specific, the behaviors or actions used by learners to make language learning more successful, self-directed, and enjoyable are considered language learning strategies. Therefore, persistent the use of the strategies for language learning is a fundamental requirement. As a result, it affects achievement (Bialystok & Frohlich, 1978; Bialystok, 1979).

The definition of learning strategies

Learning strategies have been defined by several researchers (Bialystok, 1978; Chamot, 1987; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1987). These definitions are listed chronologically below with remarks about the major points made in each work (see Table 1).

Table 1. Definition of Learning Strategies

1978	Bialystok, E.	Language learning strategies are optional means for exploiting available information to improve competence in a second language (p. 71).
1987	Rubin, J.	Learning strategies are those which contribute to the development of the language system that the learner constructs and affects learning directly (p. 23).
1987	Chamot, A.	Learning strategies are techniques, approaches, or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information (p. 71).
1990	O'Malley, J. & Chamot, A.	Learning strategies are the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information (p. 1).
1990	Oxford, R.	Learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations (p. 8).
2001	Hall, J. K.	Learning strategies are goal-directed actions that are used by learners to mediate their own learning (p. 92).

Bialystok's definition does not indicate what "optional means" are. As a result, it

seems to cause misunderstanding. On the other hand, Rubin (1987) emphasizes "social strategies," which refer to the action affecting learning indirectly. Hence, the above two researchers are not in full agreement in the elements of language learning strategies. In addition, the definition of Bialystok (1978), "to improve competence in a second language" (p. 71), focuses on how to be more proficient learners, not how to learn effectively or easily. In contrast, the definition of Rubin (1987) does not mention the purpose for which learners use learning strategies. Therefore, there is also no agreement on the purpose of using learning strategies between the two definitions. However, Chamot (1987), O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Oxford (1990) and Hall (2001) defined "element and purpose" in more detail than the previous studies did. Chamot's (1987) definition includes the element of language learning strategies: "techniques, approaches, or deliberate actions" (p. 71). The definition from O'Malley and Chamot (1990) contains "special thoughts or behaviors" (p. 1). Oxford (1990) considers it as "specific actions" (p. 8). Hall deemed it as "goal-directed actions" (p. 92). As for the purpose of using language-learning strategies, it is to be able to "facilitate the learning" (Chamot, 1987); "help them to comprehend" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990); "make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable" (Oxford, 1990); "mediate their own learning" (Hall, 2001). Since Oxford's (1990) definition includes everything that second/foreign language learners need to be intelligent learners, I will use her definition of language learning strategies in this study.

Classification of learning strategies

Learning strategies are typically grouped into three categories, that is, cognitive, metacognitive and socioaffective (Chamot & Küpper, 1989; O'Malley, Chamot, & Küpper, 1989; O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Küpper, & Russo, 1985). Cognitive strategies are behaviors, techniques, or actions used by learners to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge or a skill (Derry & Murphy, 1986; Rubin, 1987). Metacognitive strategies are management techniques by which learners control their learning process via planning, monitoring, evaluating, and modifying their learning approaches (Rubin, 1990). Socioaffective strategies include asking for clarification, repeating, imitating, circumlocuting, cooperating, and engaging in private speech (Hall, 2001). This classification scheme, developed initially for ESL students (O'Malley et al., 1985), was later validated with foreign language learners, including

students of Russian, Spanish, and Japanese in the United States (Barnhardt, 1992; Chamot and Kupper, 1989; Omori, 1992), English as a foreign language students in Brazil (Absy, 1992; Lott-Lage, 1993), and students of French in Canada (Vandergrift, 1992).

However, learning strategies may be grouped in other ways. According to Oxford (1990), learning strategies may be divided into two classes, direct strategies and indirect strategies, and each class contains three categories. Direct strategies help learners to learn the target language directly; indirect strategies help learners to support and manage language learning without directly involving the target language. Direct strategies are subdivided into memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies; indirect strategies are subdivided into metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. In this study, I will use Oxford's (1990) classification as described below (Oxford, 1990, p. 8):

1. Memory strategies

Memory strategies are techniques that help learners store and retrieve new information, e.g., creating mental linkages, applying images and sounds, reviewing in a structured way, etc.

2. Cognitive strategies

Cognitive strategies are skills or steps that involve direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of the target language, such as formal practice with sounds or structures, functional practice in natural interactions, reasoning, translating, analyzing, note-taking, etc.

3. Compensation strategies

Compensation strategies are those that enable learners to make up their missing knowledge in the process of comprehending or producing the target language, such as guessing wisely in listening and reading, using gestures, switching to the native language, and using a synonym or description in order to get the meaning across in speaking or writing.

4. Metacognitive strategies

Metacognitive strategies are steps that learners take to manage or regulate their learning, such as planning and arranging for learning tasks, setting goals and objectives, monitoring the learning process for errors, and evaluating progress.

5. Affective strategies

Affective strategies are those strategies that help learners gain control over their emotions, attitudes, and motivations related to language learning. Such strategies include encouraging oneself through positive self-talk, talking with someone about your feelings about learning the target language, etc.

6. Social strategies

Social strategies are actions that involve other people, such as asking questions, cooperating with others, and becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings.

Studies of language learning strategies

In the 1970s, the significance of individual variations in language learning was first noticed by researchers. Various researchers have studied factors related to choice of language learning strategies (Oxford and Nyikos, 1989; Ehrman and Oxford, 1989). These factors include degree of metacognitive awareness, gender, level of language learning, language being learned, affective variables (e.g., attitudes, motivation and language learning goals), personality type, learning style, career choice, aptitude, number of years of language study, and language teaching methods. In most previous strategy research, gender difference in strategy use was neglected. Additionally, according to Gardner (1985), attitudes and motivation are the primary determining factors to individual language learning. The learners with high motivation to learn a language will likely use a variety of strategies (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989).

Some researchers tend to distinguish successful learners from less successful learners based on the use of metacognitive strategies (Oxford, 1993). In a relational study which involved sixty Taiwanese graduate and undergraduate students at Indiana University, Chang and Huang (1999) found that memory strategies are related to extrinsic but not intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, studies of the listening strategies of successful language learners show that cognitive and metacoganitive strategies are used by L2/FL listeners (DeFillipis, 1980; Laviosa, 1991a, 1991b; Murphy, 1985; O'Malley, Chamot, & Kupper, 1989; Rost & Ross, 1991; Vandergrift, 1992).

The factor, proficiency level, was addressed in studies related to language learning strategy by some researchers. In a study of 70 high-school age students enrolled in ESL classes from three high schools in an Eastern metropolitan area in the United States, the authors (O'Malley et al., 1985) revealed that intermediate level students tended to use proportionally more metacognitive strategies than students with

beginning level proficiency. Chamot, O'Malley, Küpper and Impink-Hernandez (1987) found that cognitive strategy use decreased and metacognitive strategy use rose as the foreign language course level increased, but social affective strategy use remained very low across all course levels. In addition, according to some research, proficiency level and gender affect the choice of language learning strategies (Politzer, 1983; Oxford and Nyikos, 1989; Ehrman and Oxford, 1989; Oxford, 1993; O'Malley et al., 1985; Chamot, O'Malley, Küpper and Impink-Hernandez, 1987).

Research questions and hypotheses

According to the previous review, proficiency level is one of the factors to affect the choice of language learning strategies. The purpose of this study is to investigate the difference in the extent and types of language learning strategy use between higher and lower proficiency EFL students. This study was designed to determine: (1) whether a statistically significant difference exists in the extent of language learning strategy use between higher and lower proficiency EFL students; (2) the strength of the effect of language learning strategy use on English proficiency. The research questions and null hypotheses are stated as follows:

(1) Is there any difference in the extent of language learning strategy use between higher and lower proficiency EFL students?

$H_0 1$: There is no significant difference in mean language learning strategy average total score of higher proficiency EFL students and lower proficiency EFL students.

$H_0 2$: There is no significant difference in mean language learning strategy average subscores of higher proficiency EFL students and lower proficiency EFL students.

(2) Does the reported use of language learning strategies significantly relate to English proficiency?

$H_0 3$: There is no significant relationship between the use of the six types of language learning strategies and the scores on English proficiency test among EFL students

Method

Subjects

Participants were recruited from a population of students at the National Chin-Yi

University of Technology in Taiwan. The participants were divided into two groups according to the scores on the entrance exam. The first group included 49 sophomores majoring in English. They were considered as higher proficiency EFL learners. The second group included 88 freshmen who were not majored in English. Their English proficiency levels are generally considered low compared to the sophomores majoring in English. Table 2 summarizes the profile of participants.

Table 2. Profile of Participants

Group	Number	Percent
Higher proficiency	49	36%
Lower proficiency	88	64%

Instruments

1. SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning)

Language learning strategy use was examined in terms of memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. The instrument used in this study was Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). SILL questionnaire ESL/EFL Version 7.0 (Oxford, 1989) measures the type (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social) and frequency of strategy use. The instrument consists of 50 statements. Items #1-9 concern the effectiveness of memory (memory strategies); items #10-23 represent the use of mental processes (cognitive strategies); items #24-29 are the compensation for missing knowledge (compensation strategies); item #30-38 deal with the organization and evaluation of learning (metacognitive strategies); items #39-44 concern emotion management (affective strategies); items #45-50 concern learning with others (social strategies). Students answered each item statement using a 5-point Likert-scale that ranged from 1 (Never or almost never true of me) through 5 (Always or almost always true of me). The internal consistency reliability Cronbach's alpha is .96 for a 1200-person university sample and .95 for a 483-person military sample. Content validity is .95 (Oxford, 1990).

2. GEPT (General English Proficiency Test)

English proficiency was measured by GEPT. GEPT is a test of general English

proficiency, which was sponsored by Ministry of Education and developed by the Language Training and Testing Center in 1990. The test includes four parts: listening, reading, writing and speaking. GEPT is divided into five levels: elementary, intermediate, high intermediate, advanced and superior. In listening test, it contains three sections: 10 questions on picture description, 10 questions on question-response and 10 questions on short conversation. The reading test includes three sections: 15 questions on incomplete sentence, 10 questions on cloze and 10 questions on reading comprehension. The writing test consists of 5 questions on sentence rewriting according to the required direction, 5 questions on sentence combining, 5 questions on rearranging given words into a sentence and paragraph writing based on the given picture. The scores on listening, reading and writing were used to analyze the relationship between language learning strategy use and English proficiency.

Data analysis

In this study, to test Hypothesis One and Hypothesis Two, an independent samples t-test was used to evaluate the differences in language learning strategy use between higher and lower proficiency EFL students. Furthermore, to test Hypothesis Three, a multiple regression was used to evaluate the effect of language learning strategy use on English proficiency.

Results

This study examined three hypotheses which relate to the extent and types of language learning strategies used by higher and lower proficiency EFL students and their English proficiency. The report of the results consists of two parts:

(1) Independent samples t-test

(2) Multiple regression analysis

   The data in this study obtained from the SILL and the GEPT test were tabulated and analyzed using Statistical Package SAS for Windows.

 (1) Independent samples t-test

Independent samples *t*-test was used to evaluate the differences in language learning strategy use between higher and lower proficiency EFL students. To test Hypothesis One, an independent samples *t*-test was used to determine the significance of

differences, if any, between means of average total scores of SILL by higher and lower proficiency EFL students. Similarly, to test Hypothesis Two, the independent samples *t*-test was utilized to compare the difference mean language learning strategy average subscores for each type of strategy between higher and lower proficiency EFL students.

Table 3 relates to English proficiency level and presents data related to the overall SILL mean score as well as the mean scores on the six types of strategies for higher and lower proficiency EFL students. In addition, it reveals the result of the independent samples *t*-test.

Table 3. Independent Samples t-test on proficiency level

Strategies	Group	Mean	SD	*t* value	*p* value
Memory	Higher proficiency	3.0884	.4938	.95	.3439
	Lower proficiency	3.0013	.5262		
Cognitive	Higher proficiency	3.4329	.5197	3.94	.0001**
	Lower proficiency	3.0586	.5436		
Compensation	Higher proficiency	3.6701	.5778	2.44	.0161*
	Lower proficiency	3.4261	.5524		
Metacognitive	Higher proficiency	3.4830	.4494	4.12	.0001**
	Lower proficiency	3.0871	.5822		
Affective	Higher proficiency	3.0782	.6162	1.99	.0481*
	Lower proficiency	2.8580	.6213		
Social	Higher proficiency	3.4184	.5933	3.43	.0008**
	Lower proficiency	2.9943	.7421		
TOTAL	Higher proficiency	3.3618	.4110	3.50	.0006**
	Lower proficiency	3.0706	.4959		

Notes: ** *p* < .01 (significant at .01 level)
　　　 * *p* < .05 (significant at .05 level)

Based upon the mean difference on the SILL average total score between higher and lower proficiency EFL students in Table 3 (*p* = .0006), Hypothesis One was rejected. This indicates that higher proficiency EFL students use language learning strategies more often than lower proficiency EFL students. Furthermore, except memory strategy, the frequencies of using cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies for higher proficiency EFL students are significantly higher than they are for the lower proficiency EFL students. Hypothesis Two is not totally rejected.

(2) Regression analysis

A multiple regression was used to form the model of the relationship between language learning strategy use and English proficiency. The regression analysis reveals how a change in one variable (X) relates to a change in the other variables (Y). In specific, the stronger the correlation between X and Y, the more accurately Y (dependent variable) can be predicted from X (independent variable), and vice versa. The multiple regression equation in this study is:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \beta_3 X_{3i} + \beta_4 X_{4i} + \beta_5 X_{5i} + \beta_6 X_{6i} + e_i$$

Y: scores on English proficiency test

$X_1 \sim X_6$: scores on six types of strategies respectively

β_0: intercept

$\beta_1 \sim \beta_6$: the strength of the effect of language learning strategy use on the scores of the proficiency test

e: error term

Table 4 reveals the strength of the effect of language learning strategy use on GEPT total scores.

Table 4. Multiple Regression Analysis (GEPT vs. language learning strategies)

	Regression Coefficients	Standard Error	*t* value	*p* value
Intercept	237.25174	39.48839	6.01	<.0001
Memory	-6.20846	10.22320	-0.61	0.5459
Cognitive	28.11589	11.36801	2.47	0.0162*
Compensation	-4.90397	7.22605	-0.68	0.4999
Metacognitive	4.21342	10.91959	0.39	0.7009

Affective	7.15363	8.54679	0.84	0.4059
Social	-6.52793	8.22850	-0.79	0.4307

Notes: ** *p* < .01 (significant at .01 level)
　　　 * *p* < .05 (significant at .05 level)

In Table 4, it was found that only cognitive strategy use reported by the lower proficiency EFL students was significantly related to the English proficiency test (GEPT scores).

Table 5. Multiple Regression Analysis (GEPT listening scores vs. language learning strategies)

	Regression Coefficients	Standard Error	*t* value	*p* value
Intercept	79.82353	17.25565	4.63	<.0001
Memory	4.00805	4.46733	0.90	0.3731
Cognitive	9.89607	4.96760	1.99	0.0508*
Compensation	0.08072	3.15764	0.03	0.9797
Metacognitive	-0.93919	4.77165	-0.20	0.8446
Affective	0.07537	3.73478	0.02	0.9840
Social	-2.12287	3.59569	-0.59	0.5571

Notes: ** *p* < .01 (significant at .01 level)
　　　 * *p* < .05 (significant at .05 level)

According to Table 5, it indicates that cognitive strategy use reported by the lower proficiency EFL students was also significantly related to the GEPT listening scores.

Table 6. Multiple Regression Analysis (GEPT reading scores vs. language learning strategies)

	Regression Coefficients	Standard Error	*t* value	*p* value
Intercept	101.70173	16.54886	6.15	<.0001
Memory	-8.14345	4.28435	-1.90	0.0621
Cognitive	12.76931	4.76412	2.68	0.0094**
Compensation	-2.52038	3.02830	-0.83	0.4085
Metacognitive	0.78987	4.57620	0.17	0.8635
Affective	6.50277	3.58180	1.82	0.0744
Social	-4.35034	3.44841	-1.26	0.2119

Notes: ** *p* < .01 (significant at .01 level)

　　　 * *p* < .05 (significant at .05 level)

In Table 6, it shows that cognitive strategy use reported by the lower proficiency EFL students was significantly related to GEPT reading scores.

Table 7. Multiple Regression Analysis (GEPT writing scores vs. language learning strategies)

	Regression Coefficients	Standard Error	*t* value	*p* value
Intercept	53.27087	17.68434	3.01	0.0038
Memory	-1.37903	4.57832	-0.30	0.7643
Cognitive	4.18496	5.0910 1	0.82	0.4143
Compensation	-2.80693	3.23609	-0.87	0.3891
Metacognitive	4.51360	4.89019	0.92	0.3596
Affective	0.56589	3.82756	0.15	0.8830
Social	0.76750	3.68502	0.21	0.8357

Notes: ** $p < .01$ (significant at .01 level)

     * $p < .05$ (significant at .05 level)

In Table 7, it presents that there is no significant relationship between language learning strategy use and GEPT writing scores.

Conclusions and suggestions

According to the independent samples t-test on proficiency level in Table 3, higher proficiency EFL students use language learning strategies more often than lower proficiency EFL students. Furthermore, compared to lower proficiency EFL students, higher proficiency EFL students use cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies more often. The result was consistent with the finding that intermediate level students tended to use proportionally more metacognitive strategies than students with lower proficiency level proficiency (O'Malley et al., 1985) and the finding that metacognitive strategy use rose as the foreign language course level increased (Chamot et al., 1987). In contrast, there is no significant difference in the use of memory strategies between higher and lower proficiency EFL students. In addition, both higher and lower proficiency EFL students use compensation strategies more often than other strategies probably because they are the easiest to use. This finding might imply that students tried to make up for their missing knowledge by using the most direct and natural way. Furthermore, in Table 4 multiple regression analysis, it was noted that cognitive strategies had the strongest relation to English proficiency. This finding might suggest that the English proficiency probably more depends on the cognitive strategies. The result is similar to Park's (1997) investigation indicating that strategies were significantly correlated with test scores, and cognitive strategies were

more predictive of scores than other strategies. Green and Oxford (1995) also found that intermediate students used cognitive strategies significantly more than did basic students. The positive relationship between cognitive strategy use and English proficiency represents that students with a greater use of cognitive strategy have better performance on English proficiency. In Table 5 and Table 6, it also indicated that cognitive strategy use had a greater effect on the listening and reading scores of the proficiency test. However, in Table 7, the relationship between cognitive strategy use and GEPT writing scores was not significant.

In conclusion, the principal findings from this investigation include:

1. Both higher and lower proficiency EFL students use compensation strategies more often than other strategies.

2. Higher proficiency EFL students use language learning strategies more often than lower proficiency EFL students.

3. The use of cognitive strategies had the strongest relation to English proficiency.

4. Cognitive strategy use had greater effect on the listening and reading proficiency.

What learners know about themselves and about their own learning process can affect their use of language learning strategies (Wenden, 1986). Chamot and her colleagues (1987) discovered that effective learners reported a greater frequency and range of strategy use. Learners' level of strategy awareness also influences strategy use. Nyikos (1987) found that learners used only a narrow range of strategies and were generally unaware of the strategies they used. Therefore, in order to improve students' language learning, EFL teachers need to understand what language learning strategies students use and encourage lower proficiency EFL students to use language learning strategies in their learning process. Moreover, teaching methods often influence how students learn. Teachers should become more aware of their students' learning strategies in order to orient teaching methods more appropriately. This study provides the information about the difference in the extent and types of language learning strategy use between higher proficiency and lower proficiency EFL students and the strength of the effect of language learning strategy use on English proficiency. Future research should focus on methods to integrate language learning strategy training into language instruction, discovering other strategies other than the six types of language learning strategies discussed in this study might enhance students' language learning and the effect of strategy instruction on language learning.

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Appendix

Language Learning Strategies (SILL Version 7.0 ESL/EFL)

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

1. I think of 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 a new English word and an image or picture of the word 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. (For example, when you learn the word "jump", you could get up and actually jump to help you memory this word.)
8. I review English lessons often.
9. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, on the street sign.
10. I say or write new English words several times.
11. I try to talk like a native English speaker.
12. I practice the sounds of English.
13. I use the English words I know in different ways.
14. I start conversation in English.
15. I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies.
16. I read for pleasure in English.
17. I write notes, messages, letters, and reports in English.
18. I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.
19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.

20. I try to find patterns in English.

21. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.

22. I try not to translate word-for-word.

23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.

24. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.

25. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.

26. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.

27. I read English without looking up every word.

28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.

29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.

30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.

31. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.

32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.

33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.

34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.

35. I look for people I can talk to in English.

36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.

37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills.

38. I think about my progress in learning English.

39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.

40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of using English.

41. I give myself a reward of treat when I do well in English.

42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.

43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.

44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.

45. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down.

46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I speak English.

47. I practice English with other students.

48. I ask for help from English speakers.

49. I ask questions in English.

50. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.

Worksheet for Answering and Scoring the SILL

1. The blanks (_____) are numbered for each item on the SILL.

2. Write your response to each item (that is, write 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) in each of the blanks.

3. Add up each column. Put the result on the line marked SUM.

4. Divide by the number under SUM to get the average for each column. Round this average off to the nearest tenth, as in 3.6.

5. Figure out your overall average. To do this, add up all the SUMs for the different parts of the SILL. Then divide by 50.

6. When you have finished, your teacher will give you the Profile of Results. Copy your averages (for each part and for the whole SILL) from the Worksheet to the Profile.

Part A	Part B	Part C	Part D	Part E	Part F
1 _____	10 _____	24 _____	30 _____	39 _____	45 _____
2 _____	11 _____	25 _____	31 _____	40 _____	46 _____
3 _____	12 _____	26 _____	32 _____	41 _____	47 _____
4 _____	13 _____	27 _____	33 _____	42 _____	48 _____
5 _____	14 _____	28 _____	34 _____	43 _____	49 _____
6 _____	15 _____	29 _____	35 _____	44 _____	50 _____
7 _____	16 _____			36 _____	
8 _____	17 _____			37 _____	
9 _____	18 _____			38 _____	
	19 _____				
	20 _____				
	21 _____				
	22 _____				
	23 _____				

Whole SILL

SUM _____ SUM _____ SUM _____ SUM _____ SUM _____ SUM _____ = _____

÷ 9 =_____ ÷ 14 =_____ ÷ 6 = _____ ÷ 9 = _____ ÷ 6 = _____ ÷ 6 =_____ ÷ 50_____

Overall Average

Profile of Results on the SILL

You will receive this Profile after you have completed the Worksheet. This profile will show your SILL results. These results will tell you the kinds of strategies you use in learning English. There are no right or wrong answers.

To complete this profile, transfer your averages for each part of the SILL, and your overall average for the whole SILL. These averages are found on the Worksheet.

Part	What Strategies Are Covered	Your Average on This Part
A	Remembering more effectively	_____
B	Using all your mental processes	_____
C	Compensating for missing knowledge	_____
D	Organizing and evaluating your learning	_____
E	Managing your emotions	_____
F	Learning with others	_____
Your Overall Average		_____

Key to Understanding Your Averages

High	Always or almost always used	4.5 to 5.0
	Usually used	3.5 to 4.4
Medium	Sometimes used	2.5 to 3.4
Low	Generally not used	1.5 to 2.4
	Never or almost never used	1.0 to 1.4

What These Average Mean to You

The overall average tells how often you use strategies for learning English. Each part of the SILL represents a group of learning strategies. The averages for each part of the SILL show which groups of strategies you use the most for learning English.

The best use of strategies depends on your age, personality, and purpose for learning. If you have a very low average on one or more parts of the SILL, there may be some new strategies in these groups that you might want to use. Ask your teacher about these.

An Acoustic Analysis of Pitch Range in the Production of Native and Nonnative Speakers of English

Nora A. Binghadeer
College of Education, Riyadh University, Saudi Arabia

Bio Data:

Nora A. Binghadeer is an assistant professor in Applied Linguistics (Acoustic Phonetics and Language Learning) at the English Department, College of Education, Riyadh University, Saudi Arabia. She has been teaching English courses to EFL students for more than 20 years. She has taught Linguistics, Grammar, Spoken English, Phonetics, morphology, and syntax. Her current research interests include interlanguage development in intonation, kinetic tones, fossilized vowels, and accent attainment after the critical period.

Abstract

This paper investigated Saudi EFL learners' pitch range, and compared it to that of native speakers. 52 female students read sentences, and their production was analysed through pitch tracks and spectrograms. The F0 of the vowels for all tokens was measured in Hz at midpoint. The results revealed that there were significant differences between the mean of the pitch range used by non-native speakers and all native speakers for the utterances with falling intonation. However, while there were no significant differences between the non-native speakers' and the American native speakers' pitch range for the utterances with rising intonation, there were significant differences between their mean and that of the British native speakers.

Key words: EFL, language learning, language teaching, suprasegmentals, intonation, pitch range

1. Introduction

Suprasegmental errors have a greater impact on native speakers (NSs) than segmental errors, with intonational patterns playing a potentially important role in foreign accent (Anderson-Hsieh et al., 1992; Morely, 1991; Pennington & Richards 1986). This is partly due to the fact that an intonation system is an integral part of the language, and inaccurate speech melody can trigger a complete breakdown in communication (James, 1976; Timkova, 2001; Wei, 2006; Wennerstrom, 1998).

There is a "widespread consensus about the significance of intonation for successful communication" (Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994, p. 76), as many writers in the field of

pronunciation pedagogy have recognised the vital role of suprasegmentals in the intelligibility of speech leading to an increase in emphasis on the teaching of prosodics (Anderson-Hsieh et al., 1992; Celce-Murcia et al., 1996; Morley, 1987; Munro, 1995; Munro & Derwing, 1995). Our present study is a step towards the learning and teaching of intelligible pronunciation through shedding more light on pitch range as an important intonational aspect.

But in addition to being important, intonation is a fairly complicated subject (Roach, 1991; Taylor, 1993; Wennerstrom, 1998). While many consider teaching suprasegmentals to be 'notoriously difficult' (Celce-Murcia, 1987, p. 11), intonation is considered to be the 'problem child' of pronunciation teaching (Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994, p. 76), and the 'stronghold' of foreign accent (Cruz-Ferreira, 1989, p. 24).

Many writers rank the importance of intonation even higher than that of individual sounds (Morley, 1987), and 'prosodic patterns – especially differences in pitch movement – are usually experienced as being more difficult to perceive (and produce) than segmental differences' (Kaltenboeck, 2001, p. 19). In the process of speaking, every syllable is pronounced with variation in pitch as narrow pitch excursions are monotonous intonational patterns. Hincks (2005) notes that speakers who have high pitch variation as they speak would be perceived as livelier speakers.

Furthermore, Lin et al., (1995) showed that many students when listening to English paid more attention to sounds, vocabulary, and grammar; and paid very little attention to pitch changes. Therefore, when it comes to speaking English, it is no surprise to find that many students sound monotonous. Knowing the actual pitch ranges produced by EFL learners will help teachers and learners; and a comparative study of pitch ranges of English as a native language and as a foreign language may also prove useful.

2. Previous Studies

The researcher did not find any studies on the pitch range of either Arab speakers in general or Saudi speakers in particular as EFL learners. There were studies on intonation of the Arabic language and the Arabic dialects; or studies on the analysis of F0 employed by Arabs as EFL learners to signal sentence stress. The previous studies found were on the EFL pitch range used by non-Arabs. The following is a summary of their findings.

Wennerstrom (1998) measured pitch range differences in the spoken production of

18 Chinese non-native speakers (NNSs) of English (12 male and 6 female teacher assistants) and 2 NSs (American male and female). She calculated percentages of their raw pitch to adjust for sex pitch differences. A statistically significant relationship was found between the intonation system used by the NNSs and their scores on a global language test. Moreover, the results showed that the NSs made a huge distinction in pitch range 65% whereas the NNSs' averages hovered around 30% when using pitch to distinguish contrasting items from given items.

Timkova (2001) dealt with pitch range produced by ten 2nd year university students of English whose mother tongue was Slovak, and one NS. The study was based on both acoustic and auditory analyses of seven declarative sentences read aloud. Minimum and maximum values of F0 obtained showed that where NSs' pitch ranged from 85-210 (125Hz), Slovak students' pitch ranged from 200-290 Hz (90Hz) and 135-185 Hz (50 Hz). If we transform these results into percentage values of minimum to maximum pitch, we can see that where NSs' pitch range change was 59%, Slovak students' pitch range change was 31%. The study showed that the intonation realization within narrow pitch ranges sounded very monotonous, and that confident readers produced the wider range.

In Taniguchi's paper (2001), 200 Japanese students who had taken a course of English phonetics read sentences. One of the weak points in their reading was their narrow pitch range. The fundamental frequency range used by the majority of the subjects was from about 200 Hz to about 250 Hz. The range of some was even narrower. Although some subjects' pitch ranged from about 200 Hz to 300 Hz, very few used a pitch range wider than that. When we switch these results into percentage values of minimum to maximum pitch, we notice that the majority of the subjects produced a pitch range change of 20%. One of the conclusions of the study was that Japanese students may well be encouraged to speak more confidently using wider pitch ranges.

Nagamine (2002) compared the average F0 ranges of two native speakers (American) to the ranges used by fifteen Japanese male and female university students. The Japanese students went through pronunciation training for ninety minutes per week for a thirteen-week semester. The pre-training data calculated in Hertz (Hz) was compared to the post-training data (Table 1 and Table 2). They read eleven sentences. The data F0 pitch contours were analysed and compared to the native speakers' pitch range; while the native male range was 55% between the

highest and lowest, the female was 42% (average 47%). The comparison showed that the students' post-training production had a much broader range.

Table 1

Average F0 Ranges of Japanese Participants: Pre-Training Data (Hz)

	Range	Minimum	Maximum
Male	75	96	171
Female	97.73	187.82	285.55

Table 2

Average F0 Ranges of Japanese Participants: Post-Training Data (Hz)

	Range	Minimum	Maximum
Male	108.5	98	206.5
Female	132.55	190.36	322.91

If we convert these figures into percentages: The male participants pre-training pitch range was 44% and improved to 52%; while the female pre-training was 34% and improved to 41%.

In most of these previous studies, a small number of subjects were chosen for analysis (10-18), while our study dealt with 52 students to reinforce the validity of the findings. Likewise, our investigation included both British and American NSs to see the effect of the variable of two different English accents. Unlike the studies mentioned above, we avoided sex pitch variations by selecting only female native and non-native subjects. In addition, our method of analysis avoided an error made by some researchers, e.g., Timkova (2001), which was dealing directly with raw pitch data and entangling themselves with individual speaker's pitch differences. We, instead, converted raw pitch data into percentages of the same speakers' pitch range. Moreover, we included native speakers as a source of speakers using the right pitch range to avoid personal judgments. Taniguchi (2001), for example, did not integrate native speaker data. To have more control over variables under analysis, the data in this paper was not only read, just as the data selected in the majority of studies mentioned above; but also represented two different sets of sentences read by two nonnative groups of students. Finally, as done by Nagamine (2002), our data should

be considered a post-training data because it was collected at the end of the students' second year, i.e., they had covered four phonetic courses.

The aim of this paper was to investigate the production of pitch range by Saudi learners of English as a foreign language in comparison with NSs of English. The results should help improve our knowledge of intonation in teaching and learning English for Saudi EFL learners.

3. Method

3.1. Subjects

The subjects of this study were originally 60 second-year female students, but eight subjects were excluded from the study due to hesitation, and repetition with emphatic production. So, the actual number of subjects was 52 NNSs. They were on average 20 years old. All were in the English Department in the College of Education, Riyadh University. All were exposed to the same learning situation and teachers in college. They had already gone through a minimum of eight years of English; six years before college and two in college. While in college, they had taken thirty-two English language and literature courses including four in English Phonetics that covered vowels, consonants, stress, rhythm, and intonation. The NSs were four females; two British and two American.

3.2. Material

The sentences under study were part of a longer list the researcher had comprised to evaluate the students' mastery of intonation at the end of their second year. The data consisted of two sets of sentences. Four sentences were randomly chosen from each set for analysis; two represented falling tones and two represented rising tones. They are as follows:

Set 1

He looked kind of young. (fall1)

What a lovely rose! (fall2)

Have you seen him yet? (rise1)

What's your name again? (rise2)

Set 2

I worked hard. (fall1)

Come over here! (fall2)

Will you? (rise1)

How was the weather? (rise2)

3.3. Setting

Their reading was recorded in the English Department language lab.

3.4. Procedure

The subjects were presented with the sentence list and were asked to read at a normal speed. The first group of NNSs (G1) read Set 1, and the second group of NNSs (G2) read Set 2. The total number of tokens was 208 (4 utterances x 52 NNSs), and 16 tokens (4 utterances x 4 NS).

3.5. Data analysis

3.5.1. Acoustic analysis

The 208 NNSs' tokens and the 16 NSs' tokens were acoustically analysed through pitch tracks and spectrograms using SFS/WASP Version 103 (2004) by Mark Huckvale from the Department of Phonetics and Linguistics, University College, London. The F0 (fundamental frequency) of the vowel (the sonatic nucleus of the syllable) for all the tokens was measured in Hertz (Hz) at vowel midpoint. An auditory analysis was also administered.

3.5.2. Statistical analysis

Raw pitch values were converted into percentages of each speaker's pitch range. A higher percentage indicated that the speaker was using a greater pitch difference to distinguish meanings. The minimum, maximum, and mean of these percentages were also calculated. A t-test was also carried out.

3.6. Hypothesis

It was hypothesised that significant differences would be found between the means of the NNSs and the means of the NSs in the range between the highest and lowest pitch for the fall and rise tones.

3.7. Research questions

Are there significant differences between the means of both groups of NNSs and the

means of the NSs in the range between the highest and lowest pitch for the fall tones and/or the rise tones?

4. Results

When the acoustic results of NNSs were examined in comparison to NSs with regard to pitch range, distinct patterns emerged. The mean of the range between the highest and the lowest pitch for the first sentence with a falling intonation (fall1) and the second sentence with a falling intonation (fall2) for the first group of NNSs (G1), and fall2 for G2 was around 45%. As for fall1 utterances for G2, their mean was smaller (38%). The minimum range for G2 fall2 minimum was small (26%), but the minimum for all other NNSs' fall utterances was even smaller (15%-16%). A noteworthy result was that the maximum range between the highest and the lowest pitch for both NNSs groups' fall utterances was between 68%-77%, i. e., a range similar to that used by NSs (Table 3).

Table 3

Pitch range for non-native speakers' sentences with falling intonation

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
G1 Fall1	26	16	68	45.12	11.793
G1 Fall2	26	15.0	73.0	43.923	15.7199
G2 Fall1	26	15.0	77.0	38.231	14.8656
G2 Fall2	26	26.0	72.0	44.923	14.9182
Valid N (listwise)	26				

Looking at the overall result for G1 fall utterances, we observed that the mean of 45% range between the highest and the lowest pitch they produced was higher than that produced by G2 (42%). While the minimum range for both groups fall utterances was the same 15%, the maximum range made by G2 (77%) was higher than that by G1 (73%) (Table 4).

Table 4

Pitch range for non-native speakers' sentences according to group and tone

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
G1 fall1 & fall2	52	15	73	44.52	13.772
G2 fall1 & fall2	52	15.0	77.0	41.577	15.1274
G1 rise1 & rise2	52	20.0	76.0	45.885	11.7568
G2 rise1 & rise2	52	4.0	68.0	34.750	16.0939
Valid N (listwise)	52				

On the other hand, when we considered the fall utterances produced by NSs, we realised that the British speakers produced them with a mean of 72% range between the highest and the lowest pitch which was bigger than that generated by the American speakers (58%). The minimum range and the maximum range presented by the British speakers, (58% and 78%), were also bigger than those produced by the American speakers, (53% and 67%) (Table 5) (Figure 1).

Table 5

Pitch range for native speakers' sentences according to group and tone

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
British Fall	4	58.0	78.0	71.500	9.1104
American Fall	4	53.0	67.0	58.250	6.3966
British Rise	4	56.0	75.0	69.000	8.7560
American Rise	4	33.0	43.0	36.750	4.5000
Valid N (listwise)	4				

Figure 1: The mean range for non-native and native speakers
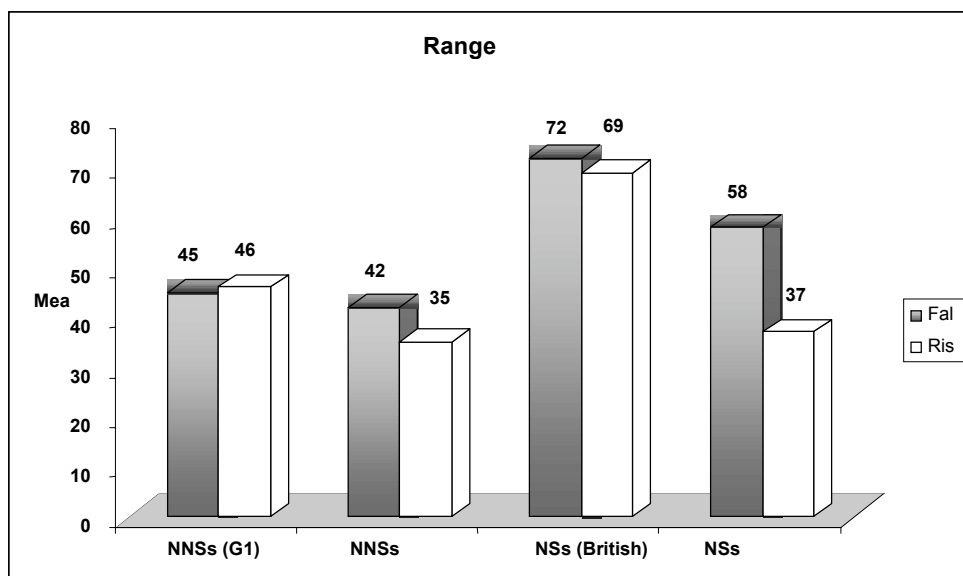
When we looked at the full shape of the fall utterances for both NNSs groups, we noted that they read the fall utterances with a mean of 43% range between the highest and the lowest pitch with a minimum range of 15% and a maximum range of 77% (Table 6).

Table 6

Pitch range for non-native speakers' sentences according to tone

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
G1 & G2 fall1 & fall2	104	15	77	43.05	14.471
G1 & G2 rise1 & rise2	104	4.0	76.0	40.317	15.0992
Valid N (listwise)	104				

Turning to the results produced by NSs, we noticed that the entire number of British and American speakers' fall utterances were produced with a mean of 65% range between the highest and the lowest pitch with a minimum range of 53% and a maximum range of 78% (Table 7).

Table 7

Pitch range for native speakers' sentences according to tone

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Br. & Am. Fall	8	53.0	78.0	64.875	10.1621
Br. & Am. Rise	8	33.0	75.0	52.875	18.4037
Valid N (listwise)	8				

So far we have been concerned with the findings of fall utterances. When we turned to the findings emerging from the analysis of rise utterances, we realised that the mean of the range between the highest and the lowest pitch of rise1 utterances for G1 (42%) was close to that for G2 (40%). While the mean of G1 rise2 was the biggest (50%), the mean of G2 rise2 was the smallest (29%). The minimum range for G2 rise utterances was very small (5%-7%), while that for G1 rise utterances was bigger 20%-26%. As for the maximum range between the highest and the lowest pitch of the rise utterances for both NNSs groups, the biggest was produced by G1 (77%), and the smallest was produced by G2 (56%) (Table 8).

Table 8

Pitch range for non-native speakers' sentences with falling intonation

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
G1 rise1	26	20.0	60.0	42.077	10.0714
G1 rise2	26	26.0	76.0	49.692	12.2630
G2 rise1	26	7.0	68.0	40.269	15.1064
G2 rise2	26	4.0	56.0	29.231	15.3891
Valid N (listwise)	26				

The total findings for G1 rise utterances shows that their mean of 46% range between the highest and the lowest pitch is higher than that produced by G2 (35%). The minimum range and the maximum range produced by G1 (20% and 77%) are bigger than those produced by G2 (4% and 68%) (Table 4 above).

As in the case of the NSs, the British speakers produced the rise utterances with a

mean of 69% range between the highest and the lowest pitch which is bigger than that produced by the American speakers (37%). The minimum range and the maximum range produced by the British speakers (56% and 75%) are also bigger than those produced by the American speakers (33% and 43%) (see Table 5 above).

To further illustrate these findings for both NNSs groups, we look at the full picture of the rise utterances that shows that their mean range is 40% with a minimum range of 4% and a maximum range of 76% (Table 6 above). When we turn to the NSs, we notice that the total British and American speakers rise utterances are presented with a mean of 53% range between the highest and the lowest pitch with a minimum range of 33% and a maximum range of 75% (Table 7 above).

The findings summarised in Table 9 illustrate the general result for rise and fall utterances. We notice that G1 produced them with a mean of 45% range between the highest and the lowest pitch which is bigger than that produced by G2 (38%). G2 minimum range (15%) is also bigger than that produced by G2 (4%), while the maximum range for both groups is almost the same (77% and 76%).

Table 9

Pitch range for non-native speakers' sentences according to group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
G1 all fall & rise	104	15	76	45.20	12.760
G2 all fall & rise	104	4.0	77.0	38.163	15.9161
Valid N (listwise)	104				

When we examine the production of NSs, we note that the mean range between the highest and the lowest pitch of the total British speakers' fall and rise utterances is 70%, which is bigger than the American speakers' (48%). The minimum range and the maximum range reached by the British speakers (56% and 78%) are also bigger than those by the American speakers (33% and 67%) (Table 10).

Table 10

Pitch range for native speakers' sentences according to group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Br. Fall & Rise	8	56.0	78.0	70.250	8.3794
Am. Fall & Rise	8	33.0	67.0	47.500	12.5812
Valid N (listwise)	8				

Finally, the results summarised in Table 11 reveal that while the NNSs' mean is 42%, their minimum range is 4% and their maximum is 77%. As for Table 12, its results show that NSs' mean is 59% with a minimum range of 33% and a maximum range of 78%.

Table 11

Pitch range for all non-native speakers' sentences

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
G1 & G2 fall & rise	208	4	77	41.68	14.816
Valid N (listwise)	208				

Table 12

Pitch range for all native speakers' sentences

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Br. & Am. Fall & Rise	16	33.0	78.0	58.875	15.6413
Valid N (listwise)	16				

5. Conclusions

The results generally conformed to our tentative expectations that significant differences would be found between the means of the NNSs and the means of the NSs in the range between the highest and lowest pitch. They reinforced the suggestion that Saudi speakers are likely to encounter difficulty producing pitch as their pitch range

was significantly narrower than that used by NSs. If we begin with the fall utterances, the NNSs' pitch range between the highest and the lowest was significantly narrower than the NSs' ($p < 0.02$ and $p < 0.01$): total NNSs' mean was 43% (G1 45% and G2 42%), total NSs' mean was 65% (British 72% and American 58%). This could be related to L1 influence where a gradual decent reaching a low intonational level is typically not maintained (Mitchell & El-Hassan, 1989).

It is necessary to draw attention to a remarkable outcome for the rise utterances. When we compared NNSs' pitch range to that used by the British NSs', the former was significantly narrower ($p < 0.04$), because the NNSs' mean was 40% (G1 46% and G2 35%) and the British NSs' mean was (69%). However, when we compared NNSs' mean to that used by the American NSs, there were no significant differences between them ($p < 0.6$). Indeed, in this respect, the NNSs' mean (40%: G1 46% and G2 35%) paralleled that used by the American English speakers (37%). What was even more striking was that Nagamine's (2002) female American NS's mean (42%) was exactly like our students' total mean for both rise and fall utterances (42%). Accordingly, our conclusion should be that our students' pitch range for both fall and rise utterances was flawless. A potential factor influencing this finding might be the learning context. American English is mostly adopted by our students in spite of being exposed to both British and American English material.

Yet, maintaining our NSs' combination of British and American, the most inclusive finding was that the NNSs' pitch range between the highest and the lowest was narrow 42% (G1 45% and G2 38%) for all fall and rise utterances as compared to the NSs' 59% (British 70% and American 48%). Therefore, the general pattern which was seen across these 52 subjects was one in which pitch was produced with a narrow range. This signaled the NNSs' inability to produce lower pitch. Here, we observed that the lowest pitch point for 87% of the NNSs' utterances was 150 Hz and above as compared to 50% of the NSs'; and for 45% of the NNSs' utterances the lowest pitch point was 200 Hz and above as compared to 13% of the NSs' (Table 13). This result is linked to L1 characteristic up and down pitch fluctuations that spoil a smooth intonational movement and keep pitch on higher frequency levels (Mitchell & El-Hassan, 1989).

Table 13

The lowest pitch point for non-native and native speakers in Hz

Lowest pitch point	Percentage	
	NNSs	NSs
150 Hz and above	87%	50%
200 Hz and above	45%	13%

The pitch tracks below (Figure 2 and Figure 3) show one example of this divergence.

Figure 2: British speaker's sentence with falling intonation (He looked kind of young.)
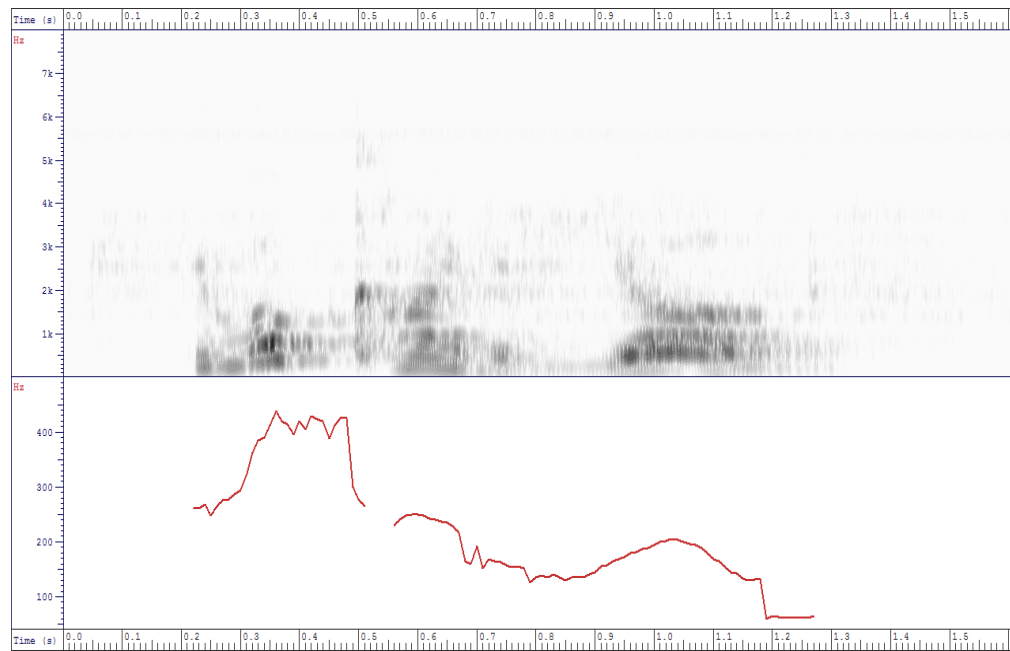
Figure 3: Non-native speaker's sentence with falling intonation (He looked kind of young.)
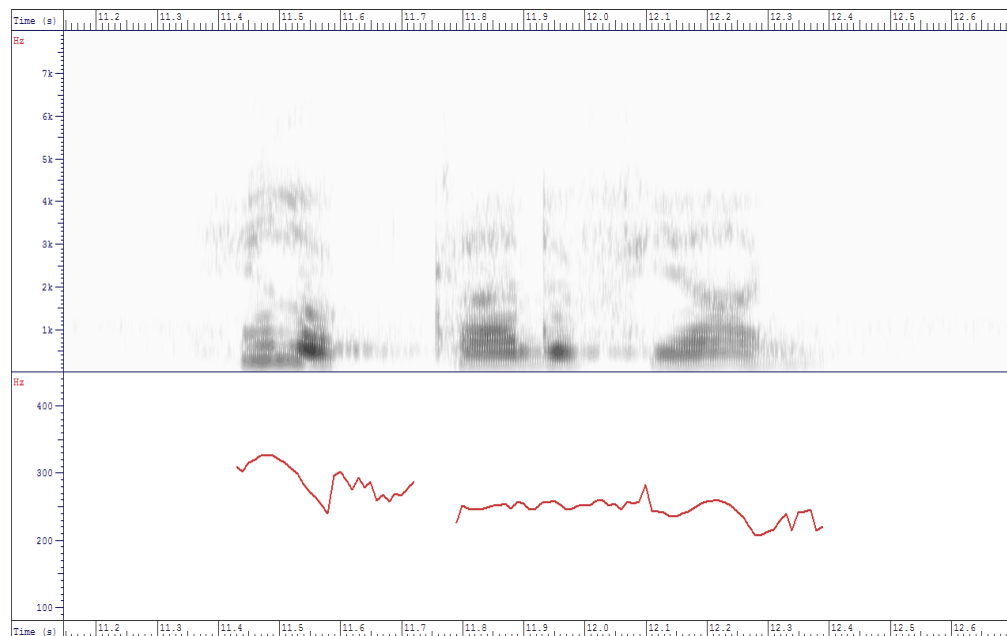
This is in agreement with previous studies (Table 14). The NNSs' pitch ranges measured by Wennerstom (1998), Timkova (2001), and Taniguchi (2001), were even narrower: 30%, 31%, and 20% respectively. As for Nagamine (2002), the post-training result for females (41%) was very close to ours (42%), while the one for males (52%) was better than our students' result. Likewise, the findings for our NSs are also consistent with previous studies, e. g., Timkova (2001) whose calculation was exactly like ours (59%); and Wennerstrom (1998) whose finding (65%) is closer to our British NSs' (70%). A noteworthy point is that Nagamine's (2002) female NS's pitch range (42%) is exactly like our students' (42%), while the male's range (55%) is broader than the one used by our students.

Table 14

Mean pitch range in previous studies and in our study for non-native and native speakers

	Pitch Range	
	NNSs	NSs
1. Wennerstrom (1998)	30%	65%

2.Timkova (2001)	31%	59%
3. Taniguchi (2001)	20%	-
4. Nagamine (2002)	female 41%, male 52%	female 42%, male 55%
5. Current study	41%	59% (Br. 70% Am. 48%)

After reviewing related literature in the past 25 years, Morley (1991) concluded that one solution to problems in language learning is to equip ESL teachers with a very specific kind of background in applied English phonetics and phonology that gives detailed attention to suprasegmentals and voice-quality features. ESL/EFL teachers should apply suitable instructional procedures that may be helpful to learners who show narrow pitch excursions or monotonous intonation patterns (Nagamine, 2002). Todaka (1993) suggested that by using a 'hyper-pronunciation' training method, i.e., one that initially exaggerates pitch contours and the duration of stressed syllables in English. NNSs can be taught to broaden their range of pitch to carry more dramatic changes characteristic of English intonation (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996).

The findings of the current study imply that teaching material should contain more instruction on the lowering of pitch to maintain a wider pitch range. To achieve that, teaching techniques should employ listening to authentic discourse for learners who tune to patterns of intonation holistically, and visual pitch tracks for those who are more analytical. In addition, explicit and immediate feedback should be provided using equipment to display learners' errors in read and spoken utterances.

This study makes no claim about a detailed presentation of emotional and attitudinal uses of intonation. Instead, what is presented is an investigation of a bare-bones system of high and low ranges that indicate native and nonnative production. Taking this cautionary note into consideration, this kind of study, nevertheless, does provide some important insights related to the teaching and learning of intelligible pronunciation. Saudi EFL learners' intonation is an area that requires further exploration in many aspects, e. g., pitch in relation to old and new information, pitch in relation to kinetic tones (a forthcoming paper by the researcher), and using pitch tracks as a tool to improve students' performance. The availability of pitch data such as these creates a baseline of expected inaccuracies which may result from speaking English as a foreign language. These difficulties should be defined and incorporated into constructive teaching strategies.

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Collaborative Teaching in an ESP Program

Ching-ning Chien, Wei Lee and Li-hua Kao
Chung Yuan Christian University, Republic of China

Bio Data:
Ching-ning Chien holds M.A. degrees in Special Education from Tennessee Technological University and in English Education from Ohio State University, as well as a Ph.D. degree in Education from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, England. She is currently an associate professor in Applied Linguistics at Chung Yuan Christian University where she is teaches listening, speaking and reading to freshman students. Her research interests include foreign language listening comprehension, foreign language learning and teaching, bilingualism, phonological awareness and second language acquisition.

Wei Lee holds an M.S. degree in electro-optical engineering from National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan, and a Ph.D. in physics from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, AL. He is currently a full professor of physics at Chung Yuan Christian University. He has worked in the areas of liquid-crystal optics, structural vibration analysis, laboratory astrophysics, and physics education. His recent research interests are liquid-crystal photonics, nanoscience and nanotechnology in display applications, and pedagogy of English for science and technology for non-native speakers.

Li-hua Kao has an M.A. in Finance, an M.S. in Applied Statistics, and earned a Ph.D in Applied Statistics from University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa. She is an associate professor in the Accounting Department at Chung Yuan Christian University where teaches Research Methods, Econometrics and Statistics. Her recent research interest is on issues related to management in business using structural equation modeling.

Abstract
This paper investigates collaborative teaching in an English-for-specific-purposes (ESP) class in Taiwan and reports the findings of the ESP course via a comparative study. Forty science students were assigned to an experimental class taught by both a language teacher and a physics professor and another forty to a control class taught by the language teacher alone. A paired *t*-test was used to assess the progress in various subjects from the pre-test to the post-test of English proficiency in the academic year. Furthermore, a two-sampled *t*-test was employed to compare the means and the percentage, obtained from a questionnaire survey of English needs of university students, between the two groups. It is shown that the experimental group had a more positive attitude and much more motivation toward English learning by the end of the academic year.

Key Words: English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English for Science and Engineering, Collaborative Teaching, Attitude in Language Learning

Introduction

Eighty-five percent of all information in science and engineering in worldwide informational storage and retrieval networks is in English (Grabe & Kaplan, 1986; Zengin, Erdogan & Akalin, 2007). English has been the link in the research and development systems and it is increasingly important for the globalization of all the nations. However, the majority of Taiwan's universities have not set a stipulated requirement of English proficiency for graduation. Non-English majors are required to take only 6 credit hours of English courses (for example, 'Freshman English' or 'English Listening and Speaking in the Lab') during the university years to fulfill the requirements for graduation by the Ministry of Education in Taiwan. There are only a small number of exceptions in universities which demand a few more credits for students to strengthen their specific English skills, adding courses such as 'English Conversation' or 'English Writing'. It is little wonder that quite a large number of university students feel their English slipping backward from the time they enter university, compared with the time when they studied English more hours during high school.

It has been argued that students can transfer general English skills and strategies to the tasks required in their specific disciplines at a later stage (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Basturkmen, 2006). Browsing through teaching objectives of English education in Taiwan, we have found that all the English curricula are aiming at annealing the basic skills for all levels of education - primary, junior, senior high school, college and university. However, as early as 1977, Professor Ching-mai Yang at the National Normal University, Taipei, suggested the importance of enhancing college and university students' English ability in the areas of their expertise (Dai, 2005). Facing a higher demand and a greater expectation for all professionals' English ability in the modern society, some universities in Taiwan are encouraging more professional courses be taught in English in addition to using textbooks written in English. In November 2005, a newly affiliated organization 'ETA-ESP' was added to English Teachers' Association (ETA) in the Republic of China. It signals that English for Specific Purpose (ESP) has been gaining increasing attention in Taiwan.

It is clear that the education of English for General Purposes (EGP) aims at facilitating English learners to achieve English proficiency for general communication purposes; whereas, ESP is well known as using a learner-centered and content/context-based approach. This primarily involves professional and practical

English, studied to meet learners' specific needs in utilizing English in their specific fields such as science and technology. For this reason, competent ESP teachers must possess related knowledge, skills or experiences, in addition to the English language itself, in order to provide learners with a successful and beneficial course. While a language teacher with an expertise in a particular subject area is seldom found in a regular university, alternatively, it is possible to conduct an ESP class via collaborative teaching. Considering the great number of university students in Taiwan who have a good background knowledge in their subject matter but have been poorly performing in English, an ESP program might be one of the best solutions to upgrade their English ability (Shao, 1992). In advocating ESP for non-English majors, we the researchers/instructors are particularly interested in understanding the effectiveness of the ESP pedagogy implemented into the Freshman English program for students who perform excellently in science but, in contrast, have long suffered from underachievement in English. This work documents our investigation of the effects of collaborative instruction in an undergraduate ESP class in Taiwan with regard to language proficiency of learners and their attitude toward language learning. To be answered in this study are the two research questions: is there any difference in English improvement between the experimental group, namely, an ESP class, and the control group, an EGP class; and is there any difference in attitude toward English learning between the experimental group and the control group by the end of the academic year? Our results unambiguously show that the experimental group had a more positive attitude and much more motivation toward English learning by the end of the academic year.

Literature review

The ESP movement originated from the massive expansion of scientific, technical and economic activities on an international scale in the 1950s and 1960s (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). The effect of such development resulted in global needs and demands on communication in English. Since the use of the language varies from context to context, English instructors have been pressured to adapt to meeting the needs of the learners in their specific environment. They have advocated ESP teaching as an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reasons for learning. In retrospect, the history of ESP can be divided into four phases. The first phase can be traced back to the 1960s and the early

1970s when ESP researchers and teachers concentrated on the lexical and grammatical characteristics of academic/professional registers at the sentence level. The second phase ranged from late 1970s and early 1980s when the focus became more rhetorical and researchers and practitioners began to examine the organization and function of discourse at a number of levels of abstraction. The third phase was integrated with the discoveries of Phase 1 and Phase 2 where researchers centered on systematic analyses of the target situations in which learners' communicative purposes were more attended. Recently, in the last phase, researchers have shifted their emphasis to learners' strategies for their effective thinking and learning. Over the past decades of ESP expansion, Strevens (1977) proposed the most famous model of the categories of ESP - it consists of English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). The former was further subcategorized as Vocational ESL, such as English for auto mechanics, and Professional English, such as English for Business and Economics, and the latter as English for Science and Technology (EST) and English for Academic Purposes other than EST. Of all the subcategories EST has been the best developed and most frequently taught. The reasons are that many ESP students throughout the world are scientists and engineers, and because a vast number of scientific books and papers are printed in English and that science, especially at the discourse level, is more regular across languages (Johns, 1991). An overview of the ESP movement illustrates the important role of ESP in the education of English as a foreign/second language.

For the last 15 years or so, there have been numerous studies done on ESP courses in Taiwan. Kuo (1993; 1998) investigated English needs and the development of teaching materials used for EST courses. Yang et al. (1994) looked into the use of field-specific authentic English texts in a Taiwan junior college. Lee (1998) and Chia et al. (1999) conducted a needs analysis on nursing/medical students. Huang et al. (1998) and Chen (1998, 2000) designed and examined the effectiveness of content-based ESP courses for business students. Lin (2006) conducted a needs analysis for lecture listening in an EAP program. Tsai (2005) and Liang (2007) addressed English courses specific for students in Travel/Leisure Management. These studies have in common that they are goal-oriented to provide the effective instruction of the English language for students' academic/professional career.

In Taiwan's universities there exists a problem that, in recent years, there have been a rapidly growing number of students who have good background knowledge in their

professional fields but perform extremely poorly in English. This phenomenon often occurs with science and engineering students particularly in private or technological universities. When teaching these students with great promise as scientists or engineers but with a very low motivation in English learning, English instructors can not help asking themselves what they can do with such a particular group. Unfortunately, English teachers are usually in no position to change the situation and to raise the number of English class hours. What they can do within their power is to design a course syllabus tailor-made for the students. To enhance the learners' motivation towards English learning, an ESP approach, which combines language practice with a learner's subject knowledge, is assumed one of possible alternatives as suggested by Jordan (2002). Therefore, if English instructors wanted to make the best use of the limited 6-credit-hour English classes, an ESP project might be one of the best solutions.

There has been limited exploration in the literature about connecting ESP methodologies to theories of learning and language acquisition (Basturkmen, 2002). Basturkmen (2006) presented a framework which can serve as an organizing scheme helping ESP teachers to ground their practices and approaches in theory. It was composed of three components: language, learning and teaching. The section or component of language illustrated the importance of grammatical structures, core vocabulary and patterns of text organization in ESP. The section of learning addressed the ideas about acculturation, linguistic input and interaction prerequisite for language learning in ESP teaching. The section of teaching described that all methodologies can be applicable to general English teaching as well as to ESP teaching, but team teaching is the distinct approach, which can only be best used in ESP.

What conditions may help lead to greater success for ESP learners? Courses designed according to learners' needs are more motivating and thus educationally more effective (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Namely, a successful ESP course or project should start with the learners' needs. Just as Bloor and Bloor stated (1986), as long as learners' needs are satisfied, the goals of ESP courses are more likely to be achieved. Compared with general language teaching which tends to focus on core structures and linguistic elements to form the base of language competence, an ESP program addresses the learners' short-term need for current operations; that is, the need to function effectively in the English language. The reason is because teachers want the skills learned to be transferrable to students' other science matters.

Hutchinson and Waters (1988) emphasized that ESP teaching should target developing learners' *underlying competence,* that is, factual as well as linguistic knowledge. This competence is fundamental to the whole teaching-learning process that enables learners to extract new knowledge. For example, ESP for mechanical engineering students should target both language skills for engineering studies and knowledge-based concepts from engineering fields, such as that of applied mechanics, mechanical design and manufacturing, thermal fluid, and control systems.

What English skills should a scientist or an engineer have who lives in an EFL context like Taiwan? What special characteristics or qualities does the ESP teacher need to cultivate in the learners so that they can succeed in English learning? On the other hand, what qualifications and what kind of knowledge do the ESP teachers need to possess so as to facilitate their students' foreign language learning? Most English teachers in Taiwan who have been trained and prepared in the areas related to linguistic competence, literary and cultural knowledge and who do not know enough about other professional fields naturally do not focus on the specific knowledge learners have in English courses they are teaching.

Johns and Dudley-Evans (1980) were two of the EAP teachers and researchers who found team teaching extremely useful in their study. Shao (1992) also claimed that the best way for an ESP program to succeed was the collaboration between science/engineering teachers and English teachers in the instruction. Fortunately, Chung Yuan Christian University (CYCU), the university in which we are undertaking this experiment, has a privileged environment in which collaborative teaching teams across the fields are possible. In this study we incorporate the freshman English course with English for Specific Purposes, offering freshman students an English course relevant to their professional fields. This preliminary work intends to explore the effectiveness of team teaching by contrasting and comparing an experimental group with a control group, of which both groups are intelligent enough to pick up science and math but stumble and feel hopeless in English learning.

Methodology

Two sample groups of students involved in the study were eighty first-year undergraduates from the College of Science and the College of Engineering at CYCU in the academic year of 2006. Forty science students were assigned to the experimental group (ESP class) and the same number of engineering students to the

control group (general English for freshman or EGP class). They were selected according to their Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) scores in the subjects of English, math and science and the scores of their subject area tests being administered by the College Entrance Examination Center in Taiwan. All of the sampled students were characterized by having a good knowledge of science (their reported scores in math or science are ranked above the 70th percentile of all the test takers nationwide) and yet performing poorly in English (their scores in English are ranked below the 30th percentile of all the test takers). They all registered in a required yearly course of 'Freshman English.' The primary goal of this course was to develop their reading and communication skills in English by introducing them to proper reading strategies and techniques and by preparing them for the needs of undergraduate university academic study or even a more advanced program, for instance, a master's degree. They were administered the Michigan English Placement Test (MEPT) at the beginning of the first semester and the same proficiency test at the end of the second semester. Since motivation in EFL learning cannot be ignored and needs to be considered as a very important element which encourages learners to acquire English especially while developing an ESP program (Basturkmen, 2006), all of the students were also given a Questionnaire Survey of English Needs of University Students at the end of the second semester (see Appendix). Pre-MEPT, Post-MEPT and the Questionnaire Survey were not given in the class hours, and they were administered by teaching assistants in the Language Center, CYCU. For data analyses of the study, only the scores of the students who took all of the three assessments were taken to be valid. If a student missed any of the three, he/she was not included in our evaluation. As a result, we only collected a complete set of data from 28 students in the experimental group and 31 in the control group at the end of the experiment.

A. Teaching approach

An effective ESP teacher must possess a relevant background in the subject field, especially on some subjects totally different from English such as science and technology, so as to offer learners a successful and beneficial course. Despite the scarcity of experts with such a cross-disciplinary training, an ESP class can be conducted alternatively by collaborative teaching. In this study, we elected to collaborate in ESP teaching between an experienced English teacher trained in language teaching and a physics professor specializing in physics. Both instructors

chose the teaching materials together and collaboratively taught the experimental group (ESP class). The language teacher taught two hours and the physics professor taught one hour a week. The same English teacher alone instructed the control group (EGP class) three hours a week for the whole academic year.

For the students in our experiment who never had any successful experience in English learning, the selection of teaching materials was extremely important. The topics had to be very interesting to the students and accessible to them in terms of ideas and background knowledge. For the ESP class, we had three teaching materials: (1) *English for Science* (Zimmerman, 1989), which provides structured scientific essays, focusing on both language skills for scientific studies and input on concepts from science; (2) *Reading Comprehension: Developing Fiction and Nonfiction Skills* (Coan, 2005), which mainly gives text organization of science-related articles for young learners; and (3) *Vocabulary in Use* (Redman, 2003), in which there are 100 units of vocabulary reference and practice, presenting vocabulary in a variety of ways, for example, topics, word formation, words and grammar, collocation and phrases, functions, concepts, *etc.* For the EGP class, we adopted two textbooks: (1) *Building on Basics* (Baker-Gonzalez & Blau, 1999), which targets at the language skills for different genres of texts, including the categories of the short stories, short novels, narratives, academic articles, articles from magazines or newspaper, and poems and (2) *Vocabulary in Use* (Redman, 2003), the same textbook also required for the experimental class. We believe that knowing the vocabulary in the professional field is not a sufficient condition for successful reading of specialized material; it is the non-technical vocabulary which causes more of a problem for EFL learners (Cohen *et al.*, 1979). Therefore, it is important for both the ESP class and the EGP class to continue to build up their basic academic vocabulary.

What roles do ESP teaching and general English teaching have in the teaching practice? The role of the ESP teaching is to activate the learners' science background knowledge in English, by introducing the methods in the scientific essays of classifying, comparing, identifying cause and effect, hypothesizing, defining, exemplifying, giving evidence, experimenting, calculating, reporting, describing and predicting. Particular attention has been drawn to science content, paragraph organization, sentence structure and lexical analysis. The role of general English teaching is to build up the foundation of general English skills which include several types of training in language sub-skills, such as skimming, scanning, and making

predictions through use of different genres of readings. In both classes, students were encouraged to ask questions or give comments about the lessons in class or out of class.

The present study aims at investigating the effectiveness of an ESP program with cooperative teaching by an English teacher and a science teacher by measuring how much progress these students have made over a one-year course. It also aims to compare the English achievement between an experimental group and a control group after receiving one year of different teaching approaches. The hypothesis is that the ESP class based on learners' strengths in science is assumed to be more motivating and thus educationally more effective than the general English class based on learners' weaknesses.

B. The research tools

MEPT was used to measure the English proficiency level of the subjects. The MEPT is a standardized placement test, one of the English Language Institute, the University of Michigan Test Publications. It has high internal consistency reliability coefficients that ranged from 0.89 to 0.92 (English Language Institute, the University of Michigan, 1994). In this test there are twenty questions in the listening section, thirty questions in the grammar section, thirty questions in the vocabulary section and twenty questions in the reading section.

The intent of the Questionnaire Survey of English Needs was intended to find out the sampled subjects' beliefs in, or attitude toward, English learning. The questionnaire was modified based on an earlier survey instrument used in a study conducted by Chia *et al.* (1999). This questionnaire consisted of seven sections of 30 items, the topics of which were (1) the importance of English in university education and professional careers, (2) the importance of various listening skill needs, (3) the importance of various reading skill needs, (4) the importance of various speaking skill needs, (5) the importance of various writing skill needs, (6) four English skill needs, and (7) the suggestion of ESP needs and percentage of ESP covered in a freshman language course. The internal reliability of the questionnaire was obtained as 0.907 using Cronbach's Alpha. It was considered reliable because the reliability score was greater than 0.85, the standard cutoff (Hughes, 2003). The answers follow two formats. One is to respond in a scale of 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4, indicating 'I don't know', 'unimportant', 'somewhat important', or 'very important'. Another is to respond with

a choice of 'Yes,' 'No' or 'Others' (see Appendix).

Analysis and results

This section presents the results and the analysis of the above collected data for the two research questions in this study. In the first, is there any difference in English improvement between the experimental group and the control group? In the second, is there any difference in attitude towards English learning between the experimental group and the control group by the end of the academic year?

A paired *t*-test was used to assess how much progress sample subjects had made from the pre-test to the post-test by analyzing scores sampled students had gained in both. The scores for all subjects are displayed in Table 1. The results showed a significant improvement for all the sampled students in English listening, grammar, and reading and the total score with a mean difference of 0.650, 1.083, 4.600 and 3.167 (with their corresponding *p*-values being 0.090, 0.080, 0.000 and 0.004, respectively), but a significant backward slide in vocabulary learning with −3.167.

Table 2 compares the experimental group with the control group by the mean difference of score improvement in the English Proficiency Test. A two-sampled *t*-test indicated no significant difference in the progress between these two groups.

In order to quantify the collected data from the questionnaire survey, a Windows-comprehensive statistical software, the Statistics Package for Social Science, was employed to compare means between the experimental group and the control group. Each answer was assigned point values with the number 1 being awarded 1 point; 2, 2 two points; 3, 3 three points, *etc.* Frequency was used to count the percentage favoring the statements the students had checked. Then, a two-sampled *t*-test was adopted to examine the comparison between the two groups. The results found that the experimental group had a higher mean than did the control group from questions 1 to 26 (except question 10) and a higher percentage from questions 27 to 30, as shown in Table 3. The difference between these two groups on questions 2, 16, 18, 19 and 20 is statistically significant at 0.01 to 0.05 levels. This reflects that the experiment with teaching collaboration has a positive influence on learners' motivation; that is, students are much more motivated toward English learning by the end of the academic year. Obviously, the ESP program was successful in fostering students in the experimental group to realize the importance of English learning.

Discussion

As mentioned above, the present study was intentionally designed to evaluate the effectiveness of ESP teaching by the results of both the MEPT and the English Needs Survey. The post-MEPT scores do not indicate a statistically significant difference in English improvement between these two groups. In other words, ESP team teaching is not effectively better. Even advancement in the scores does not show any convincing effectiveness of the ESP treatment; however, the ESP class ended up with a higher motivation toward English learning. That is one of the most important objectives of the English course, especially to the chosen subjects who do not have any hope in English learning. Only students' motivation can encourage them to keep on learning more English.

Another finding from this study is that both groups have made some progress in listening, grammar, reading and the total score, but they do not significantly gain vocabulary. Rather, they lose vocabulary they have learned from before over the academic year. This is actually consistent with our comprehensive survey conducted to assess the English Proficiency Performance over their freshman year with a much larger scale of 2494 students enrolled in a total of 61 classes (Chien, 2007). Since one of the objectives for both groups was to build up their vocabulary, this result was quite unexpected. It was likely due to the failure of the language teacher's teaching strategy: Sympathizing with students during the painful process of memorizing vocabulary, the English teacher allowed them to take weekly quizzes by referring to the textbooks starting from the second semester, so possibly the students saw no reason to make the effort to memorize words for the preparation of the tests. This proves that the weekly quiz or the open book test strategy does not result in the students learning the words. The result suggested that English instructors should design other kinds of vocabulary learning activities to help students to work towards the goal autonomously and enjoyably.

Furthermore, the study could have been more interesting if we could have found or designed a standardized assessment instrument which would have included examining science concepts in English as well as the linguistic competency skills.

Conclusion

Because all Taiwanese children have had access to English language education from the third grade of primary school in Taiwan since 2001, we hope that most stipulated

objectives of general English teaching can be achieved when they graduate from their high school in the near future. We also hope that the expected objectives in achieving English ability in their professional fields with the support of English courses at the university level can be fulfilled soon. However, as to the experiment we are conducting, English learning is demanding for this group of students. It is the language teacher's whole-year observation sitting in the physics teacher's classroom that the students in the ESP program admire the science teacher because he has professional prestige and a good command of English: he is their role model. It is still easy for them to feel frustrated when both instructors are conducting the English parts of their lessons, but they become spirited when the physics professor skillfully activates their prior knowledge about the topics and brings them to the new knowledge related to science. Therefore, to decrease the frustration experienced by both students and instructors, incorporating ESP courses into the university curriculum at the current period of time may be a feasible means of enhancing English education for science and engineering majors. As English instructors in Taiwan, we are obliged to consider selecting or developing the appropriate content and teaching approaches to meet the needs of the learners who grow up in Taiwan social and cultural contexts (Basturkmen, 2006). In doing ESP programs, teachers will more closely and directly satisfy their students' immediate needs and help them to boost their self-confidence and will implant the motivation towards English learning (Sifakis, 2003). Finally, we believe that there will be a steady increase in the development of ESP programs in EFL contexts. We hope that this study makes a contribution to evolving more various ESP programs which can help university students, who have different English needs, achieve a higher level of personal satisfaction and social contribution in a rapidly changing global society like Taiwan.

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Table 1. Paired *t*-tests of the improvement in test scores for all subjects

Testing scores difference	Mean difference	*p*-value
Listening (Post-listening – pre-listening)	0.650	.090*
Grammar (Post-grammar – pre-grammar)	1.083	.080*
Vocabulary (Post-vocabulary – Pre-vocabulary)	−3.167	.000***
Reading (Post-reading – pre-reading)	4.600	.000***
Total (Post-total – pre-total)	3.167	.004***

* and *** refer to statistical significance at 10% and 1% levels, respectively.

Table 2. Two-sampled *t*-tests measuring the difference in improvement of experiment group and control group test scores

Testing scores difference	*t*-test (control group ~ experiment group)	*p*-value
Listening (Listening 2 – Listening 1)	0.440	.965
Grammar (Grammar 2 – Grammar 1)	1.510	.136
Vocabulary (Vocabulary 2 – Vocabulary 1)	−1.232	.223
Reading (Reading 2 – Reading 1)	0.552	.583
Total (Post-total – pre-total)	0.705	.484

Table 3. Questionnaire Survey of English Needs from the Experimental group and the Control group.

Questions	Groups	*N*	Mean	Significance (2-tailed test)
1. Important to their current studies	Experiment Control	28 31	3.29 3.19	.323
2. Important to their future careers	Experiment Control	28 31	3.57 3.03	**.019****
3. Understanding daily conversation	Experiment Control	28 31	3.11 3.10	.962
4. Understanding class lectures	Experiment Control	28 31	2.86 2.71	.512
5. Understanding radio broadcasts	Experiment Control	28 31	1.79 1.84	.830
6. Understanding TV English programs	Experiment Control	28 31	2.00 1.77	.302
7. Understanding English movie films	Experiment Control	28 31	2.07 1.97	.640
8. Understanding English songs	Experiment Control	28 31	2.21 2.03	.505
9. Reading newspapers and magazines	Experiment Control	28 31	2.59 2.23	.130
10. Reading textbooks in English	Experiment Control	28 31	2.71 2.77	.822
11. Reading journal articles in English	Experiment Control	28 31	2.50 2.10	.155
12. Reading internet English	Experiment Control	28 31	2.14 1.90	.375
13. Carrying on daily conversation	Experiment Control	28 31	3.00 2.84	.528
14. Oral presentation in English	Experiment Control	28 31	2.54 2.35	.443
15. Giving speeches in English	Experiment Control	28 31	2.39 2.13	.295
16. English enunciation and intonation	Experiment Control	28 31	2.46 1.94	**.029****
17. Communicating with foreigners at the workplace	Experiment Control	28 31	2.86 2.84	.942
18. Writing correct English sentences	Experiment Control	28 31	3.11 2.61	**.039****
19. Writing varieties of English sentences	Experiment Control	28 31	2.54 2.06	**.042****
20. Writing proper English letters	Experiment Control	28 31	2.82 2.03	**.001*****
21. Writing English research papers	Experiment Control	28 31	2.57 2.16	.152
22. Writing varieties of English essays	Experiment Control	28 31	2.04 1.71	.175
23. Importance of listening	Experiment Control	28 31	3.39 3.10	.166
24. Importance of reading	Experiment Control	28 31	3.21 3.06	.436
25. Importance of speaking	Experiment Control	28 31	3.21 3.03	.353
26. Importance of writing	Experiment Control	28 31	2.54 2.10	.071
Questions	**Groups**	*N*	**Percentage**	**Significance**

				(2-tailed test)
27. In favor of Freshman English materials relevant to their professional fields	Experiment Control	28 31	70.4% 64.5%	.643
28. Favoring more than 50% of the material relevant to their professional fields	Experiment Control	28 31	50.0% 38.7%	.392
29. In favor of more elective English courses offered in sophomore, junior, senior and graduate years	Experiment Control	28 31	82.1% 64.5%	.129
30. Still favor more elective English courses even if they need to pay fees	Experiment Control	28 31	21.4% 9.7%	.225

** and *** refer to statistical significance at 5% and 1% levels, respectively.

APEENDIX

Questionnaire Survey of English Needs of Chung Yuan University Students

Part A: Questions 1 ~ 26

Directions

Please check the appropriate response 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4 。

0	1	2	3	4
I don't know	Unimportant	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
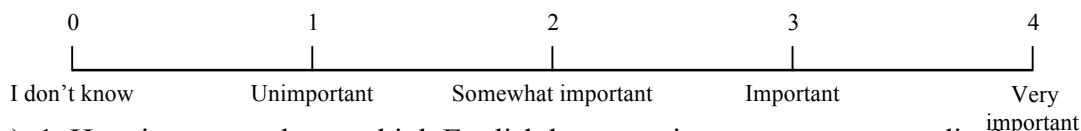
(   ) 1. How important do you think English language is to your current studies?

(   ) 2. How important do you think English language is to your future careers?

※How important do you think the following listening trainings are for students in their first year of university?

(   ) 3. Understanding daily conversation in English

(   ) 4. Understanding class lectures in English

(   ) 5. Understanding radio broadcasts in English

(   ) 6. Understanding TV English programs

(   ) 7. Understanding English movie films

(   ) 8. Understanding English songs

※How important do you think the following reading comprehension trainings are for students in their first year of university?

(   ) 9. Reading newspapers and magazines in English

(   ) 10. Reading textbooks in English

(   ) 11. Reading journal articles in English

(   ) 12. Reading internet English

※How important do you think the following speaking trainings are for students in their first year of university?

(   ) 13. Carrying on daily conversation in English

(   ) 14. Oral presentation in English

(   ) 15. Giving speeches in English

(   ) 16. English enunciation and intonation

(   ) 17. Communicating with foreigners at the workplace

※How important do you think the following writing trainings are for students in their first year of university?

(   ) 18. Writing correct English sentences

(   ) 19. Writing varieties of English sentences

(   ) 20. Writing proper English letters

(   ) 21. Writing English research papers

(   ) 22. Writing varieties of English essays

※How important do you think the following English language skills are to you?

(   ) 23. Listening

(   ) 24. Reading

(   ) 25. Speaking

(   ) 26. Writing

Part B: Questions 27~ 30
(   ) 27. Should the materials in the course of "Freshman English" be relevant to your professional fields (e.g. English for Biology, English for Science, English for Industry, English for Law, English for Business, English for Design, etc.)?
      (1) Yes   (2) No   (3) Others
(   ) 28. What percentage of English materials in the course of "Freshman English" should be relevant to your professional fields?
      (1)90~100% (2)70~89% (3)50~69%   (4)30~49%   (5)lower than 30%
(   ) 29. Do you support more elective English courses offered in sophomore, junior, senior and graduate years?
      (1) Yes   (2) No   (3) Others
(   ) 30. Do you still favor more electives if you need to pay the extra hours?
      (1) Yes   (2) No   (3) Others

One Page Plus, One More Character

Pin-hsiang Natalie Wu and Wen-chi Vivian Wu

Chien-kuo Technology University, Taiwan

Bio Data:

Dr. Pin-hsiang Natalie Wu (corresponding) is an assistant professor presently teaching at the Department of Applied Foreign Languages of Chien-kuo Technology University in Taiwan. She has been involved in British and American literature teaching, and also language teaching for many years. Her research interests include British and American literature and teaching literature. She is now bringing more student-centered activities into the classroom to motivate students for their love for literature.

Dr. Wen-chi Vivian Wu is an assistant professor currently teaching at the Department of Applied Foreign Languages of Chien-kuo Technology University in Taiwan. Her research interests include CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) and EFL Learning Environment. She is enthusiastic about combining language classroom with technology.

Abstract

This paper reports the advantages of adopting an innovative teaching method for literary learning in which the researchers integrated two activities into their literature class - "One Page Plus" and "One More Character" - in order to develop students' awareness toward the literary themes of the stories read in class and motivate students to appreciate literature. Opposed to the traditional teacher-centered pedagogy where learners mainly depend on instructors for text-explanation, theme-exploration, and meaning-interpretation, learners become fully engaged in the activities described in this paper. With proper guidance from the teachers, students first were assigned specific topics for "One Page Plus" and "One More Character" activities. They then took turns expressing their ideas, listening to other members' opinions, and discussing with their group members. Finally, students collaboratively wrote down the results of discussions. The two activities, providing students with opportunities to develop interpersonal communication skills generated from active engagement and positive interactions, are keys to successful literary learning.

Introduction

In a conference paper presented in March 1988, Norris Dale drew our attention to a conflict between "an introverted and intuitive traditional professor" who "imparts his knowledge" and a "'new wave' student" who struggled to understand the meaning of

literary works by voicing her own ideas. What Dale addressed twenty years ago is still the focus of our attention today, and has gradually gained importance in EFL teaching. Two recent EFL trends laid the groundwork for realizing the "importance" of Dale's proposed conflict. First, in recent years a rekindled interest in teaching foreign literature in EFL classrooms has been growing. Scholars have acknowledged that the study of foreign literature, through a careful selection of texts indeed contributes to student's academic, intellectual, cultural, and linguistic learning. Literary language develops in students an awareness of language use, and this awareness so spurs their affective, attitudinal and experiential faculties that will motivate them to read on. Through the adept, informed arrangement of teaching schedules, literary texts can be beneficial in EFL classrooms as they provide considerable pleasure, discussion topics, and food for thought among students.

Second, in the past, in West and East alike, most literature teachers were molded in the image of absolute authority. They were "importers" rather than "idea sharers." However, in recent years, there has been an awareness according to which teachers should encourage and maintain a classroom that is substantially pluralistic, and multivalent. In other words, the learning process, including the study of literary works, should embrace a development in which students' individual experience, horizon, perspective and habitual way of thinking can be included. Reading literature should be an experience that integrates a coexistence of different experiences from not only teachers but students as well. The literature classroom should be a place where dissimilar ideas confront, conflict, and at times converge with each other, for students will gain maximum profit only when they are active and highly-involved in the learning process. The "New Wave" student being addressed in Dale's paper turns out to be the new centre of attention in the contemporary teaching environment since she refused to accept the "set tone," the "unarguable explanation" of the literary work from her professor but managed to figure out the story's meaning by way of her own interpretation.

The contemporary environment of literature teaching shows a spirit of innovation. Vital and new teaching methods have been thriving and proven robust in recent years. This paper explores an innovative teaching method incorporated in the teaching of literature to efficiently develop students' awareness toward the literary themes of the stories read in class. Based on the difference of theme and content, the researchers made certain revisions of two student-centered activities first proposed by Lazar

(1993) and applied them to the teaching of two contemporary American short stories. We focus on two main themes: recent developments related to innovation in the teaching of literature; and student's improvement responding to those innovative teaching methods.

Theoretical background

Utilizing language activities through literary works has become a new trend in the teaching of literature in the EFL classroom. Carter and Long (1992) named this (along with others) "language-based approaches", Lee (2003) called them "Language Experience Approaches", while Shang (2001) termed them "Content-based Instruction". No matter how these approaches are referred to, they seek "to encourage students to make more conscious their reactions to a literary text" (Bancroft, 1994, p. 3). In this paper, the researchers intend to adapt and apply certain teaching activities, all student-centered, to students' needs to see if through the design and usage of these teaching techniques, students will develop a greater sensitivity toward literature, become greater beneficiaries in their learning, gain confidence and competence in analysis, and eventually read more in English because of their love for literature.

Lazar (1993) explained that when reading short stories, students may be faced with six types of problems; they include:

1.   Motivation - Students' lack of motivation may result from their lack of confidence, or disinterest in the content of the story.

2.   Comprehension - Students' failure in comprehension may come from insufficient understanding of the plot, the development of characters, and difficult vocabulary.

3.   Making interpretations - Students often fear to make their own interpretations because of the literary metalanguage used in the formal study of literary texts.

4.   Cultural problems - Texts written in English more of ten than not contain foreign cultural elements that may hinder students' understanding.

5.   Inadequate reading strategies - Literature sometimes incorporates writing techniques which, while aiming for specific effects, may blur the sequence of events of the story.

6.   Appreciating the style - Students need to get into a higher level of understanding to appreciate the writer's style (p. 76).

Lazar stressed the importance of finding ways of "using literature which will help learners to achieve their main purpose for being in the classroom" (1993, xiii). To help students cope with the above six problems, he proposed numerous activities and divided those activities into three categories: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. Pre-reading activities are used mostly to prepare and stimulate students; while-reading activities assist students in understanding the content of the story; post-reading activities enable students to go deeper into the meaning of the story. In other words, post-reading activities move students from content understanding into context understanding.

Those teaching activities which the researchers sought to use with students include two post-reading activities: "One Page Plus" and "One More Character." The adapted activities expanded the original designs (guided rewriting) into the community or collaborative learning mode in which the researchers enabled students to profit from interpersonal communication, reciprocal interaction, and peer-learning by way of the use of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Through working together to record their final assignments, students engaged in intensive reading, shared ideas, consulted with other, thought more deeply, and also had more fun in these activities. In applying these two activities, the researchers provided each student with sufficient information and explanations regarding content comprehension, for the researchers used the two activities extensively, which means to guide students toward context understanding. Ostensibly, the two activities called for the use of writing skills as an extension of study of the texts. The researchers adapted the two activities, integrating them with the practice of the four skills while making them incisive enough to create a lively and dynamic classroom. The design of those two activities is explained as follows:

One Page Plus
"One Page Plus" is the name of an activity widely used in some language classes. Lazar (1993) briefly mentioned this activity but did not offer detailed explanation. It is an activity that requires students to write one more page for what they read in class as an extension for individual creation and completion of writing task. Applied in a literature class, "One Page Plus" encourages students to further develop the story they read. The aim is to develop students' awareness from the inside of what is involved in the creative shaping of a text. In the application of such an activity, both the process

and the results are equally important. To create something based on the text, students must read between the lines, analyze the psychic condition of the character, and be aware of the thematic development of the story. In other words, they must move from "content comprehension" to "context of meaning" (Carter & Long, 1992, p. 37). This process builds their self-confidence in their analytical abilities and motivates them to think critically. The activity fulfills the requirements of building students' linguistic and literary competence. In the present program regarding innovative teaching method of literature, since "One Page Plus" was initially devised as an individual project, the researchers adapted the original design of this activity and made it a team task. Students of the same group were required to enunciate their ideas, consult and communicate with teammates, return to the text when it was necessary, and in the final step, collaboratively jot down the results. The process was in need of a series of reciprocal verbal interactions that included the practice of the four basic skills - listening, speaking, reading, and writing among the students. The most important point is that the adapted activity includes peer learning when teammates consulted and collaborated with each other.

One More Character

Very much like "One Page Plus," "One More Character" is another activity popular in some classrooms. When Lazar (1993) mentioned this activity, he simply indicated that this activity could be used with any story to assist in students' understanding of the texts read in class. The activity was another task that required an individual writing assignment based on a story, as it demands learners to add one more character to the story. Through this task, learners had to examine closely the subtle interaction among the characters, pay attention to the correspondence in meaning between their writing and the original text, and see if the new role they create contributes to the same final meaning of the story. This device will "increase student understanding of the subject matter and build language skills simultaneously" (Shang, 2001, p. 132). In our program, the researchers wanted to expand and enrich students' responses through more interpersonal interaction and communication; therefore we utilized this activity by making it a group task. Students were asked to take turns bringing up their ideas, sharing, discussing, and even debating with their teammates, and the whole group would struggle to write down the creative results. The original writing practice activity, by way of our adaptation, had been expanded to include reading, writing,

speaking, and listening activities which were highly interpersonal, reciprocal, and communicative. It involved students' sharing their values and personal beliefs as they pertained to the text, it widened students' horizon by getting them to listen to their teammates, and it required brainstorming among a group of people that was intrinsically fun, creative, and reciprocal.

The role of the teacher

What is the role of the teacher in the two activities? The role of the teacher "in literature-based instruction is one of decision maker, mentor, and coach" (Mifflin, 2007, p. 1). To be more specific, the teacher, who has read sufficiently in the past and possesses strong literary experience, plans and decides appropriate activities in order to support students in their reading and responding to certain texts. During the process of the on-going activities, the teacher serves both as a reading model and writing model for students and therefore plays the role of a mentor. Moreover, the teacher has somewhat the role of a coach "by supporting students with such activities as shared reading, literary discussion circles, and response activities" (Mifflin, 2007, p. 1).

Application

To apply the two activities, we chose two contemporary American short stories - James Thurber's (1894-1961) *The Unicorn in the Garden* and John Collier's (1901-1980) *The Chaser*. The reason why we chose Thurber's story, even though the story itself is not as contemporary as others, is because the story is humorous, short in length, simple in grammar, vocabulary, and lexicon, and full of wisdom. Generally, students love reading this story because they understand the content meaning without too much effort. On the other hand, the battle between the two sexes perfectly fits the need for an implementation of "One Page Plus" activity - students can continue their battle for the two characters in their writing task.

 The reason why Collier's story was selected is because the researchers saw the absence of female voice in the text and discerned that point meaningful in developing students' response toward the story if once this absence of character is incorporated into the design of "One More Character."

Application of "One More Page" to The Unicorn in the Garden

Thurber is a humorist and a distinctive writer of fables. *The Unicorn in the Garden,*

Thurber's most humorous modern fable, describes the battle between the two sexes - illustrated particularly through the power-struggle game between a husband and wife. Students enjoy reading the story because they appreciate the wit and shrewdness of the husband. Also, they are much entertained by Thurber's comic style and manifest humor. However, they would be quite at a loss, due to their lack of a literary symbolic schema, as to what actually happens within the married couple unless the symbolic meaning of the unicorn is provided and explained. It is generally believed that the unicorn's horn is capable of curing diseases. Powder made of unicorn horn is in great demand. On most occasions, unicorn is symbolic of purity, chastity, and innocence. According to the legend, the unicorn is so swift that hunters can capture it only with great difficulty. In order to ensnare a unicorn, they would place a maiden alone in the forest as bait. The maiden's sweet temperament would attract the unicorn, who would approach her, and thus the animal would be captured.

As mentioned before, the unicorn generally is symbolic of chastity and purity. The husband purposefully informs his wife that he has actually seen the animal, and thus makes manifest that he knows of her unfaithfulness. This also explains the wife's subsequent eagerness to get rid of her husband by phoning the authorities. The story circles on the topic of the battle between the two sexes as the husband and wife plot ways to get rid of each other. The symbolic meaning and legends of the unicorn more than suggest that the wife is a disloyal and unfaithful woman. Therefore, as student guides and decision makers, we lecture to provide the knowledge required for a basic understanding of symbol of the unicorn, and then we use the "One Page Plus" activity to develop students' sensitivity toward the theme of the story. We ask students, in groups, to discuss and write down one more page for the development of the story because we want them to be aware of the conflict within the married couple.

Application of "One More Character" to The Chaser
Collier's *The Chaser* is another interesting story which describes how a young man Alan Austen tries to purchase a certain magic potion through an old man. Alan intends to use the mixture on a woman, Diana, to capture her love.

The story is an epitome of the typical behavior of buying and selling. The old man represents the image of a seller as he endeavors to boast of the special effects of his products and to manipulate prices. His rhetoric is *par excellence* that of a master salesman - exaggerated, eloquent, shrewd, and cunning. He possibly hypes or

magnifies the effects of his products to trap buyers like Alan. Alan is the prototype of a buyer because he wants to purchase the best product at the lowest expense. He is timid because he is not sure whether he can succeed with this trade or not. Both the seller and the buyer do their best to make a successful deal, which in the end looks to be a win-win situation.

On the other hand, the story is also bristling with sexual discrimination. To be more specific, the text highlights the female voice by its very absence. The story is a realization of Levi-Strauss' "traffic-in-women" in which a man uses a woman as a "conduit or a relationship" in which the true partner is another man. In *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick explains that male homosocial desire is a measure of male bonding practices and a method of emphasizing the structure of men's relations in a patriarchal system. In order to maintain men's relations in the patriarchal system, heterosexual relations become strategies for this homosocial desire. Therefore, women are virtually the objects of negotiation and exchange in such male homosocial relations. Here, however, the bond is only a commercial one. The old man is selling what the young man thinks he wants, though, in a scene replete with dramatic, albeit subtle, irony, Alan is sure to regret some day that he ever purchased the love potion in the first place. This explains the second half of the story when the old man instructs Alan in how to cope with possible problems, with Diana and other women, in his future life. Negotiating with Alan by way of sacrificing Diana's interests, the old man then lectures him, in a benign and ostensibly friendly manner, on his need to return some day and purchase his more expensive product.

From the perspective of feminism, Diana is the main focus of description; nevertheless, she does not voice her thoughts or mind in the story, in face she doesn't even appear in it. Thus she is not given any opportunity to speak. Her fate is being manipulated between the old man and Alan to strengthen the male-male commercial bond. What is worse, the reader never fathoms her real qualities because she is sketched only in Alan's words. We believe that students may understand the author's purposeful "leaving out" of the role of Diana if they add Diana back into the text. In order to develop students' sense of the missing role of the female (which should be developed as a habit in their reading trends because of their gradual awareness of the feminine role), we designed "One More Character" and asked students to add to the story some lines spoken by Diana, either in the mode of a conversation with Alan or

in a soliloquy. By integrating this activity into our teaching, we hoped that students would become aware of the latent sexual discrimination in the text, contributing their late-twentieth century viewpoints by way of discussion and collaborative writing.

Results and discussion

"One Page Plus" for The Unicorn in the Garden

The class discussed how to create their extension of the story. Basically, students continued the argument between the husband and the wife concerning the reality of the unicorn in the "one page plus" activity. This revealed that students were not content with the original text, especially with the author's final arrangement. To be more specific, the wife being taken away abruptly was unacceptable to many students. Students within each group, after discussion, reached a consensus and wrote down a conclusion that satisfied all group members. Since these students were given a writing assignment that was to correspond with other part of the original story, students constantly went back to the text, searching for details to make possible their own interpretation. Students examined the text in such a careful way that the process not only triggered a strong recall of the vocabulary usage and sentence patterns of the story but also developed a greater sense of linguistic awareness among them.

Students' responses were varied. One group arranged to have the wife escape from the mental hospital. The group of students wrote: "The wife was very angry since she was cheated by her husband. But since no one believed her, she had to find her own freedom. Besides, she wanted to make a revenge, to got even with her evil husband." Another group contrived to have the wife sue her husband; and another had some friends of the wife collect facts about the husband's unfaithfulness to get the wife out of the asylum. One group even described a court scene in which they arranged to have a judge to punish the liar and avenge the wife for them.

Students were quite clear that the focal point of the story is the battle between the two sexes, thus they fabricated their extension of the story based on this major theme of the story. In the writings of most groups, the husband and the wife argue vehemently about the authenticity of the unicorn in order to determine who is really insane and who is not. One group wrote: "The wife screamed and exclaimed that it all was the husband's plan. The husband also admitted that he contrived the plan just because he doubted that the wife was unfaithful to him. Since he confessed his tricky mind, the police and people from asylum took him away ad released the wife. The

wife finally got her freedom." For most students, the "one page plus" activity provided them a forum in which to exercise the "poetic justice" that they could not find in the text.

"One More Character" for The Chaser

All groups discussed how to add Diana into the story. Working together, students of low English ability leaned on those who had better competence within the same group; simultaneously all students depended on one another for precious ideas coming from a different perspective, which definitely widened their horizons. Students always went back to the text, for more detailed reading and to make certain the accuracy of their interpretation. They even corrected themselves and other group members in their struggle to understand the story, and this is profitable and valuable to them because "detailed analysis of the … literary text will help students to make meaningful interpretations or informed evaluations of it" (Lazar, 1993, p. 23).

Some groups added Diana's lines either at the beginning or the end of the story. One group who added Diana's words at the end of the text wrote: "Alan secretly mixed the potion into coffee before serving the drink to Diana. After the woman had the coffee, she felt a sudden desire in loving this man standing before her. 'I love you, Alan.' 'I love you, too, Diana," said Alan." Those students confessed that they found it difficult to squeeze Diana's lines into the original text. Other groups made Diana eavesdrop on the conversation between Alan and the old man; in this way thus Diana's direct interior monologue was carried out. One of the group wrote: "Diana felt strange about Alan's behavior. Why did he sneak into one of the dark building in a narrow, un-named street? She decided to follow him. She was him walking into one of the doors and put one of her ears very closely to the door. She heard what Alan was going to do and cursed him in her mind - how can a man fool a woman in such a filthy way?"

Among the groups who added Diana's lines either at the beginning or the end, students invariably jotted down a similar result - Diana falls madly in love with Alan after she unknowingly drinks the old man's potion. Those students embroidered on the original text simply based on a basic level of comprehension. They did not read between the lines for the deeper meaning of the text. In other words, they did not go beyond content understanding. Two groups, however, described a scene in which, years later, Alan is tired of Diana and her slave-like adoration. He returns to the old

man for another purchase, this time the deadly, untraceable poison so that he can murder Diana for whom he previously bought the love potion. Some students describe the scene: "Allan: 'Oh, I felt so sick at the sight of you, Diana.' Diana: "Why, dear, don't you love me more?' Allan: '(To himself) how I regret buying the love potion from the old man.'" It is obvious that members of these groups grasped the real pattern of the story in which the young man and his passion will someday change into hate and even thought for murderousness. Alan, in these students' estimation, ultimately purchases the poison to chase after the love potion he previously bought and thus the title of the story, *The Chaser*, is meaningful according to their understanding.

For those who made Diana eavesdrop on the dialogue between Alan and the old man, Diana is a brave and shrewd woman, independent and realistic - a counterpart of Alan. She criticizes Alan's purchase, his frantic mind, and his unreal expectations about love in her soliloquy while listening to their talk. Later on, these groups invariably described a scene in which Diana and Alan have a fierce argument about what love is as well as how a woman should be respected. To build Diana into the image of an independent woman is quite meaningful because students, in their struggle toward the meaning of the story, perceived the fact that Diana and her temperament is what Alan secretly and passionately admires. What he wants to possess is not only her love but everything she represents. Students in these groups unsurprisingly were angered by the unfair trading between Alan and the old man since it betrayed Diana's interests. They arranged for her to eavesdrop on the two men's conversation based on their sense of justice - the woman should not be excluded from such an important scene, especially when her future is the core concern of the scene. In other words, they achieved poetic justice for her in their writing activity on the extension of the original story. Students in these groups went beyond content understanding to context comprehension for they indeed caught the significance of the missing female role.

We read the results of their writing activities to the whole class. In this way, groups do not adhere strictly to their own thoughts but learn from one another for a better and more accurate interpretation of the story. They paid attention to elements and features they had ignored before, and they learned how to read the story as something moral, suggestive, and purposeful. Most important, in the re-reading and discussion process, the text, linguistically and literarily, was deeply impressed upon them. Achieving this

effect is what we, as teachers, passionately hope for.

Conclusion

This paper discusses some possible ways for innovation in the teaching of literature in the EFL classroom. By incorporating into the classroom two student-centered activities, students' awareness toward the target literary themes were aroused and developed because students gain maximum profit only when they are active and highly involved in the learning process. In the first activity "One Page Plus," students paid much attention not only to the content of the story but also to the hidden meaning, and the conflict of the story. Since they were all actively involved in the activity, they had their own interpretation of the story instead of receiving passively a "monolithic" preaching from the teacher. In the second activity "One More Character," since students added back the female character to the original story following their own style, they were also making use of their own explanation instead of taking teacher's interpretation. In an innovative teaching method, the primary purpose of literature teachers is not just to pass forward their own interpretation, but to involve the reader in direct experience. "One Page Plus" and "One More Character," as being used as student-centered activities in a literature classroom, create successful learning experience. The same activities can be applied to other texts. Nevertheless, different content or themes of different stories demand different activities. As mentioned before, according to Lazar (1993) and Carter and Long (1992), activities can be grouped into many kinds. Teachers of literature can expand or adapt those activities according to specific needs.

Through careful design and integration of well-chosen student-centered activities, learning literature can be an enjoyable, exciting, and uplifting experience because the reading process provokes students' individual thoughts and interpretations. It speaks to their attitudes and experience. Literary texts become resource materials in the EFL classroom. "One Page Plus" and "One More Character," as used in this study, expanded the original writing activities into integrated projects that incorporated the practice of the four skills. Furthermore, the two projects also included peer-cooperation activities which made the discussion process reciprocal among students within each group and also between groups. Indeed, "literature is a powerful influence on those who do read and actively reflect on their experience" (Bancroft, 1994, p. 3). Students responded actively to the topics assigned to them, incorporated their own

experience, and internationalized the importance of their role because they needed to continue the authors' writing project. Through these student-centered activities, they learned to think more deeply on human affairs, to build confidence in their analytical ability, and eventually to become aware of certain linguistic usages. More importantly, they began to learn to love literature and view literary texts as materials potentially worthy of their attention.

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Speech Acts: A Contrastive Study of Speech Acts in Urdu and English

Muhammad Akram

The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan

Bio Data:

Mr. Muhammad Akram is a Ph.D. candidate under the supervision of Dr. Mamuna Ghani in the English Department (Applied Linguistics) of The Islamia University of Bahawalpur Pakistan. He holds a M.A. in Political Science. His research interests are socio-psychological variables in SLA, Sociolinguistics, Applied Linguistics, and comparative studies of Urdu and English.

Abstract

Language is considered to be a product of social contact. Language or linguistic acts that intend to influence the reality are generally known as 'Speech Acts'. The idea of Speech Acts finds its roots in the Philosophy of Language. Models of communication often give it very little function. On the one hand, the present study throws light on the contribution made by J.L. Austin and John R. Searle in the field of Speech Acts and Speech Act Theory, and on the other it highlights the significant contrasts in the speech acts in Urdu (an Indo-Aryan language spoken widely due to South Asian Diaspora) and English (Indo-European language) with regard to sex, level of formality, structure and frequency etc. The study focuses on the intentions of the speakers and their utterances (illocutionary, locutionary and perlocutionary aspects of Speech Acts). Fifty informants have been taken in the study and their utterances have been analyzed. The present study will be a valuable addition in the pragmatic field of language study.

1. What are speech acts?

Modern linguistics has been referred to as the study of language as a system of human communication. A main observation is that language can be used not only to describe the reality but also to change the existing reality. In simple words it can be asserted 'to speak is to act'. Linguistic acts that intend to influence the reality are commonly called speech acts. Speech acts play an important role in effective communication; these acts are functional units in communication.

Language can be used not just to talk about, but also to do things. Such acts performed by language have been called speech acts, and the verbs used are known as speech act or performative verbs. Speech acts have been divided into those in which a performative verb actually appears (they are called **explicit**) and those which do not

have one in their surface structure (called **primary).**

The speech acts used in conversations can be divided into three basic categories: *Meta-interactive acts* concern the organization of the conversation itself, i.e. the marking of beginnings and endings (examples: *now*, *right*); the opening or closing of a conversation (e.g. *hello*; *bye*) or the structuring of the conversation in some way (*Sorry, I'm afraid I must go now*). *Turn-taking acts* are used to pass on, hold, or obtain the floor in public speaking (*what do you think?; if I may just finish this*; *could I come in on this?*). *Interactive* acts consist of eliciting acts, which require some linguistic response, like asking for information, a decision, agreement, or the clarification or repetition of an utterance; informing acts, which offer information or respond in other ways to eliciting acts, like agreeing, confirming, qualifying or rejecting; acknowledging acts, which provide positive or negative follow-up or feedback, directing acts, which ask for an immediate or future action.

1.1 Direct and indirect speech acts:

Speech acts can also be classified based on the directness of an utterance. A direct speech act is an act in which the illocutionary force is built into the structure of the sentence. For example, with the utterance "stop making noise", the hearer understands the illocution in the utterance to be a directive without much difficulty or misunderstanding. Indirect ways of getting things done by language are called indirect speech acts. For example, if you are sitting at the only fast computer in the department ten minutes before nine and a colleague comes in and asks 'Are you teaching at nine?', the question is what does he want? When you answer 'No, I am not' and he goes away without saying anything else it is likely that he wanted to get on the computer to do his work but did not want to ask you directly. Another indirect way to ask would be 'Are you going to be long?' which also avoids the direct question 'Can I get on the computer?

1.2 J.L. Austin:

The British philosopher J.L. Austin was the first to draw attention to the many functions performed by utterances as a part of interpersonal communication. In particular he pointed out that many utterances do not communicate information, but are equivalent to actions. He called these utterances performatives different from information. According to Austin (1962), linguistic acts fall into three categories:

1- Locutionary

2- Perlocutionary

3- Illocutionary

Locutionary acts

Locutionary acts are acts that are performed in order to communicate; the act of actually uttering (the particular sense and reference of an utterance) their study is the domain of fields like phonetics, phonology, syntax and linguistic semantics.

Perlocutionary act

Perlocutionary act is the act performed by saying something in a particular context. It represents the change achieved each time, in a particular context. Depending on the kind of per locution, different conditions have to hold in order for it to be achieved. These acts are the by-products of acts of communication, acts performed by means of saying something, moving someone to anger, consoling some one in his distress, etc.

Illocutionary acts

Illocutionary acts, more commonly known as speech acts, are acts performed in saying something: making a statement or promise, issuing a command or request, asking a question etc. The act performed in, or by virtue of, the performance of the illocution. The illocutionary act is not in one to one correspondence with the locution from which it is derived. There are different locutions that express the illocution and vice versa.

   Austin (1962) concludes that utterances in general have the following related features: (1) felicity conditions; (1a) illocutionary force; (2) truth value; and (2a) locutionary meaning (sense and reference). One difference between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts is that while the former are directly involved in the act of producing an utterance, the latter are less central to the act (Austin, 1962). These speech acts are used systematically to accomplish particular communicative purposes. Austin focused on the third of these acts. He emphasizes his claim that only the verb used to describe illocutions can be used as performative verbs.

1.3 John. R. Searle:

Searle (1975) states that the taxonomy used by Austin is defective, especially in its

lack of clear criteria for distinguishing one kind of illocutionary force from another, though Austin's categories exhibit different syntactical properties, there is no clear or consistent principle or set of principles on the basis of which Fraser's and Austin's taxonomies are constructed. According to Searle, a speech act is defined as an action changing the universe of discourse when a speaker utters it and a recipient grasps it. It may be oral as well as written, or even expressed via some other communication from such as sign language. Searle (1975) divides speech acts into five basic types:

Assertives:

An assertive is a speech act the purpose of which is to convey information about some states of affairs of the world from the speaker to the hearer (boast, complain, conclude, deduce, describe, call, classify, identify). For example:

> *The founder of Pakistan is Qaid-i-Azam.*
> *Kim Day Chung was the former president of South Korea.*

Directives:

A directive is a speech act, where the speaker requests the hearer to carry out some action or to bring about some states of affair (ask, order, command, request, beg, plead, pray, entreat, invite, permit, and advise). For example:

> *You can finish you work and go to bazaar.*
> *She can complete and submit the file.*

Commissives:

A Commissive is a speech act, the purpose of which is to commit the speaker to carry out action or to bring about some state of affairs (promise, pledge, and vow). For example:

> *I will finish the work and go to bazaar.*
> *She will come here and take me with her.*

Expressives:

An expressive is a speech act, the purpose of which is to express the speaker's attitude to some state of affairs (thank, congratulate, apologize, condole, deplore, welcome). For example:

> *I like the ideas presented in this conference.*
>
> *I feel sorry for all this.*

Declaratives:

A declarative is speech act, where the speaker brings about some state of affairs by the mere performance of the speech act (declare, bequeath, appoint, excommunicate). For example:

> *The paper for the Busan conference is accepted.*
>
> *Tania was baptized.*

Heringer (1972) points out that Searle is probably wrong in saying that all felicity conditions are conventional. He is of the opinion that they are natural. For example, a condition that a speaker requesting something to be done must intend for that thing to be done is naturalistic rather than conventionalist.

1.4 Speech act theory

Searle has been credited with the speech act theory. A speech act is an utterance that functions as a functional unit in communication i.e. language performs communicative acts. It serves as the minimal unit of analysis. Speech acts are conditioned by rules of conduct and interpretation.

Speech act theory, even though influential in a number of fields, has not been without its critics. A number of researchers criticized it because their findings were based mainly on simulated speech in isolation and single-sentence utterances that were taken out of the context (Levinson, 1983; Flowerdew, 1990; Mey 1993; Geis, 1995). Levinson (1983) proposes a 'context-change theory' of speech acts. He feels that speech act theorists have failed to appreciate the absolutely critical contribution of the context of the situation in which the interaction takes place. Flowerdew (1990) lists the most important flaws and drawbacks of the speech act theory in the following domains:

1. Exact number of speech acts
2. Discrete categories versus scale of meaning
3. Indirect speech acts and concept of literal force
4. Contrast between specific and diffuse acts

5. Size of speech act realization forms

6. Relation between locution, illocution and interaction

7. Relation between the whole and the parts in discourse.

From the above criticism it can be pointed out that the unit of analysis of a speech act should be at discourse level and it should not be limited to the sentence level. And it should take the 'local' context, namely, conversational sequences into account. According to Levinson (1983):

> "When a sentence is uttered, more has taken place than merely the expression of its meaning; in addition, the set of background assumptions has been altered."

As speech acts research has been conducted on English, speech act theory's cross cultural value has also been criticized. So, it can be asserted that the socio-cultural values and beliefs, of the speech community (where the utterance takes place) and speech event, should also be considered in the analysis of speech acts.

1.5 Felicity conditions

For every illocutionary act there is a relatively small set of necessary conditions on the intentions, beliefs, desires and external circumstances of the speaker and addressee who are performing the illocutionary act, that is a set of conditions on the speaker's and addressee's set and setting. These conditions are called felicity conditions.

If the illocutionary force of a sentence takes effect, the utterance is said to be happy or felicitous. The factors, which determine whether a particular illocutionary act succeeds or not are termed felicity conditions. If it goes away for some reason, it is called unhappy or infelicitous. Searle (1975) listed the following felicity conditions (rules) on directive illocutionary acts:

1. Preparatory condition: hearer is able to perform action

2. Sincerity condition: speaker wants the hearer to do action

3. Propositional content condition: speaker predicates a future act of hearer

4. Essential condition: counts as an attempt by speaker to get hearer to do action.

It is commonly believed that felicity conditions are universal. Felicity conditions do not only have the function of allowing us to distinguish between the different possible illocutionary forces of an utterance. Their main function is to characterize felicitous illocutionary acts and thereby indicate the various ways that illocutionary acts can go wrong. Felicity conditions can be used to understand how networks of acts interrelate.

2. A contrastive study of speech acts in Urdu and English

Acknowledging that, numerous second language acquisition (SLA) studies have also focused on the acquisition of speech acts, pragmatic awareness and pragmatic judgment. These studies have covered various speech acts such as invitations, requests, greetings, refusals, apologies and compliments. The present study highlights the significant contrasts in the speech acts in the Urdu (an Indo-Aryan language spoken world widely due to South Asian Diaspora) and English (Indo-European language) with regard to sex, level of formality, structure and frequency etc. The study focuses on the intentions of the speakers and their utterances (illocutionary, locutionary and perlocutionary aspects of Speech Acts).

Speech acts do not occur in vacuum from other speech acts. For example, several speech acts can occur consecutively forming what is known as a Speech Event. A speech event is an important unit of analysis because it provides a context in which to examine the actual "relationship between the speaker and the utterance, on the particular occasion of use" (Brown and Yule, 1983).

3. Method

Instrument

A questionnaire was designed comprising ten different speech events and situations. The selection of the number of speech events was made taking into account the limited scope of this study and the range and diversity of speech events was chosen on the frequency of their occurrence in daily interactions. The speech acts in English language were selected from the following books:

1- Advanced Speaking Skills   (1978) by Harmer, J. and Arnold, J.

2- Communicate-1   (1979) by Morrow, K. and Johnson, K.

3- Communicate-2   (1980) by Morrow, K. and Johnson, K.

4- English Conversation Practice   (1975) by G. Taylor

5- English for Commercial Practice   (1983) J. A. Rimmer and J. Scott

6- English for Hotel Staff   (1979) K. Schrago-Lorden

7- First Certificate Skills   (1982) by Menne S.

8- Functions of English   (1981) by Jones, L.

9- More Dialogues for Everyday Use   (1984) by Curry, D.

10- Situational Dialogue   (1972) by Ockenden, M.

11- Variations on a Theme   (1978) by Maley, A and Duff, A.

Criteria for the evaluation of contrasts in speech acts

The following criteria were followed for the contrastive analysis of speech acts in both of the languages i.e. Urdu and English:

1- Range   (number of speech acts occurring in both languages)

2- Frequency   (how often speech acts occur)

3- Structure   (word, phrase, sentence or idiomatic expression)

4- Acceptability   (standard or non-standard form of language)

5- Level of Formality   (formal use of language or informal use of language)

6- Politeness   (polite expression or abrupt)

Participants:

Fifty participants have been taken from different colleges of Punjab in the study. Participants, (20 male and 30 female) aged between 18-23 years, were randomly selected from different colleges and they were told what the whole research project was about. The participants, who were graduate students, were also informed about the objectives of the study and that their participation was voluntary. Their utterances have been analyzed manually and the most common expressions used in Urdu were relied on, for categorization of the speech acts in accordance with criteria given above.

4. Results and discussion

The following are the results that have been discussed with special reference to Urdu English speech acts.

Greeting:

Greeting is a universal speech event found in all the cultures of the world. It is used by a very large number of people on the basis of daily interaction.

Speech acts in English	speech acts in Urdu
1- Good Morning	1- Assalam-o-Alaikum
2- Morning	2- Subh-o-bakher
3- Good Afternoon	3- Adaab
4- Good Evening	4- Khush Amdeed
	5- Salam Alaikum/Sama Laikum
	6- Salam

The range of speech acts in Urdu is more extensive than English. There are four expressions in English whereas in Urdu there are six expressions. All English expressions are used quite frequently. But in Urdu speech acts No. 1 and 5 are used quite often. The remaining four speech acts are used rarely. These are not commonly used in daily interaction. The Urdu speech act no. 3 is associated with typical Urdu-speaking people. This expression is also used in writing.

Structurally, there is only one expression in English that is in the form of a simple word and this is also informal in approach. In Urdu, there are two expressions (3, 6) that are in discrete words. Three English speech acts are phrases and four Urdu speech acts are phrases. All English speech acts are standardized and polite. All English speech acts are formal except the second one, which is informal. In contrast, the first five expressions in Urdu are standardized and the last one is the non-standard expression. Except the last two speech acts which are informal and abrupt all the first four expressions are quite formal and polite as well.

Greeting on special occasions:

There are special occasions in all the cultures of the world. English and Urdu culture enjoy their different occasions of greater importance.

Speech Acts in English	Speech Acts in Urdu
1- Happy Christmas	1-Aap ko/tumhein nya saal mubarak ho
2- Happy Easter	2- Eid Mubarak
3- Happy New Year	3- Shaadi Mubarak
4- Have a good weekend	4- Saalgirah Mubarak

5- Happy Birthday   5- Chaand Raat Mubarak

                                                                        6- Mah-e-Rtamzan Mubarak

                                                                        7- Eid-e-Milaad-u-Nabi Mubarak

The range of special events in Urdu culture is wider than in English culture. There are different religious customs in both of the language cultures. Birthday and marriage greetings are common in both cultures.

The English speech acts are common in the conversation of native speakers. But all Urdu speech acts are not common. The last three expressions in Urdu are slightly more common with women. The remaining expressions are common in Urdu conversations. Structurally, all English expressions can be used as phrases and sentences. The same is the case with Urdu speech acts. Almost all English speech acts can be used formally as well as informally. Similarly the Urdu expressions are also used formally as well as informally. But the speech act related to the event of Chand Raat is informal. This speech act is generally common among young girls and women. Men use this expression but rarely. Similarly, the speech act of Eid-e-Mild-un-Nabi is formal in approach. All expressions can be used directly or indirectly. Politeness is present there in both language expressions.

Drawing attention:

It is an interesting speech event. Sometimes it creates very interesting and amusing situations, which are not only funny but also, require mannerism.

Speech Acts in English	Speech Acts in Urdu
1- Excuse me	1- Suniey
2- Excuse me please	2- Baat Sunein
3- Hello	3- Muaaf Kijyie ga
4- Attention please	4- Suniey ga
5- May I have your attention please	5- Suno/Baat Suno/Arey sun'na
	6- Aik minnet baat sun'na
	7- Zara sun'na
	8-Mohtarma/Bibi/Behn-ji/Amma'n-ji/Khala ji/Khatoon
	9-Mohtaram/Janab/Bazurgwar/Baba-ji/Chacha ji/Bhai sahib/Aji hazrat/

Qibla/Beta/Abba ji/Molvi sahib/Sufi ji

The range of Urdu speech acts is wider than English. It is so because a distinction is made while talking to male and female and young and old. The English language does not make this difference while interacting with men and women, and with young and old. The last two expressions in Urdu clearly show this difference. There is only one expression (3) in English that is available in the form of a word. In Urdu language there are three expressions (1, 8, and 9) that are in the form of words. The remaining four expressions in English are in sentences. In Urdu, there is only one expression (6) that is a sentence. Urdu has five expressions (2, 3, 4, 5, and 7) in phrases, while English has no phrase.

All English speech acts are used quite often in daily conversation. The Urdu speech acts are also commonly used in communication. Urdu has many expressions, which are less standardized while almost all English expressions are standardized. There are two formal expressions (2, 5) in the English. The Urdu language has four formal expressions (3, 4, 8, and 9). English has two informal expressions (1, 4) while Urdu has five informal expressions (1, 2, 5, 6, 7). In Urdu there is no specific word for drawing attention on telephone in Urdu so the English word 'hello' is frequently used in Urdu also.

Gratitude:

English Speech Acts	Urdu Speech Acts
1- thanks/Many thanks	1- Shukriya
2- Thanks a lot/very much	2- Boht both Shukriya janab
3- Thank you very much/so much	3- Aap ki both meharbani/inayat hay
4- I don't know how to thank you	4- Boht nawazish
5- You have been most kind/helpful	5- Aap ki zara nawazi hay varna banda kis qabil hay
6- I am really/most/very grateful to you	6- Mein aap ka/ki bey had mamnoon /mashkoor hoon
7- How can I thank you?	7- Aap nay to humein bey daam khareed liya
8- You have been so kind	8- Mein aap ka ye ehsaan zindagi bhar nahi bhula sakta/sakti
	9- Aap ki meharbanion kay jawab mein

kehnay kay liye merey pass alfaaz nahi

10- Aap ka karam hay Allah aap ko is ka ajer day

The range of Urdu is rather extensive as compared to the English language. In Urdu there are some expressions that are more common in writing rather than in speaking. Speech acts (5, 7, and 9) are very formal expressions. These expressions are not only common in communication but also in writing, especially the letter writing. All the speech acts in both languages can be used formally as well as informally. The first three English speech acts are used quite often in communication. In Urdu there are seven expressions that are used frequently and the remaining four expressions are rare. In English there is only one expression in the form of word 'thanks'. Similarly Urdu has only one expression in the form of word 'Shukriya' both languages have only one phrase which is 'many thanks' in English and 'bohat Shukriya' in Urdu. The seven expressions of English are in the form of sentences and Urdu has eight speech acts in the form of sentences. All expressions in English as well in Urdu are standardized and very common in use. Grammatically, the expressions of both the languages are polite and direct.

Pleasure:

Pleasure is a feeling that contributes a lot in one's life.

Speech Acts in English	Speech Acts in Urdu
It is lovely/beautiful	1- Zabardast
2- Very nice/wonderful/marvelous	2- Wah/Aha! Kitna khoobsurat hay
3- great/excellent	3- Wah bhai Wah
4- I have very much enjoyed	4- Kia baat hay!
5- I liked…….a lot	5- Boht khoob/kia khoob hay
6- We were so pleased/happy	6- Kitna pyara hay
7- It was such an interesting/pleasant	7- Maza aa gia bhai
8- It was so enjoyable	8- Subhan-Allah!
9- What an interesting!	
10- How lovely/nice	
11- That was lovely/great	

The range of speech acts in English is wider than those of Urdu. There are eleven expressions in English and just eight expressions in Urdu. In English all the speech

acts are used frequently in communication. Except the last expression in Urdu, which has been taken from Arabic origin, the other expressions are also frequently used in conversation.

Both languages have just one expression that is in the form of a word (1 in Urdu and 3 in English). There are no expressions in English that are in phrases while in Urdu there are three expressions (3, 5, and 8) in phrases. There are four expressions in Urdu, which are in the form of sentences while in English there are ten expressions, which are in the form of sentences. The expressions are generally in the form of adjectives and interjections in both languages. All expressions in both Urdu and English are standardized and people use these expressions commonly in their daily conversations.

All English speech acts can be used formally as well as informally. In Urdu there is clear distinction between formal and informal expressions. There is only one speech act (8) in Urdu that is formal in approach. The other remaining speech acts are informal. Both language expressions are mostly polite.

Surprise:

Speech Acts in English	**Speech Acts in Urdu**
1- Oh! Oh no!	1- Wakaei
2- Really!	2- Mujhey yaqin nahi aa raha
3- What! (all question words)	3- Na mumkin
4- Impossible!	4- Ye nahi ho sakta
5- Incredible	5- Mein nahi manta/maanti
6- I can't believe it	6- Ye kesay ho sakta hay/mumkin hay
7- You must be joking	7- Nahi/nahi bhai/nahi yar
8- Good God/Heavens!	8- Achha!
9- Well, this is a surprise!	9- Heirat hay/ajeeb baat hay
10- Did you really!	10- Such/suchy
11- Have they really!	11- Qasam khao
12- Surely not!	12- Kahin aap/tum mazaq to nahi ker rahey
13- Honestly!	13- Kia ker rahey hein aap
	14-Oh Khudaya/Uff Khudaya/Uff Allah/ Haey Allah ye sab kesay hua

There are thirteen speech acts in English whereas Urdu has fourteen speech acts. The expressions in Urdu seem to be the literal translation of English expressions. Almost all English speech acts are used formally as well as informally. However, much depends upon the circumstances in which people are communicating with each other. In Urdu speech acts no. 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 12 are formal as well as informal. Some expressions (4, 5, 7, 10, 11, and 14) are completely informal. Women typically use the last expression in Urdu speech acts.

There is use of words, phrases and sentences in both languages. English has five expressions (2, 3, 4, 5, and 13), which are in the form of words. Three expressions (1, 8, and 12) are in phrasal forms. The remaining expressions are small sentences. In Urdu five expressions (1, 3, 7, 8, and 10) are in the form of words. Some expressions (9, 11) are phrases. The rest of the seven expressions are sentences.

English speech acts are quite common in use. But in Urdu there are some speech acts (9, 11 and 13) which are somewhat rare in common conversation. The rest of the expressions are frequently used in communication. All English expressions are standardized and polite. In Urdu there are four expressions which are non-standardized, the remaining expressions are standardized. All expressions in Urdu are polite except one expression (11), which is rarely used.

Apologizing:

Speech Acts in English	Speech Acts in Urdu
1- I am very/terribly/awfully sorry	1- Mein muaffy chahta hoon/chahti hoon
2- I'd like to apologize for……	2- Mein apnay kiey per sharminda /pasheiman hoon
3- Please forgive me/excuse me for…..	3- Muaaf ker do na bhai Ghalti ho gai
4- I really must apologize for….. hoon	4- Mein apni kotahi per maazrat khwa
5- Sorry about/for that	5- Mujhey both afsos/nidamat/ranj hay
	6- Brah-e-meharbani meri khata ko darguzar ker dein
	7- Mein api herkat per muafi ka/ki talabgar /khawastgar hoon
	8- Janab ghalti ho gai muaaf ker dein

9- Bhai gustakhi muaaf ayenda aesa nahi ho ga

10- Khuda kay wastay mujhey bakhsh dein

11- Khata muaaf/meri tauba

The range of Urdu expressions is much wider than those of English expressions. English has only five expressions but in Urdu there are eleven expressions. All speech acts in English are commonly used in communication. In Urdu some expressions (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8) are very common and the rest of five expressions are rare in Urdu. Speech act no. 4, 6 and 7 are more common in writing than in speaking.

Almost all English expressions are formal which can be used informally as well. But all Urdu expressions are not formal. Three expressions (3, 9 and 11) are informal. Just one expression (5) can be used formally as well as informally. All the remaining expressions are formal.

Structurally all English expressions are sentences. In Urdu the last expression is a phrase but all of the remaining expressions are sentences. All English expressions are standardized and polite. But in Urdu eight expressions are standardized and three non-standardized. Speech acts 4, 6 and 7 in Urdu are more polite than the other expressions.

Forgiving:

Speech Acts in English	**Speech Acts in Urdu**
1- OK	1- Achha bhai ab chhoro usay bhool jao
2- All right	2- Nahi nahi aesi koi baat nahi
3- Don't worry	3- Nahi koi baat nahi sab theek hay
4- Never mind	4- Dafa karo matti dalo jo hona tha ho gia
5- Forget it	5- Chalein jane dein ab
6- It wasn't your fault	6- Chalein muaaf kiya, kia yaad karein gay kis sakhi say pala para hay
7- It was no body's fault	7- Chhorein sahib garhey murday okhaarnay ka kia fayda
	8- Chalein chhorein laikin aeynda ehtyat kijeiy ga
	9- Arey ab rehnay bhi dein,samjhein raat gai

baat gai

The range of speech acts in Urdu is wider than in English. There are only seven expressions in English but in Urdu there are nine expressions. All speech acts in English are used quite often. 'OK', 'Alright', 'Never mind' are very commonly used expressions among the native speakers of English. In Urdu the expressions (4, 7 and 9) are not very common and rare in use. All the remaining expressions are commonly used.

Structurally there seems to be a great contrast in both languages. 'O.K.' is the only expression in English which is in the form of abbreviation. Speech acts no. 2, 4 and 5 are phrases. The rest of the expressions are sentences. But in Urdu all of the expressions are in sentences. All expressions in English are standardized. Urdu has also standardized form but expression no. 6 is an idiomatic sentence very common in interaction of Urdu speaking people.

Almost all expressions in English are formal and these can be used informally also. In Urdu, expressions (2 & 3) can be used formally as well as informally. Just three expressions (7, 8 and 9) are formal and all the other expressions in Urdu are informal. English speech acts are polite but this tendency in Urdu is lesser one than that of English.

Disappointment:

Speech Acts in English	**Speech Acts in Urdu**
1- Oh hell/damn	1- Meri to samajh mein nahi aa raha kay ab kia ho ga
2- Oh dear/no!	2- Meri to aqal jawab day gai hay, maloom nhai ye muamla kesay hal ho ga
3- How disappointing!	3- Afsos kia socha tha or kia ho gia
4- I had so hoped….	4- Ab to kuch nhai ho sakta Allah he hafiz hay
5- It doesn't matter I suppose	5- Kia faiyda hua itni mehnat kernay ka
6- It can't be helped	6- Oh yeh kia ho gia
7- What a pity/shame/nuiance	7- Laa'nat hay is kaam per bhai
8- Not again!	8- Chhoro koi faiyda nahi sochnay ka
	9- Dafa karo jo hona hay wo to ho ga kia, hum ker bhi kia saktay hein

The range of speech acts in Urdu is wider than in English. There are eight expressions in English and nine expressions in Urdu. All the expressions both in English and Urdu are commonly used in conversations. Structurally, Urdu speech acts are complete sentences whereas in English expressions (1, 2, 3 and 8) are phrases and the remaining expressions are sentences.

Almost all the expressions in English are standardized whereas in Urdu expressions (6 & 9) are less standardized and the remaining expressions are standardized. All English expressions are formal in use. The first three speech acts in Urdu can be used formally as well as informally and the remaining six are informal. All English speech acts are direct expressions. Urdu speech acts are also direct in nature.

Fear or worry:

Speech Acts in English	**Speech Acts in Urdu**
1- I am afraid/scared/frightened/worried	1- Mujhey to us waqt ka soch ker he dar lag raha hay
2- It worries/scares/frightens me	2- Agar ye masla hal na hua to kia ho ga
3- I don't like this at all	3- Allah kher karey pata nahi kia ho ga
4- It makes me feel uneasy	4- Agar aisa na hua to Qayamat barpa ho jaey gi

5- I am not at all happy about…..

6- There is something not quite right about…..

7- I have got a nasty/strange/uneasy feeling that….

The range of English expressions is comparatively more extensive than that of Urdu. Urdu speech acts can be increased according to the requirements. All the expressions of both languages are frequently used in common conversations. Structurally, all the expressions in English and Urdu are in sentences.

All English and Urdu expressions can be used formally as well informally. All English and Urdu expressions are in standardized forms in this typical speech event. The element of politeness is greater in English than in Urdu. The expression no. 4 in Urdu is rather a warning and very less polite in nature. All English expressions can be used in direct narration. All Urdu speech acts are used directly as well as indirectly in communication.

5. Findings

Following are main findings which show with the help of the tables how the speech acts in the two languages differ from each other.

5.1- Speech Act Classes

Speech Events	Speech Act Class
Greeting	Expressive
Greetings on Special Occasions	Expressive
Drawing Attention	Directive
Gratitude	Expressive
Pleasure	Expressive
Surprise	Expressive
Apologizing	Expressive
Forgiving	Declarative
Disappointment	Assertives
Fear OR Worry	Expressive

Table 5.1 shows different Speech Act Classes

5.2- Speech Act Classes in percentage

Speech Act Class	Percentage
Assertives	10 %
Directives	10 %
Commissives	0 %
Expressives	70 %
Declaratives	10 %
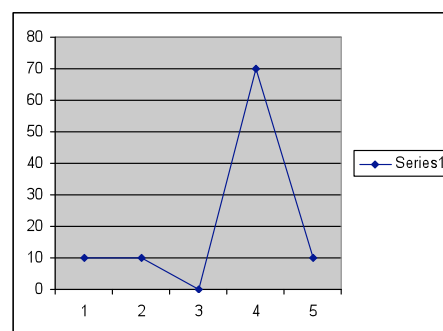
Table 5.2 shows Speech Act Classes in percentage

5.3- Range:

Speech Events	Range	
	English	**Urdu**
Greeting	04	06
Greetings on Special Occasions	05	07
Drawing Attention	05	09
Gratitude	08	10
Pleasure	11	08
Surprise	13	14
Apologizing	05	11
Forgiving	07	09
Disappointment	08	09
Fear OR Worry	07	04

Table 5.3: shows the range of expressions in English and Urdu

The first thing that has been found is the range of Urdu speech acts is wider and more extensive as compared to English speech acts in almost all the speech events. Urdu speakers do not recognize the speech situation and they employ complete sentences instead of phrases and single sentences. The range of speech acts, when these are available in single lexical items, is greater in English language than in Urdu.

5.4 Frequency:

Speech Events	Frequencies			
	Often		**Rare**	
	English	**Urdu**	**English**	**Urdu**
Greeting	All	02	-	04
Greetings on Special Occasions	All	04	-	03
Drawing Attention	All	08	-	01
Gratitude	All	07	-	03
Pleasure	All	07	-	01

Surprise	All	11	-	03
Apologizing	All	06	-	05
Forgiving	All	06	-	03
Disappointment	All	09	-	-
Fear OR Worry	All	03	-	01

Table 5.4: shows the frequencies of expressions in English and Urdu

English speech acts are more frequently used than the Urdu expressions. The above table clearly shows that in English there is not even a single entity that is used rarely but in Urdu there so many expressions that are used rarely. The role of gender does not play any significant role in the speech acts of the two languages i.e. there is no clear distinction of males and females. Barring a few specific expressions almost all the expressions can be used equally by both of the sexes.

5.5- Structure:

Speech Events	Structure							
	Words		**Phrases**		**Sentences**		**Idioms**	
	English.	**Urdu**	**English.**	**Urdu**	**English.**	**Urdu**	**English.**	**Urdu**
Greeting	01	02	03	04	-	-	-	-
Greetings on Special Occasions			05	04	05	07	-	-
Drawing Attention	01	03	02	04	02	01	-	-
Gratitude	01	01	01	01	07	08	-	-
Pleasure	01	01	-	03	10	04	-	-
Surprise	05	05	03	03	05	07	-	-
Apologizing	-	-	-	01	05	10	-	-
Forgiving	01	-	03	-	03	09	-	03
Disappointment	-	-	04	-	04	09	-	-
Fear OR Worry	-	-	-	-	07	04	-	-

Table 5.5: shows the structure of expressions in English and Urdu

Structural variety exists in both languages. Verbalization can be done through single lexical item, phrase, idiom or a sentence but the propensity to use the sentences

is higher in Urdu than in English. Another important finding is that though Urdu language has use of idiomatic expressions to some extent, there is no use of idiomatic expressions in common conversations in English.

5.6- Acceptability:

Speech Events	Acceptability			
	Standard		Non-standard	
	English	Urdu	English	Urdu
Greeting	All	05	-	01
Greetings on Special Occasions	All	07	-	-
Drawing Attention	All	07	-	02
Gratitude	All	09	-	01
Pleasure	All	08	-	-
Surprise	All	10	-	04
Apologizing	All	08	-	03
Forgiving	All	08	-	01
Disappointment	All	09	-	-
Fear OR Worry	All	04	-	-

Table 5.6: shows the acceptability of expressions in English and Urdu

If we see on the level of acceptability, it is revealed that English expressions are more acceptable in their given context. But the case with Urdu is quite different. Speech acts are restricted in Urdu in their acceptability being used by laymen or uneducated people causing variation in language use.

5.7- Formality:

Speech Events	Formality					
	Formal/Informal		Formal		Informal	
	English	Urdu	English	Urdu	English	Urdu
Greeting	All	-	-	04	01	02
Greetings on Special Occasions	All	05	-	01	-	01
Drawing Attention	All	-	-	04	02	05
Gratitude	All	-	-	10	-	-

Pleasure	All	-	-	01	-	07
Surprise	All	06	-	01	-	08
Apologizing	All	-	-	08	-	03
Forgiving	All	02	-	03	-	04
Disappointment	All	03	-	01	-	06
Fear OR Worry	All	01	-	-	-	03

Table 5.7: shows the formality of expressions in English and Urdu

The level of formality has been found to be very much higher in English as compared to that of Urdu. A clear distinction has been made in the use of formality in both of the languages. Generally all the Urdu expressions can be used interchangeably with no clear specification of formality or informality. This does not mean that Urdu language is not formal in its expression but the speakers' use is somewhat abrupt that lacks standardization and formality.

5.8- Politeness:

Speech Events	Politeness			
	Polite/Indirect		**Abrupt/Direct**	
	English	**Urdu**	**English**	**Urdu**
Greeting	All	04	-	02
Greetings on Special Occasions	All	All	-	-
Drawing Attention	All	03	-	06
Gratitude	All	All	-	-
Pleasure	All	All	-	-
Surprise	All	10	-	01
Apologizing	All	03	-	07
Forgiving	All	03	-	06
Disappointment	All	-	-	All
Fear OR Worry	All	-	-	All

Table 5.8: shows the politeness of expressions in English and Urdu

The most important finding is the difference level of politeness in both of the languages. English language seems much more polite in his regard. Urdu is less polite

because most of the speech acts seem to be direct, abrupt and blunt. An attempt is made to soften it by using a mild tone and sometimes some borrowed words 'Please' and 'Excuse me' etc. are added to Urdu speech acts to bring the elements of politeness.

6. Conclusion

The present study is an attempt to analyze the Urdu language from sociolinguistic and socio-pragmatic perspectives. Although the study is limited in its scope it has highlighted significant contrasts in the speech acts of English and Urdu with regard to level of formality, structure and frequency etc. It has been generally observed that the students in most of the situations tend to translate speech acts from their first language (Urdu) to the target language (English). Such expressions may create pragmatic failure in communication with native speakers of English. An understanding of speech acts as they are realized in the English language will contribute a lot in achieving communicative competence in the target language.

Communicative competence, certainly, does not mean just the linguistic competence of the local or target language but the socio-cultural implications are also there. The findings show that there are some utterances in both languages that are meant only for religious or cultural purposes. The findings can be used for language teaching, language learning and syllabus design and particularly to improve the politeness of communication in Urdu speech acts with definite politeness being coined and introduced in the Urdu textbooks. Furthermore, from the sociolinguistic point of view the findings show that there is a need to teach students about particular language norms and beliefs for use in particular contexts.

It goes without saying that it would be beneficial to do such a study with a greater number of participants. Further studies with greater numbers would go far in substantiating the data provided here. In addition, several other factors need to be examined such as native language and differing speech events.

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Teaching Listening-Speaking Skills to Thai Students with Low English Proficiency

Sripathum Noom-ura

Thammasat University, Thailand

Bio Data:

Sripathum Noom-ura, an Assistant Professor of the Language Institute, Thammasat University holds an M.A. in Applied Linguistics and a Diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language (Dip. TESL). Her main interests range from teaching listening and speaking, reading and writing, ESP courses in the area of science and technology, and conducting classroom research.

Abstract

This study aimed at exploring the results of an intervention designed to improve the listening-speaking skills of students with low English proficiency for 60 hours over three weeks. These twenty-eight students were randomly selected from the lowest group in English ability among the first year students at Thammasat University, Thailand. The students had participated in integrated-skills classes unsuccessfully and had become less motivated in learning English. Three teachers designed a course to help students find English learning more enjoyable, develop a better attitude and get ready to study ESP courses in subsequent years of university. The data was collected from the pre-post tests, pre-post questionnaires, classroom observation, students' self reflection, and course evaluation. The findings showed that: (1) the scores and the students' readiness, interests, and confidence in learning and using English were significantly increased; (2) some students rated as 0 or 0+ speakers became Level 1+ and Level 2 performers; (3) from classroom observation, the students showed good rapport among themselves and with the teachers; (4) the students reflected on their changes cognitively, affectively and behaviorally; and (5) the students were satisfied with the course as a whole. The research also analyzed the factors for success and gave some recommendations for an EFL situation.

Keywords: teaching listening and speaking, intensive course, less-able students, slow language learners, low English proficiency

1. Introduction

High school students in Thailand must get certain scores from the National Entrance Exam to gain admission to a faculty of a public university. The English scores the students get from the Entrance Exam are used for student placement into an English class at Thammasat University. If their English scores are over 80 per cent, they will be classified as advanced students, who can be exempted from taking English foundation courses, while lower scored students will be grouped into high intermediate, intermediate, and low intermediate or less able students. These three groups of students are placed at different levels of English courses called EL172, EL171 and EL070. The last group of the students, about 20 percent of 3,000 students each year, is the main concern of this study. Their entrance English scores are below 40 per cent. They are less able in English when compared to their peers. Their utterances are in words or short prefabricated phrases. Their grammar is mostly inaccurate and their pronunciation requires concentrated listening. In class they are apparently less motivated to learn because they know their English ability is low. When their ability or their grades are low, they are less motivated to learn. When they are less motivated to learn, their ability can never improve (Littlejohn, 2001). Because of their 'negative learning experience', they say goodbye to English as quickly as they can. However, from the year 2003 the Commission on Higher Education of Thailand requires that university students take at least 12 credits of English before they graduate (Wiriyachitra, 2002). This means that, apart from English foundation courses, students have to take one or two more ESP courses in their later years. Again, they participate in such classes with very little progress. They leave university being unable to do a simple task such as giving directions to a foreign tourist. From an informal interview to 25 randomly selected students of the fourth year students in 2003, the researcher found that the students had participated unsuccessfully in the English classes because the teaching of all four skills was too difficult for them. Also, their real need of English was only the ability to communicate satisfactorily for basic needs such as giving directions or other language functions needed for everyday survival. Their opinions seemed to agree with El-Koumy (2000), who concluded that the teaching focusing on integrated skills seemed to be too burdensome for less able students but more suitable to highly motivated learners. Harlow and Muyskens (1994) also pointed out that the ultimate goal of most language learners is to be able to

converse or communicate in that language when they are traveling or trying to gain access to information through interactive technologies such as movies and television. Hadley (2001, p. 94) also suggested that although teaching speaking and listening skills helps follow natural sequences in acquiring a language, teaching less able learners requires special settings. The learners should be provided a classroom context where they enjoy learning with low anxiety, practicing simple but meaningful and personalized language patterns. After the learners have developed the fluency of the language of a 'here-and-now' context, the lessons then can aim at higher linguistic levels. This study, therefore, tried to develop a classroom context that emphasized more listening and speaking, expecting students to find English learning more enjoyable and thus developing better motivation so that they could participate and study ESP courses more successfully in their later university studies.

2. Literature review

Shrum and Glisan (2005) explained that average or non-gifted students are actually one of two groups. The first group refers to students with a learning disability (LD). They suffer from disorders that affect a broad range of academic and functional skills including the ability to listen, speak, read, write, spell, reason and organize information. They need long-term assistance from specialists. The second group refers to students whose aptitude for language learning is minimal (FL-difficulties). They are poor language learners but if more suitable language classes are provided they may improve. However, it is quite unfortunate that a 'more suitable language class' seldom exists. Most language teachers practice according to what was concluded by McDonough (1981, p. 138). Classroom management most of the time ignores individual differences of the learners. A classroom of mixed ability students requires a teaching method that focuses on a variety of activities with the hope that either one or other of the activities will help the majority of students to some extent, while slow learners become temporarily 'invisible' or ignored. However, there have been concerns and administrative policies that pay more attention to minority populations. For example, in the United States there is a federal legislation which enacts the theories of standards-based educational reform called No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Although, according to Shaw & Gouwens (2002), being hotly debated in requiring all public school students to be measured annually for math and reading

and leading to some undesirable practice in some schools, the Act explicitly indicates that slow learners or LD students do exist and need more attention. In Peru, the Remedial English Project was initiated in 1992 to study the learning disabled group and the English slow learners to find ways in assisting them. That means in both cases, slow learners are regarded as ones who have specific needs and, therefore, special classes must be established in some ways to help them (Lescano, 1995). The placement of students in courses of different levels at Thammasat University reflects an attempt to help slow learners. The lowest level course (EL070) is regarded as a non-credit remedial course for students with low English proficiency. Such students usually show poor memory or function at significantly below the expected level. They score low on achievement tests. They master skills slowly and have poor self-image. All of these contribute to their low motivation. The problem that still exists at Thammasat University and probably elsewhere in Thailand is the regular class size of over 40 or 50 students, which makes it almost impossible for a teacher to care for individual differences.

Jamieson (1992) looked into variables that contribute to individual differences in language learning: aptitude, motivation, anxiety, self-esteem, extrovert and introvert personality, and cognitive style. A lot of research had been conducted to find ways to help poor learners. In an EFL situation, Takeuchi (2003) tried to compare the learning strategies of 153 Japanese students comprising poor language learners, good language learners, highly advanced learners and successful language learners. The results of the study showed that poor language learners used only 3 strategies in language learning while successful learners used 31 strategies. In 1999, Chung conducted an experiment in Taiwan asking students to watch videos with or without context and subtitles. It was found that when the lessons were prepared to match the level of the learners, there was no significant difference in achievement between fast learners and poor learners. Gan, Humbpreys, & Hamp-Lyons (2004) compared nine successful language learners (SLLs) with 9 unsuccessful language learners (ULLs). One of the results showed that ULLs believed that teachers paid interest only to SLLs and did not give them enough help. They felt they were forgotten. These studies implied that it is possible to help slow learners by training them to use more language learning strategies or showing them that they are not forgotten by preparing lessons that are more suitable to their learning styles.

Theoretically, Hadley (2001, pp. 94-105) proposed five hypotheses that would be conducive to the achievement of language teaching goals, but only some of them seem applicable to slow learners. For instance, one of the hypotheses involves providing opportunities for students to practice using language in a range of contexts likely to be encountered in the target culture. This means students should be encouraged to express what they mean interacting among themselves and with native speakers of English, or English speaking people. Thus, small group activities or outside class experiential activities should be provided exclusively while teacher-fronted instructional formats also have their place. In other words, Hadley commented that classroom practice should provide opportunities for students to carry out a wide range of language functions. The teaching practice that limits the student role to the respondent of the teacher question and the belief that a higher level of language functions such as activities enquiring student opinions, arguments or inquiries should be reserved for advanced conversation courses may not be right because the majority of students never take such courses. However, while the teaching approach is targeted to help students cope with communication demands, the role of the development of accuracy or the form-focused instruction must have its part in a language classroom. The most important hypothesis that is really applicable to poor language learners is to tailor a lesson that is responsive to the affective as well as the cognitive needs of students. The students should be settled in a classroom environment that lowers their anxiety, increases their confidence and encourages their willingness to communicate (Chan, 2002). Actually, the last aspect - the willingness to communicate (WTC) - has been suggested by many educators such as MacIntyre, Baker, Clement, & Donovan (2003) that it be the ultimate goal of language learning process which must always be engendered. Some examples in engendering students' WTC include planting students' interest in foreign affairs and foreign cultures, removing students' anxiety and building their confidence in using the language, preparing students to complete tasks in pairs before performing in a large-group setting, using authentic materials, and using a variety of activities and tasks.

Balado (2001) and Lescano (1995) suggested the following practical ideas to help teachers understand slow learners and work with them in a more effective way:

- Their weakest skills are writing and reading. Focus priority goals on oral expression and listening skills and devote less time and effort to polishing grammar and detailed reading.

- Use lots of praise and reinforcement. Also, slow learners need repetition.
- Limit the working time and have several short work periods rather than one long one.
- Add variety to the academic routine. Do active things and use educational games, puzzles, and other techniques as much as possible.
- Work on material that is somewhat challenging but allows success. Work that is too hard or too easy is a turn-off.
- Make learning fun and comfortable.
- Provide meaningful, concrete activities rather than abstract ones.

Together with the suggestions above, another essential aspect to help poor language learners is to provide a lot of opportunities for language exposure. Lightbown & Spada (1987; 1989) compared 1000 students from 40 intensive classes and 200 students from regular programs. The study found that intensive experienced learners, who had learned the language for five months, were more fluent and confident in using the language than the non-intensive experienced learners, who had been learning the language for 5 to 7 years. Wighting, Lisbet & Tindall (2005) reported the results of a three-week intensive course preparing 149 young Chinese students to be able to liaise in English with the 2008 Olympic Games participants. A variety of activities were used and the results were quite satisfactory because language improvement and cultural awareness were remarkable through the intensity of English exposure with American teachers and American friends in the camp. There are also many other intensive language courses throughout the world that usually require learners to attend class every day for at least 3-6 weeks so that a certain level of proficiency can be reached. It is also fortunate that those courses can be run with the ideal number of 8, 12 or 15 participants in each class. There has been a plethora of advertisements that claim their language intensive courses provide a one-to-one student/teacher ratio or small classes with a fully flexible learning content geared to the needs of an individual learner.

Based on research explored in the above review, this study, therefore, intended to set a framework in offering a 'special class' to a 'special group' of students within the following scope. The course offered was aimed to:

- increase the intensity of the learning time and decrease the number of class participants,

- give priority to listening and speaking skills,

- provide varieties of activities that require interaction, collaboration, and competition, and

- provide sufficient input and at the same time encourage output both inside and outside class.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Purposes of the study

The study aimed to find out how much the course could help and promote a more positive attitude towards learning English in the learners, and thus the following goals were set:

3.1.1   To study the development of the students' listening and speaking skills after they joined the course

3.1.2   To study the students' readiness, interests, and confidence in learning and using English after taking the course

3.1.3   To evaluate the course as a whole, regarding the curriculum, the teaching methodology and other aspects of classroom environment

3.2 Participants

Twenty-eight students were randomly selected from 360 students of the lowest ability group of Thammasat University first year students. Their grades from a previous English course were a D and D+.

3.3   Curriculum and teaching methodology

The three-week course comprised 60 hours: half days from Monday to Wednesday and full days on Thursday and Friday. The communicative approach was used with the variety of 'fun' elements such as games, puzzles, songs, competitions, collaboration and roleplays. Two Friday afternoons were reserved for 'review activities' of the language practiced from the whole week. There was a day trip to a tourist attraction where students were assigned in a walk rally game to communicate with foreign tourists to fulfill two tasks. The last day of the course was called the 'Day of Performance.' Students were assigned to engage in simulation and roleplay activities. The learners were divided into three subgroups which were led by two Thai teachers

and one native speaker. Each teacher took care of a group for one week and changed to the next group. In some activities all three teachers mixed all learners together and shared the information gaps that each group had encountered. The target language functions involved giving personal and family information; describing objects, places and people; giving directions and telling locations; telling likes and dislikes; comparing things; shopping and ordering meals; and discussing their future plans. These topics were chosen because they seemed useful for everyday life communication.

3.4 Data collection and analysis

Five research tools were used in this study. The data was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

3.4.1 A pre and post-test was designed by the researcher team to find the students' ability in two skills. The listening test consisted of 40 multiple-choice questions and the speaking test comprised 10 questions used for a structured interview. The tests were based on the content from the book chosen for the course called "New Person to Person" (Richards, 1995). The book was actually a guideline to lead the three teachers in the same direction, while other teaching activities were supplemented as necessary. The two tests had been piloted with 40 students who were at the same level as the subjects of the study and the test results were analyzed for reliability and validity. The MC listening test could be objectively scored while the speaking test required the reliability of two raters. This was done after the two testers had interviewed 10 students who were at the same level with the subjects and compared the test results. The inter-rater reliability was 0.9455. The listening pre and post-test results were analyzed by mean, standard deviation, and dependent t-test. The speaking test results were also analyzed with the same statistics but the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) rating criteria (Long & Richards, 1987, pp. 407-408) were also used to rank the level of the students' speaking performance. This FSI criteria was used because with the checklist of performance and conversion tables, as Keitges (1987) suggested, it could be used to interpret the level of a learner quite effectively.

3.4.2 A pre and post questionnaire was designed by the researcher to find the students' readiness, interests and confidence in learning and using English. The questionnaire required students to give their previous background of language learning such as the grades they had got in their previous English courses. The main questions

in the questionnaire were grouped into four parts using the Likert scale to rate the students' responses. The first part consisted of 10 questions aimed at finding how the students could see the importance, necessity and benefits of learning English and the researcher set this part to see if there was any 'cognitive' change in the students' views. The second part of the questionnaire involved the 'affective' elements in learning English as how they felt about learning English. The third part of the questionnaire asked about how they behaved regarding the use of English in their daily life. In other words, these three parts of the questionnaire actually aimed at finding how the students 'think, feel, and do' about English. The last part of the questionnaire was to check the students' confidence in using the target language functions such as talking about themselves and their families, giving directions and ordering a meal. The questionnaire had been piloted with the same students who had helped in piloting the listening and speaking tests. The data was analyzed with the mean, standard deviation and t-test.

3.4.3 A self-reflection check sheet was developed to see how the students mirrored their learning experience. It involved the three aspects that corresponded with the questionnaire mentioned above, i.e. students were expected to reflect change (or no change) cognitively, affectively and behaviourally. This check sheet was delivered everyday at the end of each class to individual students and because of the huge pile of the paper, the data only from the five lowest and the five highest achievers at the end of the course was analyzed.

3.4.4 Classroom observation was conducted 9 times during the three weeks. The observer, the researcher who did not teach the course, set the aim to focus on four aspects of the teaching procedure, namely: the teacher-student interaction, the student-student interaction, the course content and teaching methods, and the classroom general atmosphere. The data was analyzed based on the notes given under each aspect and then descriptively summarized.

3.4.5 A course evaluation form adapted from the one regularly used by Thammasat University at the end of each course was also distributed to find the students' opinions about the teaching methodology, the teachers, the curriculum and other administrative factors such as the time allotted for the course and the class size. The data was analyzed with percentage, mean and standard deviation.

4. Results

The results are presented in the following discrete areas:

4.1 Listening test results

The students' listening average score significantly increased from 17.82 to 22.61 from the total of 40 as shown in the table below.

Table 1: Listening test results

	Mean	**Standard Deviation**	**t**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
pre-test post-test	17.82 22.61	7.013 7.057	-5.537	.000***

*** Sig 0.001

4.2 Speaking test results

The students' average score of speaking increased from 22.71 to 33.75 from the total of 60 as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Speaking test results

	Mean	**Standard Deviation**	**t**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
pre-test post-test	22.71 33.75	8.119 8.934	-7.396	.000***

*** Sig 0.001

The students' level of speaking performance was also rated with the FSI criteria. It was found that before taking the course, 25 students were rated as Level 0, 0+, and Level 1 speakers. At the end of the course, there were only 12 students who were left at Level 0-1 while 16 of them became speakers of Level 1+ and Level 2 as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Development of speaking skills rated by FSI criteria

Pre test		Post test	
Level	Number of students	Level	Number of students
0	2	0	1
0+	15	0+	4
1	8	1	7
1+	2	1+	10
2	1	2	6

When looking closely at the quality of the performance, students' responses developed quite positively. Their utterances, rather than words or fabricated short phrases with long pauses, became longer and more polite. The examples of students' responses can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4: Examples of students' responses

Pretest	Post test
Example 1 T: Can you tell me what you see in the picture? S: Belt.	T: Can you tell me what you see in the picture? S: It's a belt. A leather belt. It's red. It's for (a)* lady.
Example 2 T: Can you tell me what you are wearing today? S: Jean. Shirt.	T: Can you tell me what you are wearing today? S: I'm wearing jeans, blue jeans. My T-shirt is red and white. I'm wearing white sock(s)* and pink trainer(s)*.
Example 3 T: You're in a restaurant. You want to order food and here's the menu. S: I want chicken. (long pause) Salad.	T: You're in a restaurant. You want to order food and here's the menu. S: May I have a medium-rare steak, a salad, and a coke, (pause) please.

* Students did not pronounce the 'redundant' sounds.

4.3 Students' readiness, interests, and confidence in learning and using English

The study found a relatively high significance that the students changed cognitively. This means students could see how English was important for their further studies and their jobs; 80 percent of the subjects suggested that many more English courses be compulsory. They also saw English as having become necessary for many daily activities. The second ranked responses involved affective filters. Students found English learning more enjoyable, less tiring, and not beyond their capability. The lowest rank was indicated by their behavior. The statistics showed the least change in their behavior. They still seldom read English newspapers and neither did they listen to English radio programs or try to talk to foreigners. However, the positive cognitive, affective and behavioral changes could be noticed from the t-test result as shown in the following table.

Table 5 : Students' readiness and interests in learning English

	Mean (Pretest)	SD.	Mean (posttest)	SD.	t-test	Sig.
Cognitive elements (what students think)	3.87	0.37	4.04	0.32	-3.70	0.00***
Affective elements (how students feel)	3.21	0.34	3.38	0.33	13.00	0.00***
Behavior (what students do)	2.66	0.75	3.03	0.77	-3.10	0.00***

***Sig 0.00

When the data about how confident the students were in using English was analysed, it was found that students could do best when talking about themselves, telling likes and dislikes, and giving directions while they were less confident in comparing objects and places, discussing about their future plans and giving presentations in front of the class as shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Students' confidence in using English

Language Function	Mean Pretest	SD.	Mean Posttest	SD.	t-test	Sig.
1. talking about oneself	2.93	0.77	3.36	0.56	-3.06	0.00***
2. talking about family	2.79	0.57	3.29	0.76	-3.33	0.00***
3. describing clothing	2.68	0.77	3.21	0.50	-3.22	0.00***
4. describing objects	2.57	0.79	3.18	0.55	-3.67	0.00***
5. giving directions	2.61	0.96	3.57	0.74	-4.93	0.00***
6. telling likes and dislikes	2.93	0.94	3.64	0.62	-3.87	0.00***
7. shopping	2.46	0.84	3.21	0.79	-4.10	0.00***
8. comparing things	2.46	0.92	2.96	0.64	-3.15	0.00***
9. comparing places	2.18	0.77	2.89	0.79	-4.67	0.00***
10. ordering food	2.43	0.88	3.29	0.76	-5.09	0.00***
11.talking about future plans	2.32	0.90	2.89	0.96	-2.83	0.01 **
12. giving presentations	2.14	0.76	2.64	0.56	-3.55	0.00***

4.4   Results from students' self reflection

Although the data from the check sheet was analyzed as percentages, the results showed some agreement with the results from the questionnaire in 4.3. Cognitively, the majority of the students (82%) could see that English was essential in their lives; they learned it in a more motivated way; they tried to attend class regularly and 90% of them showed up on time. They noticed the difference between 'fun' and 'less fun' or 'less difficult' lessons. They felt that they could talk about themselves and their

family in a more informative way. They could describe the appearance of objects, places and people and could also discuss their likes and dislikes more confidently. They understood the teachers and their peers better and they could make themselves understood a lot better.

4.5   Results from classroom observation

The observer found the teachers could develop a good rapport with the students. They remembered every student and showed intimacy by calling them by their nicknames. The students themselves, realizing that they were among peers of the same level, tried to cooperate and help each other learn. They didn't feel as inferior as when they were among 'better' learners. The content and the teaching methodology were suitable for them, especially when they were learning English by playing games. A good example of the game that the observer could see clearly that they really enjoyed was about describing objects. The teacher put many objects in a black plastic bag and each student took turns to put their hand in the bag and describe the objects without seeing them, while the other students tried to guess what the objects were from the description. The class atmosphere was quite desirable, and everyone became active participants. They participated in pairwork and groupwork quite satisfactorily. A few students even developed the courage to ask questions when the lessons seemed unclear to them. These kinds of behaviour seldom existed in their regular classes.

4.6   Results from the course evaluation

All of the students (100 percent) were satisfied with the intensity of the course, the number of classmates, the teachers and the teaching methodology and all of them agreed that the course was able to help improve their listening and speaking skills dramatically. A student wrote this comment at the open-ended part of the course evaluation form (translated by the researcher): *I enjoyed this class a lot. I had never been able to give good information about my family before and I could have chance to speak English much more than 'yes' 'no' 'okay.'* Another student wrote: *Professor, if you do a new research, please let me join again. Your course really helps me improve my English.*

5.   Discussion and Recommendations

Despite the positive results that showed the high significance statistically in all

aspects of this study, it cannot be taken for granted that the course was successful. It was very interesting to find that in a Thai context this research class could make only a little change in the students. It was apparent when the students' average scores of both skills were compared as shown in the table below. From the pre test, the students' combined average score of both listening and speaking skills was 40.53 from the total of 100. If the pass-mark was set at 50%, these students would have failed an English exam before taking the course. When the average score of the post test turned out to be 55.36, it meant the students passed the test, but they were still rated as poor language learners. It could not be said that a student with the score of 55 from 100 was a good student. Three weeks did help, but not much.

Table 6: Student's average scores (both skills)

	Average Score (Listening)	Average Score (Speaking)	Total (100)
pre-test	17.82	22.71	40.53=F*
post-test	22.61	33.75	55.36=P*

*F = failed, P = passed

Statistically, however, with such a significant improvement, given the short length of the intervention, it could probably be claimed that if a class was conducted properly and geared to the learners' needs, it could be possible to help poor language learners. The factors for success, the limitations of the study and the recommendations from the study are as follows:

5.1 Factors for success

5.1.1 It cannot be denied that this course was ideal for the participant students. The main components of success include a rare case of a small number of students in the class, the availability of both native and non-native English speakers, and the opportunities to run language-use activities both inside and outside class. Moreover, the students participated in the class in a relaxed atmosphere. They merely came to learn – no grades; it was a special course run for a research purpose. They could enjoy the class even though they were participating in the subject that some of them said was the 'most-disliked' one in their life.

5.1.2 The course devoted less time and effort to focus on grammar and detailed reading, which was quite different from the regular class that the students had been familiar with. Such a course probably has resulted in the student higher motivation. As Balado (2001) and Lescano (1995) have pointed out, the weakest skills of poor language learners are writing and reading. Thus, when the course focus was deviated from what they were not capable of to something that they found less demanding for accuracy, it may have helped boost their self-esteem. The change of the skill focus for this course could be one of the factors that helped motivate students to participate more actively. In relation to this, the classmates who shared a similar level of competency were another factor that contributed to students' active participation. They did not keep quiet and let the 'better' students speak for them as in the regular class where more competent learners tend to dominate the talk. They needed to cooperate and help each other to put their message across, although the quality of the performance was not as good as the researcher had expected.

5.1.3 The awareness of the teachers who took student personality and cognition variables into account as suggested by Reiss (1981) and Oxford (1990) also played a great role in helping less able students. They combined the varieties of teaching methods that encouraged the students to develop positive attitudes in learning. One of the class 'going shopping' was started by Total Physical Response and 'Simon Says' game and then moved to some input of language model through listening and then role playing. Songs, games, and roleplays seemed to be the key elements in creating a non-stressful atmosphere in the class.

5.1.4 The real benefit of the course came from the intensity of the exposure; the students had to learn and use English every day for three weeks. In an EFL situation, time allocation for English learning may need reconsidering if students are expected to reach a high level of proficiency. In many Thai universities, students are required to take one or two compulsory English courses when they are in the first year, and English is optional in their later years. Students with average or low ability may never want to take any other elective courses once they have met the curricular minimum requirement. They may avoid English when they are in their third or fourth year. When they graduate, it is apparent that they are not good at English and they cannot meet the demands for English used in the workplace (Wiriyachitra, 2002). From the current study, it seemed obvious that in order to improve the learners' language skills, they should be exposed to the language every day, rather than the once or twice a

week of regular classes. The Educational Testing Service found out that language learners with different levels of language aptitude require different learning time to achieve a goal. For example, a learner with minimum of aptitude may need at least 16 weeks (480 hours) of training to become a Level 1 speaker, 24 weeks (720 hours) to become a 1+ performer and 44 weeks (1320 hours) to be at the Level 2/2+ (Hadley, 2001, pp. 16-18). From this study, the students below average who had attended the class for 60 hours in three weeks did improve, so it may be likely that if they had had more opportunities to learn they would have more comfortable and confident in using English.

5.2   Limitations of the study

Like some other studies, an unavoidable problem occurred in the form of missing samples. At the beginning of the course, 36 students took part in the learning, but eight of them gradually disappeared. A few had given an excuse that they were too tired because they had another course to concentrate on to get a good grade from it. Two students explained that they wanted a summer vacation rather than coming to a non-credit class. The biggest problem that such an ideal class encountered was that the smaller the classes were, the greater the budget needed for administration. When the class size became smaller with only 8-12 students in each group rather than 40-50, it meant more teachers, more classrooms and more use of learning facilities. This study would not have been possible without the financial support from the Thailand Research Fund. In addition, the researcher should have had some follow-ups to see if the students could really participate in the subsequent ESP courses satisfactorily after the intervention.

5.3   Recommendations

5.3.1 More time should be given to language learning. The detailed amount of training and the expected levels of speaking proficiency is given in language taught at the Foreign Service Institute (Hadley, 2001, pp. 16-18) can be used as a guideline.

5.3.2 The focus skills in language learning and teaching should be reconsidered. According to Wiriyachitra (2002), "researchers on the topics of needs and wants of English in workplaces have suggested that the English curriculum in Thai universities cannot meet the demands for English used in the workplace. The skills used most at this level are listening and speaking which are not the focus skills in the Thai tertiary

education English curriculum." It is thus necessary that universities take the findings of such research into consideration as an important part of the educational reform.

5.3.3 Low level learners should not be expected to reach the same successive level as good language learners. If the learners think their needs are listening and speaking skills, it is not justified to force them to learn all the four skills although each skill enhances the development of another skill. There are many cases where a successful native speaker of a language is not at all capable of tackling a high level of reading or writing proficiency. It really depends upon what skills are needed and regularly used.

5.3.4 Ways of evaluating student language ability should be changed. Thailand's current system of evaluation and assessment of language learning is based on a grading system. After finishing a course students know only what grades they get or whether they pass or fail the exam but they never know their real ability in the English skills. They don't know what they can and cannot do. There are benchmarks and band systems developed by many institutes which seem to better describe the learner successive level of communicative achievement. Such a system, which is increasingly available, should be applied in an EFL situation. In this research, the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) Proficiency Ratings were used to assess the students' speaking ability because it was found that the performance factors and descriptions, together with the weighting and conversions tables were quite easy for the raters to use. For example, if the raters found that the student '*can ask and answer questions on topics very familiar to him/her with slowed speech and limited vocabulary, frequent errors of pronunciation and grammar but still be understood by a native speaker*,' he/ she is a Level 1 speaker. If the student '*can discuss particular interests with reasonable ease and adequate control of grammar,*' he/she would be ranked as a performer of Level 3. In addition, there have been current developments of guidelines that provide a means of assessing the proficiency of language learners, some more developments of scales for describing language proficiency and criterion-referenced performance assessments such as the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB), and the Common European Framework (CEF). They are descriptor systems that focus on the successful completion of communicative tasks, i.e. use-focused rather than form-focused, and each level of the systems can clearly refer to a learner's ability in listening, speaking, reading or writing. If the students' abilities are assessed by different skills, it means that some learners may reach a high level in reading but they may be at a lower level

in listening, speaking, and writing. Their target needs seem more tangible and the description of 'can do' statements makes students recognize what skills they need to pay more or less attention to or when to enroll for a correct course. Countries in EFL situations may adopt or adapt one of those guidelines or establish their own appropriate to their context.

6. Conclusion

Less-able students of English cannot cope with too many skills because they use very few strategies in language learning. For them, listening and speaking skills seem to be more motivating to acquire because they can use these skills for everyday communication. They should also be given opportunities to be exposed to the target language more intensively both inside and outside class because they need repetitive learning in an environment that is relaxing and encouraging. In assessment, there must be some clear guidelines, descriptors, or benchmarks to describe what the learners can do or what level they are at and what language functions they should learn to master so as to move up to another level.

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The Impact of English as an International Language (EIL) upon Arabic in Saudi Arabia

Reima Al-Jarf
King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Abstract
The study investigated college students' views of the status of English and Arabic in Saudi Arabia in the 21st century, and their attitudes towards using English and Arabic as a medium of instruction at the university level. Findings showed that 96% of the participants consider English a superior language, being an international language, and the language of science and technology, research, electronic databases and technical terminology. Eighty two percent believe that Arabic is more appropriate for teaching religion, history, Arabic literature and education majors, whereas English is more appropriate for teaching medicine, pharmacy, engineering, science, nursing, and computer science. They gave many educational, technological, social and labor market reasons for favoring the English language. The study concluded that Arabic is facing a serious threat from the dominance of English language in higher education, because of the lack of language planning and linguistic policies that protect, develop and promote the Arabic language, because of the slow Arabicization processes in the Arab world, and inadequacy of technical material translated and published in Arabic.

1. Introduction

1.1 English and Arabic in the 1980's and 1990's

The competition between English and Arabic as a medium of instruction at Arab universities has been going on for decades. Many Arab universities have adopted English as a medium of instruction at colleges of medicine and engineering since the early 20th century, due to British colonization. The feasibility of using Arabic as a medium of instruction at colleges of medicine and engineering was the subject of

several studies in the 1980's and 1990's. For example, Al-Jarallah & Al-Ansari (1998) found that 60% of medical students at King Saud University in Saudi Arabia supported using Arabic as a medium of instruction in medical schools, and 8.7% did not see any difference in using either language**.** Al-Mohaideb (1998) also found that 49% of the engineering faculty and 62.7% of the engineering students at King Saud University thought that it was possible to teach engineering in Arabic. However, 85.7% of the faculty and 81.1% of the students believed that use of Arabic as a medium of instruction in engineering would be possible when more Arabic engineering textbooks are available. In a similar study by Al-Mohandes and Baker (1998), 66% of the students at King Saud University preferred to use both Arabic and English in delivering class lectures, 57% preferred to use Arabic textbooks, 53% preferred to write their projects in Arabic, 39% preferred to answer test questions in Arabic. Only 22% preferred to use English in delivering class lectures, 32% preferred to use English engineering textbooks, 33% preferred to write their engineering projects in English, and 44% preferred to answer test questions in English.

About 45% of the students preferred to answer exam questions in Arabic, 36.9% preferred English, 15.1% preferred to answer in Arabic and write technical terms in English, and 3% preferred to use both English and Arabic (Al-Jarallah & Al-Ansari, 1998). In another study, Assuhaimi and Al-Barr (1992) found that 77% of medical students at King Faisal University in Saudi Arabia preferred to answer test questions in Arabic as opposed to 23% who preferred to answer test questions in English. Seventy five percent feel that they are better able to answer oral questions and carry on medical discussions in Arabic than English.

Results of a survey by Abu-Arafah, Attuhami and Hassein (1998) showed that 52% of the Production Technology and Industrial Electronics faculty at the College of Technology in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia believed that using Arabic as a medium of instruction at their departments was successful and worthy of support. Almost 52% believed Arabic should be used as a medium of instruction at their departments. However, 71% preferred to use English as a medium of instruction as it helps them find a job in other countries.

The availability of Arabic publications in medicine, engineering and technology was investigated by some researchers. Abu-Arafah, Attuhami and Hassein (1998) reported that 25% of the faculty at the Departments of the Production Technology and Industrial Electronics at the College of Technology in Riyadh had publications in

their fields in Arabic, 70% of the faculty and 71% of the students believed that Arabic references in Production Technology and Industrial Electronics were sufficient. In medicine and engineering, 8% of the faculty and 22% of the students indicated that Arabic engineering textbooks were sufficiently available. About 5% of the faculty and 13% of the students felt that it would better to switch to Arabic as a medium of instruction gradually. About 48% of the faculty would prefer to switch to Arabic as a medium of instruction when more Arabic engineering textbooks and references are available, and 20% of the faculty and 11% of the students preferred switching to Arabic after faculty are trained in how to teach in Arabic (Al-Mohaideb, 1998). Al-Hajj Eissa and Al-Mutawa (1988) found that 92% of the faculty at the College of Science at Kuwait University indicated that the Arabic Science books were lacking.

In the 1980's and 1990's, advantages of using Arabic as a medium of instruction at colleges of medicine and engineering were highlighted by several research surveys of faculty and students' views. In Al-Jarallah & Al-Ansari's study, 49% of medical students at King Saud University reported that they comprehended 75% of the lectures and 45% comprehended 25%-75% when they were delivered in English. However 90% of the students reported that they comprehended more when lectures were delivered in both English and Arabic, and 60% comprehended more of the class lectures when they were delivered in Arabic only. When lectures are in English, 50.7% indicated they would have fewer opportunities to interact and participate in the class discussion. Students' reading speed of medical material in Arabic was found to be higher than that when reading medical material in English. It was found that residents and interns read 109.8 words per minute in Arabic as opposed to 76.7 words per minute in English, i.e. their reading speed in Arabic was 43% faster than their reading speed in English. Their reading comprehension medical material in Arabic was found to be 15% better than that in English. Students' achievement level increased 66.4% when Arabic was used as a medium of instruction (Al-Sebaee, 1995). When studying in Arabic, 46% of subjects reported that they would spend half the studying time, 30% would need one third of the studying time, and 17.7% would need the same amount of time when they read medical material in Arabic as opposed to English (Al-Jarallah & Al-Ansari, 1998). At King Faisal University, 80% saved one third of the time when they read medical material in Arabic compared to English (Assuhaimi and Al-Barr, 1992). In Al-Sebaee's study (1995), medical students saved 50% of their time when they read Arabic medical textbooks. In doing assignments in

Arabic, 27.6% of the students would need one third of the time only, 35.9% would need half the time, and 27% would need the same amount of time to do their assignments if they were given in Arabic. At King Faisal University, 70% of the subjects saved one third of the time or more when they did assignments in Arabic compared to English (Al-Jarallah & Al-Ansari, 1998).

In the 1990's, the academic level, success rates, mastery of material studied of students who studied medicine and technology in Arabic was investigated as well. A report published by the Curriculum Development Unit at the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation indicated that 48.3% of the administrators asserted that the academic level of the graduates of the College of Technology who studied in Arabic was very good and 44.74% asserted that it was satisfactory (Abu-Arafah, Attuhami and Hassein, 1998). Experiments comparing the use of English and Arabic as a medium of instruction in medicine and engineering were conducted by the Arabic Language Academy in Jordan. In those experiments, 30% of the students failed when English was used as a medium of instruction as opposed to 3% failures when Arabic was used as a medium of instruction. The students covered more material, their medical knowledge was wider and more accurate, and the students saved more time and effort in studying the material at home when Arabic was used as a medium of instruction (Abu-Hiloo & Lutfiyya, 1984). In two other experimental studies with two groups of Arab medical students at the American University of Beirut and Jordan University in Amman, the experimental group studied the material in Arabic and the control groups studied the same material in English. Comparisons of the achievement scores of the experimental and control groups in both experiments showed that the comprehension ability of the experimental group, i.e., Arabic-medium instruction, was higher than that of the control group i.e., English-medium instruction (Al-Sebaee, 1995).

By contrast, findings of prior studies highlighted the disadvantages of using English as a medium of instruction with science students. At Kuwait University, Al-Hajj Eissa and Al-Mutawa (1988) asserted that use of English as a medium of instruction posed many problems for students at the College of Science such as: 64% of the faculty surveyed reported that the students' English proficiency level was low; 66% reported that the students' comprehension of scientific concepts was poor; 76% reported that the students were de-motivated; 48% indicated that students had difficulty comprehending their English textbooks and 54% indicated that students had difficulty

comprehending lectures delivered in English, in addition to the students poor writing, spelling and speaking skills. Moreover, science students found instructors' explanations in English difficult to understand, they could not follow lectures, could not take notes and had poor knowledge of English scientific terms. Studying in English required more effort and more time than studying in Arabic. For those reasons, 54% of the students preferred to study in Arabic, as they would understand the subject matter better. When correcting medical students' exam papers written in English at the College of Medicine, Zaqazeeq University in Egypt, it was found that only 10% of the students were able to express themselves clearly, 65% gave the required information but failed to write correctly and 25% had difficulty understanding the type of information required by the questions (Al-Sebaee, 1995).

1.2 English and Arabic in the 21st Century

Due to latest developments in information and communications technology that have taken place in the past decade (early 21st century), English has become more dominant in all walks of life than ever before. It is used everywhere. One out of four people around the world can communicate in English. English is the official language of major political and economic alliances such as the Commonwealth countries, the EU, the NATO, OPEC, and the ASEAN. It is the language of 85% of international organizations and the main language of technology, business, finance and tourism. Most research, references, technical terms, international conferences, electronic databases are in English. World-famous newspapers, T.V. stations, movies, airlines, multi-national companies, and 90% of the material published on the Internet use English as a primary language.

Due to the increasing dominance of the English language, the number of people seeking to learn English is increasing. About one billion students are learning English worldwide (Crystal, 2003). English is taught as a foreign or second language at schools and universities in almost every country. Since 2001, English college requirements were increased to four levels or a total of 300 hours per semester for level I, and a total of 204 hours per semester for levels II, III & IV. In addition, 12 3-hour ESP courses or a total of 48 hours per semester are offered to all the United Arab University (UAE) University students depending on their major area of study. At the same time, the Arabic language core courses offered to students at UAE University

were reduced to two credit hours per week or a total of 32 hours per semester (See UAE University Website). In many Arab countries, the number of English language institutes has considerably increased. In addition to private schools that offer intensive English courses starting from Kindergarten, private schools with international programs use English as a medium of instruction in the content areas such as math, science, geography and history starting from first grade, as opposed to only one Arabic language course (five hours per week) and one Islamic studies course (1-2 hours per week). In Egypt, there are currently 557 language schools as opposed to 195 language schools 10 years ago. In 2003, the Saudi Ministry of Education passed a law that mandates the teaching of English in the public schools starting from Grade 6. A year later, the teaching of English started in Grade 5. The new Ministry mandate stressed that English be well taught along the same lines as Arabic. To ensure the effective teaching of English, specialists from the Ministry of Education and individuals who are highly proficient in English would be following up and supervising the teaching of English in Saudi public schools (Al-Riyadh Newspaper, No. 12849, August 26, 2003). To ensure that English is effectively taught to students in the public schools, the development of effective English textbooks, enhancing the teaching performance of English teachers, and utilization of technology in English language teaching have become a priority.

In a globalized world where English has become a global language, many people – including Arabs - currently feel that English is superior to all other languages – including Arabic. Many young people have become keener on learning English than Arabic as they feel that English is superior. Hence, the aims of the present study is to investigate the following: (i) How college students view the status of English and Arabic in Saudi Arabia in the early 21st century; (ii) In which colleges and majors students think English should be used; (iii) In which colleges and majors students think Arabic should be used; (iv) The scientific, technological, educational, social and labor market factors for preferring English/Arabic as a medium of instruction at the university level, as perceived by the subjects; and (v) How students view their role in developing/maintaining the status of the Arabic language in the 21st century.

2. Participants

Participants of the present study consisted of 470 female students majoring in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, computer science, English, education, arts and

languages and translation at King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The participants consisted of students in their freshman, sophomore, junior and senior years.

3. Instrument

An interview-questionnaire with open-ended questions was used (See Appendix). The questions included the following: (i) How do you view the status of English and Arabic in Saudi Arabia? (ii)Which is more appropriate as a medium of instruction at the university level English or Arabic? (iii) In which colleges and majors should English be used? (iv) In which colleges and majors should Arabic be used? (v) What is your role in developing the Arabic language?

4. Data collection and analysis

Students were interviewed individually and their responses were recorded on their questionnaires. Answers were sorted out, and the percentage of students giving the same answer was computed. Results are reported quantitatively and qualitatively. Where possible, percentages of students giving the same response were computed.

5. Results

Findings of the present study have shown that 96% of the participants consider English a superior language to Arabic because they think that the world has become a small village and English is the dominant language and the language of communication in this global village. English is used all over the world, whereas Arabic is used in limited geographical areas.

Findings of the present study also revealed that 82% of the participants believe that Arabic is more appropriate for teaching Islamic studies, history, Arabic literature and education, whereas English is more appropriate for teaching medicine, pharmacy, engineering, science, nursing, and computer science. The participants gave many reasons for favoring the English language. These reasons are summarized below.

5. *Scientific and technological reasons*

Ninety six percent of the participants believe that learning English has become a necessity as it is the language of modernity. They think that Colleges of Medicine in other countries use English as medium of instruction. They also think that everything

they would like to know is written in English. Sophisticated scientific websites are in English. All computer majors, programming languages, catalogs, medications, technical terms, conferences, research and references require English. They believe that it is impossible to teach information technology (IT) in Arabic. They cannot work with the computer in Arabic. They need to master the basics of English in engineering and medicine in order to be able to communicate with foreign doctors and engineers in other countries and exchange knowledge, experiences and skills with them, through direct contact or through the Internet, to continue to learn and keep up with the latest developments in their areas of specialization and in fields where English is used.

5.2 Educational Reasons

Eighty one percent of the participants indicated that in school, students study math and science in Arabic for twelve years and when they enter the university, they study math and science in English. When they graduate from high school, their knowledge of English is limited and as a result of that they face many problems in college. Graduate colleges in Saudi Arabia require students to write their theses in English and do not allow students to write them in Arabic. Higher education policies do not mandate Arabic as a medium of instruction. In addition, they need English to pursue their studies abroad. When students study in English, they will acquire a new language, but when they study in Arabic, which they have acquired at a young age, and have learnt throughout their school years, there is nothing new to acquire at the university level. They think that studying in English is better than studying in Arabic, as it gives them a more solid knowledge base. They preferred to learn from primary sources. They believe that those who do not know English cannot advance in their education.

5.3 Lack of Arabic specialized resources and terminology

Ninety six percent of the participants feel that Arabic cannot be used as a medium of instruction in medicine, pharmacy, engineering and computer science due to the inadequacy of resources (references) which doctors and engineers need to consult and use as textbooks for teaching and learning. For example, no math textbooks and research articles are available in Arabic. There are no books about autism in Arabic. Many research results first appear in English. This makes it easy for them to get the most recent information and will help them to communicate with the rest of the world.

All primary resources in medicine, pharmacy, and engineering are in English. The research articles that they read on the Internet are in English. It is easier to study and read textbooks in English, English technical terms are clearer, the writing style is better and exposition of ideas is clearer. High school science and math books are not easy to understand, because they are translated literally.

Ninety three percent of the participants believe that books and articles in medicine, engineering, science and technology are not translated into Arabic. They feel that it is impossible to translate all of the available medical, engineering and scientific literature into Arabic. Translation is costly and time consuming. By the time specialized books and articles are translated into Arabic, the information they contain would be obsolete, because science advances too fast.

About 93% of the subjects think that many English technical terms have no Arabic equivalents and can only be transliterated. Arabic translation equivalents will make technical terms more difficult to understand. They added that they are not familiar with Arabic technical terms such as حمض النووي""كعبـرة، والعمر الحيوي، وخزعة، وال. They believe that Arabizing technical terms is ineffective because many technical concepts cannot be translated and explained in Arabic. Knowing technical terms in English would make knowledge transfer easier. Advances in science and technology are more related to English than Arabic. It is better to study in English because English connects all languages.

5.4 Job opportunities

Ninety one percent of the participants indicated that mastery of English is required for success in life. Students who know English have a better future than those who do not. It will be easier for them to find a job. Those who know Arabic only have limited job opportunities. Job opportunities at hospitals and corporations require oral fluency and ability to write business reports and to correspond with companies abroad in English. They need to use English to communicate with their non-Arabic speaking colleagues at work. When they graduate from college and work, they will be sent abroad for training, which requires knowledge of English as training is conducted in English. The participants indicated that the Saudi labor market does not recognize Arabic. It prefers those who know English. Studying in English will prepare them for their career.

5.5 Social reasons

Eighty nine percent of the participants believe that people who study in English are more qualified and have a better social status than those who study in Arabic. Society respects those who can communicate in English and those who have graduated from an English-medium college or university. Some pass and graduate with poor grades and a poor achievement level because of their poor English. A person who can communicate in English has a better self-esteem and more self-confidence.

5.6 Participants' future role in protecting the Arabic language

When asked about their role in protecting and developing Arabic as the language of scientific innovations, research and publications, 91% of the participants indicated that there is nothing they could do, because that requires a political resolution not individual efforts. They added that the current situation in Arab countries is not opportune for innovations, research and publication. Arab countries have no research and development centers similar to those in the West. Unlike Japan, Europe and USA, universities and research centers in the Arab World are not well funded and do not encourage research and publications in Arabic. They also believe that no incentives, no motivation for researchers and authors who write in Arabic are provided.

6. Discussion

Findings of the present study show that the participants are overwhelmed by the dominance of the English language in the 21st century. They feel that Arabic is inferior to English, and feel a big gap between the status of English and Arabic in research, publications and technical terminology. They gave many educational, scientific, technological, vocational and social reasons for preferring to learn English.

   The percentage of participants in the present study who preferred to use English as a medium of instruction at the university level is much higher than that in other prior studies conducted ten years ago. Many changes have taken place in the past ten years. The spread of satellite television and the Internet have made participants in the present study more aware of the dominance of the English language than participants in prior studies. For example, Al-Muhandes and Al-Hajj Bakri (1998) found that 66% of the students at King Saud University preferred Arabic to English as a medium of instruction in lectures, 57% preferred to use Arabic textbooks, 53% preferred to write their projects in Arabic, and 39% preferred to take exams in Arabic. In another study

conducted by Al-Muhaideb (1998), 75% of the engineering faculty and 73.7% of the engineering students surveyed preferred to use Arabic as a medium of instruction. About 49.4% of the faculty and 62.7% of the students believed that use of Arabic as a language of instruction was feasible. About 85.7% of the faculty and 81.1% of the students believed that it is possible to use Arabic as medium of instruction in engineering once Arabic textbooks in engineering are available. Abu-Arafa, Attuhami and Hassein (1998) also conducted a study at the Colleges of Technology in Saudi Arabia. They surveyed faculty and students' opinions at the department of Industrial Electronics and Production Technology where Arabic was used as a medium of instruction, and found that 52% of the faculty indicated that use of Arabic as a medium of instruction was a successful experience and was worth support and implementation. Fifty two percent believed that Arabic should be used as a medium of instruction. Twenty five percent had several contributions in Arabization and translation of technical books into Arabic.

Prior studies in the Arabic literature found that faculty and students were more aware of the advantages of using Arabic as a medium of instruction in medicine and engineering. Assuhaimi and Al-Barr (1992) conducted a study with medical students at King Faisal University in Saudi Arabia. When they compared their reading and writing time in English and Arabic, 80% of the students indicated that they save one third of the reading time or more when they read in Arabic, and 72% save one third of the writing time or more when they write in Arabic. Seventy seven percent preferred to take medical exams in Arabic as opposed to 23% only who preferred to take medical exams in Arabic. Seventy five percent reported that their ability to answer oral questions and discuss medical issues is much better in Arabic than English.

Prior studies in the Arabic literature found that use of English as a medium of instruction has several negative consequences. For instance, Al-Hajj Eissa & Al-Mutawa (1988) found that using English as medium of instruction poses major problems for many Kuwaiti students majoring in science. Sixty four percent of the faculty at the College of Science at Kuwait University indicated that the students' achievement level in English is low. 66% also indicated that the students' low proficiency level in English negatively affects their comprehension of scientific concepts. Seventy six percent indicated that the students' low proficiency level in English affects their motivation for learning. Forty eight percent of the science students surveyed indicated that they have difficulty understanding English textbooks

and 54% have difficulty understanding English lectures, in addition to their difficulty in writing, spelling, note-taking and oral communication, and inadequate knowledge of scientific technical terms in English. Eighty four percent of freshman students have difficulty understanding scientific concepts presented in English and 80% of students studying science in English exert more effort than those studying science in Arabic. Fifty percent do not understand English science textbooks and 54% preferred using Arabic as a medium of instruction at the College of Science because this would lead to better understanding. Examination of the students' English test papers at Zaqazeeq University in Egypt showed that only 10% of the students were able to express themselves clearly, 65% gave the information asked for by the questions but could not use correct English, and 25% did not show an understanding of the material at all (Al-Sibaee, 1995).

6.1 Feelings of inferiority

Participants of the present study believe that English is more important, easier and more useful than Arabic, and that Arabic technical terms are difficult to study, because medicine, technology and engineering are Western, not Arabic sciences. They believe that when Arabs become leaders in medicine, engineering, science and technology, we can teach such disciplines in Arabic. The author believes that using and studying Arabic, rather than English technical terms, is a matter of habit. When words like 'هاتف، جوال، حاسب، حاسوب، حواسيب، مطوية' first appeared in the Arabic language, they were not accepted and used by Arabs. But now they have become very common and are widely used. Once new technical terms appear in the media, especially Satellite T.V. such as 'غسيل، التوحد، خارطة الطريق، محور الشر، مجوقلة، رتل عسكري، الخصخصة، الأموال، تعويم الجنيه، والعولمة', they will become common within a short period of time.

As to the status of Arabic, the participants seem to be unfamiliar with the status of Arabic among world languages. Many languages such as English, French, Spanish, Turkish, have many loan words from Arabic. About 60% of the Persian words, and 25% of the words in Bahasa are of Arabic origin. Turkish, Urdu, Hindi, and even Ukrainian languages have Arabic loan words.

6.2 Misconceptions about the language of instruction at medical schools worldwide

The participants think that Colleges of Medicine in other countries use English as medium of instruction. The participants do not seem to know that most non-Arabic

speaking countries use their native language as a medium of instruction at Colleges of Medicine and Engineering. For example in Armenia, a country with 3 million inhabitants, Armenian is the language of instruction in its higher education institutions. This is also the case in Greece, South Korea, Japan, China, Turkey, Indonesia, Iran, Russia and many others. This does not mean that such countries do not teach other foreign languages such as English to their students.

6.3 Lack of specialized material in Arabic

As to the plethora of specialized references, textbooks and articles in medicine, pharmacy, engineering and computer science in English, and inadequacy of references, textbooks and articles in medicine, pharmacy, engineering and computer science in Arabic, this is supported by the Arab Development Report published in 2002, which reported that only 330 books were translated into Arabic in the whole Arab World.

Another report of the Federal Coordinating Committee on Science, Engineering and Technology Policy (1993) indicated that 50% of the scientific and technological research and books are published in English and Arabic constitutes a small percentage of the other 50%. This means that Arab students or specialists who do not know English will not access and benefit from 50% of the reference material in science and technology and will not be able to participate in international research projects.

As to the inadequacy of research funds provided by Arab governments, the Arab Human Development Report (2003) indicated that the research budget constitutes 2% of national budget as opposed to 22% in Japan. An Arab spends US$3 only on research as opposed to US$409 spent by a German, US$601 by a Japanese and US$681 by an American.

As to the availability of Arabic specialized references in certain participant areas, Al-Muhaideb (1998) reported that 8% of the faculty and 22% of the students at King Saud University indicated that engineering reference books are plentiful. In Abu-Arafa and Attauhami's study (1998), 76% of the faculty and 71% of the students surveyed indicated that Arabic references in their production technology and industrial electronics are readily available.

6.4 Misconceptions about the amount of technical terms in specialized medical and engineering textbooks

Participants think that the main obstacle for using Arabic as a medium of instruction

is the Arabization of English technical terms. The participants are placing more emphasis on technical terms than necessary, because the percentages of technical terms in specialized books is very small, compared to common language. Al-Sebaee (1995) reported that the frequency of technical terms in English medical books is only 3.3%, the other 96.7% are from common language.

The participants do not seem to be well aware of the availability of specialized English-Arabic dictionaries and terminology databanks. For example, the Saudi Terminology Databank housed by King Abdul-Aziz City for Science and Technology (KACST) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, contains about 400,000 technical terms in all participant areas (http://gdis.kacst.edu.sa/BASM.html). The Arabic Language Academy in Egypt, and the Center for the Coordination of Arabization in Morocco (http://www. arabization.org.ma/Dictionnaire.asp) have their own specialized terminology databanks and dictionaries and continually work on Arabizing technical terms. The problem is that many students, faculty and researchers do not know that such terminology databanks and specialized English-Arabic dictionaries exist.

6.5 Misconceptions about the Arabization and translation processes

Many participants believe that transliteration is the only way for translating English technical terms into Arabic. Here again the participants do not seem to be aware of Arabization processes, some of which are: (i) primary derivation; (ii) secondary derivation by root modification and metathesis; (iii) simple derivation by using patterns for deriving agents, patients, action and state nouns, abstract nouns of quality, nouns of frequency, nouns of manner, nouns of place and times, tool names, occupations, disease names, diminutives, onomatopoeia and many others; (iv) back formation where verbs are derived from nouns; (v) expanding derived forms (vi) metaphorical use of words; (vii) adding new meanings to commonly used words such as طائر، سرب، يسار، جناح سياسي، تيار سياسي، رتل عسكري ،ات; (viii) reviving old words; (ix) using explanatory phrases rather than single word equivalents; (x) loan words from other languages; (xi) loan words with partial Arabization; (xii) loan words with phonetic Arabization; and (xiii) derivation from loan words.

Many participants believe that it is impossible to translate specialized references and journal articles published in English. This is another misconception. If countries like Armenia, Ukraine, Turkey, Korea and Japan can keep up with the latest developments and can publish and translate specialized material into their native

languages, why cannot Arab countries, that have 300 million inhabitants, do the same thing? In the early 20th century, Ataturk Romanized the Turkish alphabet and since then, the Turks have been writing books using the new alphabet.

Throughout the 20th century, there have been many individual Arabization and translation efforts, but in the latest decade, new collective efforts have appeared that seek the revival of translation in the Arab World such as The Arab Organization for Translation (AOT), Arabization of Health Sciences Network (AHSN), World Arab Translators' Association (WATA) and others.

7. Conclusions

It can be concluded from the findings of the present study that Arabic is facing a serious threat by the dominance of English at higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia. The inferior role of Arabic as a medium of instruction in higher institutions in Saudi Arabia is heightened by the lack of language planning and linguistic policies that protect, develop and promote the Arabic language, by the inadequate Arabicization efforts, and by the inadequacy of technical books translated and published in Arabic.

To alleviate the dominance of the English language in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia, the Saudi government needs to establish a new Arabic language policy and establish new strategies for protecting and developing the Arabic language. College students need to be informed of the status of Arabic among other world languages. Arabic language courses need to be updated and students' ability to translate and coin Arabic technical terms, to enable authors to write books and research papers in Arabic need to be developed.

Saudi higher educational policies need to be geared towards supporting Arabic. All students in all colleges should take a required course in Arabization as part of the university requirements. Students need to be taught English prefixes, suffixes and roots and their Arabic equivalents. They should be required to learn Arabic technical terms together with their English equivalents as it is the case in other countries such as Greece. In college Arabic language courses, students need to study the Arabic derivational patterns and need to be introduced to terminology databanks and online specialized dictionaries. Allowing graduate students to write their projects and theses in Arabic and requiring them to append An English-Arabic glossary to theses.

Arabic publications in science, technology, medicine can be promoted by requiring that as part of faculty promotion requirements. A consortium of translation centers and organizations in Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries can be established and made available on the Internet. Arabization and translation journals can be publicized. Translation of technical English books into Arabic can be promoted, and finished higher if a team of specialist works on a single book, each translating one chapter only, rather than a single translator of the whole book.

Specialized English-Arabic dictionaries and terminology databanks need to be continually updated by a team of lexicographers or publishers. Electronic versions of Arabic specialized dictionaries need to mad available online. Emphasizing use of the Arabic language by organizations, and at conferences. The media can play a major role in promoting the Arabization and translation industries.

Specialized electronic databases for Arabic research similar to Medline, ERIC, AGRICOLA and ECONOLIT can be established. Forming a consortium of university libraries, research centers to enable students and researchers to access Arabic specialized material and publications. Arab scholars can make use of other countries' experience in translating English references and article (such as Japan, Korea, China, Russia, Greece and others).

Finally, the protection, development and promotion of the Arabic language needs a directive to be issued and activated by the Saudi government. Such a directive for enabling and protecting the Arabic language was issued by the Syrian government in 2007. A similar directive was issued by the UAE government for combating the dominance of the English language and mandating use of Arabic in correspondence, reports, communication in ministries, companies, and higher education institutions.

Surveying college students' attitudes towards using English and Arabic at higher education institutions in Arab countries in general and Saudi Arabia in particular every 10 years or so is highly recommended to observe new trends and changes in views and factors affecting those views and watch for any threats that may affect the status of Arabic in its birth place, Saudi Arabia.

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Appendix

Name: ---------------------------------- Major: ---------------------- Level: ------------

1. How do you view the status of English and Arabic in Saudi Arabia?

   ----

2. Which is more appropriate as a medium of instruction at the university level English or Arabic?

   ----

3. In which colleges and majors should English be used?

   ----

4. In which colleges and majors should Arabic be used?

   ----

5. Give at least 3 scientific & technological reasons for favoring English as a medium of instruction at the university level?

   ----

6. Give at least 3 educational reasons for favoring English as a medium of instruction at the university level?

   ----

7. Give at least 3 social reasons for favoring English as a medium of instruction at the university level?

   ----

8. Give at least 3 reasons related to the labor market for favoring English as a medium of instruction at the university level?

   ----

9. What is your role in developing/retaining the status of the Arabic language?

Creating an Authentic EFL Learning Environment to Enhance Student Motivation to Study English

Wen-chi Vivian Wu and Pin-hsiang Natalie Wu
Chien-kuo Technology University, Taiwan

Bio Data:

Dr. Wen-chi Vivian Wu (corresponding) is an assistant professor currently teaching at the Department of Applied Foreign Languages of Chien-kuo Technology University in Taiwan. Her research Interests include CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) and EFL Learning Environment. She is enthusiastic in combining language classroom with technology.

Dr. Pin-hsiang Natalie Wu is an assistant professor presently teaching at the Department of Applied Foreign Languages of Chien-kuo Technology University in Taiwan. She has been involved in British and American literature teaching, and also language teaching for many years. Her research interests include British and American literature and teaching literature. She is now bringing more student-centered activities into the classroom to motivate students for their love for literature.

Abstract

English in Taiwan, just like the majority of countries in Asia, is treated as a subject for study rather than as a living language to be spoken in daily conversation. Therefore, the EFL classroom context is very different from a natural ESL learning environment. The lack of a surrounding community of English speakers outside the classroom increases the challenge for EFL instructors (Parker, 1995). Pèrez (2004) claimed that the opportunity for communication in authentic situations and settings is a major factor for second-language acquisition by adults. Another important determinant of language learning achievement is motivation (Dornyei, 1994). Chang and Shu (2000) also claimed that there is a positive relationship between the learning environment and student motivation, stating that a good learning environment helps to improve the learning outcomes, and inspires and boosts the learning spirit.

This empirical study, using quantitative methodology, explored the perceptions of students at a Taiwanese technical university concerning its EFL learning environment in three aspects: the physical environment, instructional arrangements, and social interaction. The study also examined the relationship between the learning context and student motivation. Quantitative data revealed that the EFL environment in the three aspects was considered by students to be an obstacle to their learning, and that student motivation positively correlated with the learning environment. The paper concludes with recommendations by the researchers for improving practice.

Creating an optimal EFL learning environment - the key to successful second language acquisition

People around the world need to be able to communicate with each other as never before for business, social, and academic purposes as a result of globalization. Trade, ideas, knowledge, and technology flow from place to place, and a common language is essential to maintaining and improving the stream of communication (Nwaila, 1997). Since Taiwan is in a region of Asian economic center, proficiency in the English language has been a mark of learning, social status, and success (Kim, 2002).

However, as in the majority of Asian countries, English in Taiwan is taught in English as Foreign (EFL) classes where it is treated as a subject to be studied study rather than as a living language to speak. The lack of a surrounding community of English speakers outside the classroom increases the challenge for EFL instructors immensely (Parker, Heitzman, Fjerstad, Babbs, & Cohen, 1995) as it is suggested that the opportunity for communication in authentic situations and settings, especially with native speakers, is a major factor for second-language acquisition by adults (Spolsky, 1989). This may explain why so many popular EFL programs and foreign language teaching methods developed over the past half century have tried to replicate the target language environment through immersion camps and programs or bilingual school curricula (Lapkin, Swain, & Shapson, 1990).

Another crisis resulting from insufficient student interaction with native English speakers is deteriorating English proficiency (Tung, 1984), demonstrated by Taiwan's low ranking in both TOEFL (Test of English as Foreign Language) and TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication). Tung further pointed out that the difference in these scores can be explained by the environment of English-language usage surrounding students. In 2003-2004, Taiwan was tenth in computer-based total mean scores on TOEFL in Southeast Asia beating only Cambodia, North Korea, Thailand, and Japan (ETS, 2004). The total mean score for Taiwan was 203, well below the world mean score of 215. The highest score for Asia was earned by Singapore, at 252 (ETS, 2004). In 2002-2003, Taiwan was 18th from the bottom worldwide and sixth from the bottom in Asia TOEIC (Chang, 2005). On both tests, students from countries where English is a part of everyday life like Singapore, Philippine, or Hong Kong score consistently 20 to 40 points higher than do Taiwanese students.

Another important determinant of language learning achievement is motivation

(Dornyei, 1994). Dornyei defined motivation as the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language. Su (2003), Sue (2004), and Rueda and Chen (2005) used references to recent studies to advocate stimulating student motivation in order to increase their interest and achievement. These studies showed that "students with greater second/foreign language learning motivation, in most cases, receive higher grades and achieve better proficiency in the target language" (Rueda & Chen, 2005, p. 210). Hsieh (2002) claimed that there is a positive relationship between the learning environment and student motivation. Chang and Shu (2000) echo Hsieh's idea by stating the following four guiding principles to define an excellent learning environment:

1. A good learning environment helps to improve the learning outcome.

2. A good environment provides the learner with care and support.

3. A good learning environment inspires and boosts the learning spirit.

4. A good learning environment cultivates responsibility in the learner (p. 34).

In addition, Chang (1999) and Dornyei (1990) also found second-language motivation strongly tied to the contest or where the language is learned. Labrie and Clement (1986) did support the assumption that low learning proficiency is the result of the lack of a true immersion or an authentic environment, which, in turns, results in lack of commitment of Taiwanese students to active learning with the associated motivation and attitude for learning English. That is the reason why a majority of students in Taiwan attribute their low motivation to study English to the lack of an authentic learning environment.

Various definitions of the learning environment exist in the literature, but many center around the learner's situation while undergoing the process of learning. Smith, Neisworth, and Greer (1978) defined the learning environment as having five dimensions:

1. *Physical environment*, architecture, design, and arrangement considerations for the school and particularly the instructional space.

2. *Instructional arrangements*, curriculum content and characteristics, teaching method, and materials and media for instruction.

3. *Social situation*, teacher-child, child-child, interactions, group dynamics, classroom, school, and community social aspects.

4. *Evaluation instruments and evaluative practices*, placement, summative, and formative devices and procedures used by school psychologists and others.

5. *Supportive services*, in-school (health, speech, counseling) and out-of-school (employment counseling, follow-up) facilities (p. 11).

The first three dimensions are directly related to students learning course content. Therefore, this study focuses on the first three dimensions only due to the limits of time available.

Understanding and optimizing the learning environment of EFL learners in Taiwan has been recognized by Taiwan's Ministry of Education in the Challenging 2008 National Development Plan to establish an English-speaking environment. However, the literature examining the impact of learning environment on learner motivation to study English and the relationship between both is relatively scarce (Chang, 1999). This study aimed to investigate individual elements in the learning environment of a technical university in Taiwan and their relationships with learner motivation. The elements of the EFL learning environment most easily controlled, and most often encountered, by those participating in the study were closely examined. Those elements included the physical environment, the instructional arrangements, and the social interaction of the members of the environment.

Methodology

Population and Sample

The target population consisted of 3,589 non-English major freshman students required to take English in EFL classes at one private technical university - Chienkuo Technology University (CTU) in central Taiwan. Following the sample size recommendations of Kreijcie and Morgan (1970), the sample for the study was 593 freshman students selected from the population using a two-stage random sampling procedure, combining cluster sampling and random sampling. After the sample was identified, the researcher delivered the study introduction letter to the faculty instructors of the classes containing students chosen for the sample, requesting these faculty members to have their students to complete the study survey during class time. The letter assured participants of their confidentiality and their participation was voluntary. In the first stage, the researcher selected nine, nine, and eight classes, respectively, from the day, evening, and weekend schools using a table of random

numbers. In the second stage, 1,233 students in the selected 26 classes were numbered, and a table of random numbers was used to select 593 students (from the 26 classes) for the sample. Out of the sampled participants, 571 responded, resulting in a response rate of 96.3%.

Instrumentation

The researcher created a quantitative data collection instrument based on two existing survey tools, including Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery and the California Foreign Language Project and related literature. The instrument is divided into two major sections with a total 54 survey items. Sections A - motivation for learning English with 20 items asked students how motivated they were to study English, and Section B with 34 items regards characteristics of the EFL learning environment (see Appendix 1).

The 34 question items in Section B were grouped into three categories - physical environment, instrumental arrangements, and social interaction - and divided into two separate questions for each question item. The first question per item asked students about how much each item was present in their environment (existence) using a five-point Likert scale ranged from "1" indicating *not at all* to "5" indicating *very strongly*. The second question asked how important (importance) this item was to their learning by using the same five-point Likert scale.

Data analysis

The researchers used the software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze the quantitative data. The Cronbach's Alpha value for this survey was .90, which is considerably higher compared to a minimum required value of .70. Mean score for Section A was calculated to measure student motivation. A series of dependent *t* tests was computed to determine whether the difference between existence and importance reached the significant level in the three separate categories of the learning environment - physical environment, instructional arraignments, and social interaction. If the mean score for existence was higher than that of the score for importance, or vice-versa, and reached the significance level of .05, the statistics allowed a determination of which variable was an incentive or an obstacle. By using Pearson's *r* coefficient, the association between motivation and learning environment was calculated to determine how strongly they were related to each other and whether

that correlation was positive or negative.

Results

Descriptive statistics revealed that students had a low motivation with a mean score of 2.88 ($M = 2.88$) where 3.0 indicates a neutral impression of their own motivation. The combined mean for these three environmental factors was ($M = 2.90$), which was low to neutral. Student respondent perceptions regarding the extent that environmental factors were present in their school environment (in existence) included three issues - physical, instructional, and social environment. The combined mean for these three environmental factors was ($M = 2.90$), which was low-moderate. For the instructional environment as a separate issue of the environment, the mean ($M = 2.96$) was higher than for both the physical ($M = 2.83$) and social environment ($M = 2.84$), indicating that the student respondents were more aware of instruction as an EFL environment factor than were the physical or social environment. Finally, respondents rated the importance of the overall environment factors ($M = 3.45$) as higher than the students perceived factors actually being in existence ($M = 2.90$) in their EFL environment. Respondents perceived both the physical environmental ($M = 3.48$) and instruction environment factors ($M = 3.48$) as more important than the social environment factors ($M = 3.37$), displayed in Table1.

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations for Motivation and Learning Environment

Learning Factors		Mean	SD
Motivation	Motivation (items 1-20)	3.24	.70
Learning Environment – Existence	Physical Environment (items 1-8)	2.83	.67
	Instructional Arrangements (items 9-25)	2.96	.62
	Social Interaction (items 26-34)	2.84	.71
	General Environment (items 1-34)	2.90	.60
Learning Environment – Importance	Physical Environment (items 1-8)	3.48	.64
	Instructional Arrangements (items 9-25)	3.48	.65
	Social Interaction (items 26-34)	3.37	.76
	General Environment (items 1-34)	3.45	.64

Inferential statistics showed the overall learning environment was perceived by the students as an obstacle because the mean score for existence (M = 2.90) was lower than the mean score for importance (M = 3.45), and reached the significance level of .05, *t* (498) = -16.82, *p* = .000. The first dependent-sample *t* test was performed to determine if the physical environment was perceived to be an obstacle or an incentive. Because the mean difference for the physical environment between its existence and importance was found, and since the difference reached the significant level, *t* (498) = -16.82, *p* = .000, physical environment was considered by the students as an obstacle. The second *t* test was used to determine whether the instructional arrangement was perceived to be an obstacle or an incentive, and the third *t* test was for the social interaction. Both the instructional arrangement and the social interaction were also considered as obstacles with *t* (498) = -14.87, p = .000, for instruction arrangement, and *t* (498) = -13.92, *p* = .000 for social interaction, displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Dependent-sample t Tests for Mean Difference between the Existence and Importance based on the Three Dimensions in the Environment

Factors	*Mean*	*SD*	*Min.*	*Max.*	Difference	*t*	*df*	*p*	*Effect Size*
Env._Ex._I	2.83	.67	1.00	5.00	Env._Ex._I-	-16.82*	498	.000	.75
Env._Im._I	3.48	.64	1.25	5.00	Env._Im._I				
Env._Ex._II	2.96	.62	1.00	4.71	Env._Ex._II-	-14.87*	498	.000	.67
Env._Im._II	3.48	.65	1.35	5.00	Env._Im._II				
Env._Ex._III	2.84	.71	1.00	4.89	Env._Ex._III-	-13.92*	498	.000	.62
Env._Im._III	3.37	.76	1.00	5.00	Env._Im._III				

* *p* < .05 (2-tailed); Env._Ex._I: Physical Environment-Existence; Env._Ex._II: Instructional Environment-Existence; Env._Ex._III: Social Environment-Existence; Env._Im._I: Physical Environment-Importance; Env._Im._II: Instructional Environment-Importance; Env._Im._III: Social Environment-Importance.

A positive relationship existed between motivation and overall learning at the .01 level. Significant correlations at the .01 level were also found between motivation and each of the issues - existence and importance in the environment, displayed in Table 3.

Table 3

Summary of Correlations among the Four Learning Factors

	Motivation	Environment (Existence)	Environment (Importance)
Motivation	1.000		
Environment (Existence)	.250**	1.000	
Environment (Importance)	.573**	.236**	1.000

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

Discussion

The most important conclusion drawn from this study was that CTU students considered the overall EFL environment to be an obstacle to their learning. While social interaction was considered to have the least negative impact on their proficiency, the social aspect of the learning environment was not perceived as a learning facilitator. Changing learning environment elements that are under the school's control will show students that technical universities are working to meet their needs and support students' optimum learning success. Improving the environment would improve student motivation and thereby student proficiency and achievement. Symbols of institutional and community commitment to an academic program have a strong influence on the perceptions of students, their motivation, and their achievement outcomes. These symbols need to be enhanced to affect student motivation.

Students have to want to learn, especially when they face the disadvantage of being behind before they begin. Hsieh (2002) found that improving the overall EFL environment improves student motivation: giving students what they need, and letting them know about it, spurs them to do more on their own. If students do not see a link to their own efficacy, they do not consider such an activity an "opportunity" to be used in their learning. Therefore, they do not feel motivated to use the tools and resources provided or to understand their advantages fully. Only in seeing their own improvement in speaking and listening will they understand the benefits of the tools

they used to improve.

Without understanding which specific skills they should be learning, students take the path of least resistance. When not confronted by a need to use English outside the classroom on a daily basis, it is easy to see the inside of the room as the only place to speak English. Students and instructors may remember why they want to learn English - to travel, get a job, or to graduate - but they find the motivations that keep challenging them - reading magazines, watching films, talking with friends - convenient only within the bounds of the classroom. When the material is considered to be difficult to access and outside of the place of learning, students fail to recognize their greatest motivational learning tool, using English. By redefining the sense of which places and times are included in the English-learning environment, CTU could help instructors and students redefine their concept of "authentic" interaction. If students are enabled to see the usage of English as a necessary part of an authentic environment, even if accuracy is not the ultimate goal, students will understand that they can improve the environment just by using English, and teachers would not feel so bound by the textbook and traditional teaching methods. In turn, EFL English learners at CTU would understand that the entire world and the entire day is their classroom.

Recommendations for improving practice

The recommendations emerging from the study results and conclusions are as follows:

1. The EFL learning environment at a technical university has a powerful effect on learning motivation and perceived relevance of learning English, but students and the school can avoid learning contexts that decrease student motivation by using available resources and can mitigate them by hiring more teachers, generating peer interaction, adding multimedia equipment to all classrooms, or making sure the language lab is staffed.

2. Installing modern multimedia in all classrooms, especially overhead-mounted computer projectors and speakers, will arouse all CTU students' interest to learn English.

3. Before instructors can apply the techniques of cooperative and communicative learning, such as scaffolding, they must ensure that the activities fall within their own and students' comfort zones. Students need

to understand the boundaries, the goals, and expectations of the task in order to stay on track and produce quality work. This will help teachers control small groups, pair work, or discussions in large-group settings and help students understand the point of the exercise. Faculty needs to engage students in dialogue about the changing global society and the role of English language in it.

4. Both teachers and students need to be taught how to set and meet learning goals. While the GEPT remains an important part of the curriculum and instrumental motivation, individualized learning goals and integrative motivation also must be addressed.

5. The English Corner can provide a valuable resource if students can be enticed into participating in a nurturing setting. If teachers make one visit mandatory per semester, the students will have a reason to visit with a friend, making it less intimidating. Also, the English Corner needs to be staffed by a faculty member or an upper-class English major. Including alternate, non-academic locations and activities in the English Corner program, such as restaurants, arcades, karaoke, or bowling, would keep the situation low-pressure and help students understand the more casual uses of English.

6. The greatest desire of students was to have more contact with native speakers. If instructors are not able to bring foreigners to the classroom, they could assign students to conduct their own interviews with foreigners living in the community. There is also the option of using technology to allow two-way audio and video conferencing with native English speakers. The students will need some basic guidance in finding native speakers, and teachers can direct them to the locations where students may be the most likely to encounter them, such as department stores, churches, and expatriate pubs and restaurants. Technical institutions that want to make progress need to increase the availability of native English language speakers in their campus community.

7. Including opportunities for fun extracurricular activities is another recommendation meant to encourage students to use English in non-academic settings. Inviting foreign bands, English language speakers, or

hosting English language plays, karaoke, or films on a regular basis will attract students looking for fun and a chance to practice their English.

8. A smaller class with a proper student-to-teacher ratio and expanding the hours of English classes in a daily schedule will create a more comfortable physical situation as well as allow teachers longer blocks of time to attempt more CLT and cooperative teaching methods.

9. By offering grade-based or economic-based incentives for participation in English-language activities, CTU can boost student motivation by helping them demonstrate the link between efficacy and reward. Extra credit, scholarships for passing the GEPT, or reimbursement for exchange-student expenses would help fuel student motivation.

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Perceptions of the Motivation and the Learning Environment—A Survey for EFL Students in Taiwan

This survey asks your opinions about your study of English as a Foreign Language. Your opinions are important to help educators understand how to improve EFL programs. The survey should take about 15 minutes to complete. Thank you for contributing to this educational research.

A. Motivation for Learning English

Directions: Please circle the number at the right of each question to indicate your opinion suing the following guide.

Not at All	Very Little	Moderately	Strongly	Very Strongly
1	2	3	4	5

How motivated are you to study English to…

1. Get a job that requires English?	1 2 3 4 5
2. Increase your chances of future career advancement?	1 2 3 4 5
3. Travel to foreign lands where English is an essential tool for communication?	1 2 3 4 5
4. Pass English-related tests (i.e., GEPT, TOEFL, TOEIC)?	1 2 3 4 5
5. Get a good grade that will benefit your grade-point average?	1 2 3 4 5
6. Get through the required course?	1 2 3 4 5
7. Become a more knowledgeable person?	1 2 3 4 5
8. Meet your family's expectations?	1 2 3 4 5
9. Be competitive with others in varied fields?	1 2 3 4 5
10. Earn social respect of peers who have not yet mastered English?	1 2 3 4 5
11. Satisfy your own interest in English?	1 2 3 4 5
12. Establish relationships on the Internet with more and different people?	1 2 3 4 5
13. Be included in relationships with others who use English?	1 2 3 4 5
14. Be part of the global society that uses English?	1 2 3 4 5
15. Understand and appreciate another culture by reading literature in its original	1 2 3 4 5

language?	
16. Understand the news from native English-speakers' perspective?	1 2 3 4 5
17. Learn more about people who speak English?	1 2 3 4 5
18. Meet and communicate with English-speaking foreigners?	1 2 3 4 5
19. Be proficient in English?	1 2 3 4 5
20. Satisfy your desire to learn as much as English as you can?	1 2 3 4 5

B. Learning Environment in EFL

Directions: Please circle one number at right of each statement to indicate your opinion. Be sure to answer both columns for each statement.

For example, if your teacher requires you to listen to the news in English once a week, for the statement "Listening to English-language radio," you may rate the first column as a "5." But, if you don't like listening to the news in English and do not think it is important, you might rate it as a "1" for the second column.

Not at All	Very Little	Moderately	Highly	Very Highly
1	2	3	4	5

	How much is each of the following a part of your EFL Program?	How important is each of the following to your learning in the EFL Program?
1. A comfortable setting in the classroom (i.e., good lighting/air conditioning)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2. Flexible classroom furnishings to allow small-group work	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3. Modern classrooms and buildings	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
4. A small enough student-to-teacher ratio to allow teachers and students to become well acquainted	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
5. A place on campus to practice English outside of class time	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

6. A language lab with audio/visual materials for independent study	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
7. Ample space for multiple class-time activities	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
8. Bilingual signs and English learning bulletin board on campus	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
9. A practical and useful curriculum for future career development	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
10. A curriculum focused on meeting the needs of daily life	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
11. A variety of teaching activities for learning	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
12. My teachers' instruction focused on two-way communication	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
13. Teachers' use of authentic, real-life related materials for learning	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
14. Opportunities to talk with native English speakers	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
15. Time to practice English with my peers in class	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
16. The use of real-world, current-affairs learning materials	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
17. Commercial movies/TV in English	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
18. A focus on students' real-life issues in English conversation	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
19. Teachers' introduction to Western cultures in class	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
20. The use of current computer and teaching technologies	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
21. Quality printed-text materials in English	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
22. Learning strategies taught by teachers to make individual mastery of English easier	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
23. Regular in-class drill and practice	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
24. Regular translation of English into Mandarin	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
25. Requirement for students to engage in English conversation during most classes	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
26. Class activities suggested by the students	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
27. Opportunities to actually use English in my community	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
28. My teacher's awareness of my level of	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

use		
29. Small-group discussion to accomplish English-learning tasks	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
30. Peer tutoring	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
31. My peers' positive attitudes toward studying English	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
32. My teacher's enthusiasm for teaching English	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
33. Support for EFL from campus administration	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
34. Small-group tasks focused on collaboration among members	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Rethinking the Objectives of Teaching English in Asia

Z. N. Patil
The English and Foreign Languages University, India

Abstract

Language teaching methodology has been changing over a period of time. The teacher-centered approach is gradually giving way to learner-centered approach. However, even today in many classrooms, the teacher remains a donor of knowledge and corrector of learner errors. Students are required to memorize irrelevant and trivial details such as definitions of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc. The goal of English language teaching in such classrooms is to develop meta-linguistic and literary competence in the learner. Accuracy is prioritized over confidence building, fluency, appropriateness and general communicative competence. Classroom practices emphasize rote learning and examinations test memory rather than understanding and use of the English language in real life situations. Consequently, several students develop fear complex, which in several cases leads to suicides. Therefore, there is an urgent need to rethink the objectives of teaching English as a second and foreign language. The present paper attempts to explain how it is imperative to place confidence building, fluency and appropriateness before accuracy, and narrates the author's personal views on this issue.

Keywords: priorities, confidence, appropriateness, accuracy, fluency

Background: Before I tell you what I want to tell you

Just before the start of the new academic year, an organization called PACE hosted an annual seminar for teachers in New Delhi where hundreds of teachers and some well-known speakers participated in a brainstorming session. In the past only teachers were invited to this event. This year eminent speakers were invited to conduct interesting motivational sessions. In view of the disturbing trend of examination stress taking serious toll on student life, the organization collaborated with a well-known hospital named Apollo Hospital to present a talk to help teachers identify and address this grave issue. A famous medical consultant delivered a talk on "A teacher's role in eliminating student stress".

Tragically, examination time means suicide season. Recently, on a particular day at least six students across India committed suicide. Why did these youngsters commit suicide? The reasons were varied, but a common factor was classroom related and examination related stress. According to estimates, five thousand eight hundred fifty seven students committed suicide in 2006. This means that sixteen students committed suicide ever day. This is a hocking figure, which should prompt us to reflect upon the nature of interaction in our classrooms and the type of tests and examinations we have at the end of the year.

It seems that suicides or suicidal tendencies among students are related to pedagogical practices and examination patterns. There is evidence to suggest that suicides or suicidal attempts tend to skyrocket before examinations. In a study conducted in 2007 in New Delhi, it was found that three hundred students attempted suicides immediately before the commencement of the board examinations. The same study reported that seventy per cent or two thirds of students preparing for examinations showed symptoms of examination related disorders. This clearly indicates that there is something terribly wrong with the examination system, which determines classroom pedagogy to a large extent.

The board examination tests rote learning, putting tremendous pressure on students to memorize vast amounts of data such as definitions of parts of speech, rules for sentence formation, indirect narration, passive construction, and so on. As a result, students take 'memory pills'. The point here is that the amount of detail expected to be studied at this stage of learning is entirely unnecessary and defeats any attempt at developing communicative and creative skills. I would like to bring to your notice that it is because of the examination system and patterns that most teachers dole out

vast amounts of trivial and irrelevant detail.

Our school learning system does not make learning interesting or a pleasure. On the contrary, it tortures our children endlessly. Students are expected to master huge heaps of data presented in a dry fashion. Moreover, the context, which helps us form associations for memorizing, or more accurately, remembering things, is absent. Sadly, classroom methodology and examination patterns strike at children's self worth and belief I themselves. Surprisingly, a teacher's performance is evaluated on the basis of her students' performance in the board examinations and not by her accomplishment in making students understand, let alone enjoy, what is being taught.

The malady of the present day scenario of English language teaching can be summed up in the following words: overemphasis on (1) rote learning of trivial and irrelevant data, (2) meta-linguistic and literary competence at the neglect of communicative competence, and (3) accuracy at the expense of fluency and appropriateness. Hence it is imperative to rethink the content, the methodology, and above all, the objectives of the English language education in Asia. It is in this context that I would like to discuss my priorities.

Introduction: Let me tell you what I am going to tell you

When I was a school and college student, my English teachers would correct my grammar and spelling errors indefatigably. They would constantly bring home the point that accuracy was of top importance. Accordingly, I labored hard to perfect my spelling and grammar. Happily, my hard work paid dividends. Finally, I could spell words correctly, use punctuation adeptly, and produce sentences accurately. My teachers rewarded me with excellent grades and certificates, which I have preserved with great pride till date. Honestly, I am indebted to my teachers for my lexical, phonological and grammatical competence. However, later I realized that grammaticality alone was not sufficient. The moment I started using English in real life situations, I found my grammatical competence embarrassingly inadequate to communicate effectively and efficiently. To my dismay, my bookish English occasionally made me a butt of ridicule. On completing my Masters in English I was recruited as a lecturer in English in a college and began to deliver my wares. Gradually, I started sorting out my objectives of teaching English to my students. Subsequently, I laid down the agenda for myself: confidence building, fluency,

appropriateness, and accuracy. As I gained more teaching experience, my adherence to this sequence strengthened. Thereafter, this intuitive claim got converted into a firm conviction when I started teaching in Vietnam. Since then I have made it my mission to enable my students to use English confidently, appropriately and accurately. The order is, of course, significant. Now let me take up these priorities one at a time.

Discussion: Let me tell you

The first occupant on the agenda is *confidence building*. Let me start with my claim that most students in some Asian countries (especially in Japan) are diffident when it comes to using English. Understandably, the biggest challenge for a teacher of English in such countries is to help students overcome shyness, inhibitions and nervousness. As we know, in Asian countries English is either a foreign language or a second language. To use the well-known three-circle metaphor (Kachru, 1992), we do not belong to the inner circle; some of us are in the outer circle and some in the expanding circle. Most of us do not get opportunities to hear and speak English. Consequently, unlike people who fall within the inner circle, we are primarily visual learners, not auditory learners. Incidentally, I will be drawing my examples from Vietnam and Japan for two reasons. First, I have taught English to pre-service diplomats and sea- port officers in Vietnam for three years, and to pre-university and university students in Japan for the same length of period. Secondly, unlike in India, in these countries English is a foreign language and exposure to English is very minimal. Families do not speak English at home; employees do not use English in the office, at the station, at the post office, and even at the airport, etc. The only place where English has some privilege is the English classroom. And even here teachers and students use Vietnamese, Japanese or whatever the native language is quite extensively. By the way, this is not to deny the facilitating impact of the use of the first language in an English class. In fact, I personally acknowledge and endorse the utility of bilingual technique in second and foreign language classes. Nevertheless, there is a difference between the use of the native language as a facilitating instrument and as an eclipsing substitute. If the teacher uses Japanese, for example, extensively, then s/he loses a potential opportunity to help students overcome inhibitions about English. The few occasions when learners have an opportunity to listen to some English are missed. Learners remain as shy at the exit level as they were at the entry

level. Another reason why Asian students, for example, do not try to speak English is their constant fear of instant teacher correction. As teachers we need to understand and remember the importance of indirect and positive feedback. Clearly, such feedback has encouraging effect on the learners and instills confidence in them. In short, the first priority in such a situation is to make the learner feel comfortable with the language and eradicate the fear of making mistakes. Once the learner is at ease with the teacher and the language, half the battle is won.

In this context, I would like to share with you an interesting observation about Vietnamese learners. I have observed that most Vietnamese students learn a lot of English in karaoke centers. When they sing karaoke, their enunciation of English words is amazingly accurate. They can approximate American or British pronunciation incredibly perfectly. A karaoke is one place where they get rid of their nervousness. There is no teacher to correct pronunciation and grammar. They feel absolutely comfortable with their peers and try to emulate their favorite singers with unbelievably close approximation to the original articulation, rhythm, pitch and pace.
I have always believed that learning how to speak English is similar to learning how to swim or how to ride a bicycle. I remember the day I first jumped into water to swim. I was scared of water and thought that I was going to drown; but gradually, I picked up confidence, gathered courage and began to move my arms and legs and was amazed at my progress in swimming. Speaking English is very similar to this. As you know, every big thing has a small beginning. The Ganges is a small stream at its origin in the Himalayas. Let our learners make a small beginning. Let them make mistakes. We need to break the ice, set the ball rolling. Only then can our students develop their English speaking skills. Let the learner take the initiative. This will not happen if the teacher explains rules of grammar and sentence structures in a mechanical and mindless manner. This will not happen as long as we teach English through Vietnamese, Japanese, Korean or Chinese, depriving our learners of invaluable opportunities of language practice in meaningful, relevant, realistic situations. This will not happen unless they themselves use the language in simulated situations. Can we become champion swimmers just by reading a dozen books on swimming? We want our learners to become expert swimmers, but we do not let them jump into the water. Instead, we spend hours after hours standing by the side of the swimming pool and explaining to them how to swim! How can our learners become confident Olympic swimmers if we do not let them walk into the pool? How can they

become champion cyclists if we do not allow them to pick up the bicycle, ride it, fall and rise a few times and then pedal it away? Our job as teachers is just to support them when they first ride a bicycle, just to give the bicycle a push and leave it and let it go. Confidence results from falling off and getting up, not from continuous support from the teacher and parasitic dependence on the part of the learner.

Teachers can instill, sustain, and increase self-confidence in the learners in various ways. Dornyei (2001) lists five strategies to help our learners in this respect:

- Teachers need to foster the view that competence is not a static condition but an ongoing process. Thus learners come to think that growth is gradual but sure.

- They need to provide regular experiences of success in the classroom.

- They need to give opportunities to the learners to contribute meaningfully. When students feel that they can contribute, they will feel more interested.

- They need to praise the learners for their contribution and their progress. An occasional word of encouragement will elevate their spirits and level of motivation. In this context, I would like to mention a custom prevalent among the citizens of Solomon Islands. They say that when these people want to cut a tree, they do not use any axe or saw to fell it; they gather around it and pelt curses and swear words. After a few days, the tree withers away and collapses. I think this custom has a lot to teach us.

- They need to make the classroom climate less stressful. Learning gains momentum when the classroom situation is relaxed, friendly and homely.

Now let me say a few words about *appropriateness*. Let me begin with the example of Japanese, which is widely known as one of the most difficult languages to gain pragmatic competence in. Many learners complain that though they have vast amounts of Japanese vocabulary and grammar, they cannot communicate effectively with native speakers. Let us assume that one's pronunciation is amazingly close to native accent and one's grammar without blemishes. Are these two competencies enough to ensure effective communication? Impeccable enunciation and grammatically sound sentences are, no doubt, important. However, phonological and grammatical competence alone cannot guarantee effective communication. In order to communicate in an acceptable manner in various social and interpersonal situations we need more than mere clear accent and accurate grammar. Rules of grammar are

necessary, but rules of use are essential. Let me cite some examples to substantiate the point.

Unfortunately, a certain gentleman's friend lost his mother. On hearing the sad news, he rushed to the bereaved friend to offer condolences. The following conversation is a transcript of what transpired between them:

Mr. A: I'm greatly shocked by the news. I couldn't believe my ears.

Mr. B: I'm deeply touched and overwhelmed by the spontaneous overflow of your powerful feelings of sympathy. Let me reiterate, I left no stone unturned, but as luck would have it, the hand that rocked my cradle kicked the bucket one score days ago. …. It was a nocturnal demise.

What do you think of Mr. B's language? Would you describe it as living English or bookish English? I do not think you would expect this kind of English in a friendly conversation, would you? Let us examine Mr. B's English. As you can see, its grammar is perfect and it is evidence of the idiomatic/lexical competence of the speaker. However, it is language without life in it. Let us analyze the utterances and talk about its highlights:

- overwhelmed by the spontaneous overflow of your sympathy
- reiterate
- left no stone unturned
- as bad luck would have it
- the hand that rocked my cradle
- kicked the bucket
- one score days ago
- nocturnal demise

In normal circumstances, people would use the following expressions:
- thanks for your feelings
- tell
- did whatever I cold
- unfortunately
- my mother
- passed away
- three weeks ago
- passed away at night/died in sleep

Mr. B's English is too ornate to express a sense of loss of a dear one. Instead, he could have said:

"I tried hard, but unfortunately I lost my mother three weeks ago. She passed way in sleep."

I remember another example, which is an anecdote. One day a snuff (powdered

tobacco taken into the nose by sniffing) addict was traveling by bus. After some time he got fidgety because he had left his snuff box at home. Luckily for him there was another snuff addict on the bus. He went over to the gentleman and said:

"Excuse me, sir. Would you mind if I inserted my digital extremities into your concavity and take a pinch of pulverized tobacco, which, on entering my nasal cavity, will cause a tickling sensation and a blissful titillation in my olfactory organ."

What a circuitous and roundabout way of making a simple request! I am sure you find this English funny and frozen. Now, let us gloss the highlights:

- digital extremities= finger tips
- pulverized tobacco= snuff; tobacco that is powdered into snuff
- nasal cavity= nose
- a tickling sensation and a blissful titillation= a sneeze and a feeling of relaxation that follows it
- olfactory organ= nose

The speaker could have said:

"May I have a pinch of snuff, please?"

An extensive vocabulary can be a powerful writing and speaking tool; however, it can also be misused, made to make others feel powerless. I would never use a five-dollar or a "hyaku yen" word where a fifty-cent or a "ju yen" word will do the job just as well or even better. Do we really need utilize when a three-letter word, use, will nicely suffice. In everyday situations do we really need risible when laughable is at hand? Bovine spongiform encephalopathy is a perfect expression, but is it worth sending our listeners/readers to a specialized, technical dictionary when we can express the idea through mad cow disease? It's an important question that we need to ask ourselves. On the other hand, we should not cheat our readers out of some important nuance of meaning that we have discovered in a word that is new to us. At some time we have to assume that our readers also have dictionaries. It's sometimes a tough line to draw—between being a pedantic, pretentious boor (Oh, there are three dandies!) and being a writer who can take full and efficient advantage of the multifarious (another one!) resources of the English language. As someone has said, the finest language is mostly made up of simple and unimposing words. There is no need to use a big word when a diminutive one will suffice.

The above illustrations throw light on the fundamental differences between living English and bookish English. The latter does not consider the factors (such as speaker-listener relationship characterized by 'solidarity principle' and 'power

principle', formal and informal nature of the occasion, etc.) that influence the choice of words and sentence types. On the other hand, living and appropriate English does take these factors into account. It is sensitive to the nature of occasion, speaker-hearer relationship, and topic. An informal, friendly interaction requires simple, easily decipherable English. Intimate relationship between speaker and hearer demands short sentences and simple words. An everyday topic needs non-technical, monosyllabic vocabulary. In other words, the degree of formality of English depends on the extent of formality of topic, occasion and speaker-hearer relationship. Any mismatch might lead to either humor or bitter feelings. Thus when we speak, we are all the time making choices at lexical, grammatical, and pragmatic levels. As teachers of English we need to sensitize our learners to the norms of appropriateness and acceptability of vocabulary, grammar, style and tone in various situations. Young learners learning a second or foreign language not only need to understand the grammar of the language but they also must learn language socialization. Learning how to speak, how to use different styles of communication in different contexts (casual, formal, etc.) is as important as, or perhaps more important than, learning the rules of grammar and spellings of words.

Finally, let us talk about *accuracy*. Let me make it clear what I mean by the term. When people talk about accuracy they usually think of it in terms of external norms-norms of British English, American English, and Australian English. They want their learners to emulate the so-called native accent in terms of minute but details such as (1) the deletion of the /r/ sound in words that appear in front of words beginning with consonantal sounds, and (2) aspiration of the /p/, /k/ and /t/ sounds. You will bear me out that these phonological nuances are communicatively irrelevant for a foreign or second language learner. They may be relevant to a learner who is aspiring to be an international pilot or an intelligence service worker. However, this does not mean that we can speak and write the way we want. Undeniably, there are aspects of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary, which need to be mastered for comfortable intelligibility. We Asians do not need to speak like the Americans and the Australians; but need to be understood by the Americans and Australians and indeed by fellow Asians.

We can talk about accuracy with reference to three broad categories: pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. As I mentioned earlier, I will draw examples from my experience of teaching English to Vietnamese, Japanese and Arab students.

Evidently, one major problem area for these students is accent. For example, most Vietnamese and Japanese learners do not articulate words clearly. Vietnamese learners tend to drop word-final sounds. For instance, they will pronounce the italicized words in the following sentence almost identically, as if they were homophones:

"Mr. Nguyen, why (/wai/) doesn't your wife (/wai/) try white (/wai/) wine (/wai/)?"

Whereas omission is a major problem with Vietnamese learners, substitution is a big problem with Japanese learners. For instance, there is a strong tendency among Japanese learners to replace /r/ with /l/, /v/ with /b/ and /f/ with /h/. As a result, it is very difficult to distinguish, for example, between "This is a grass house." and "This is a glass house." An Arab learner's problems are substitution and insertion of extra sounds. So, "pill" is articulated as "bill" and "text: is pronounced as "tekist". The pronunciation problems of the three groups of learners can be summarily illustrated with the help of the following single example:

"I'm going to dine with six friends. We'll have a pot of fried rice each."

An Arab learner will most probably say:

"I'm going to dine with sikis friends. We'll have a boat of fried rice each."

A Vietnamese learner will tend to say:

"I'm going to die with sick friends. We'll have a pot of rice each."

A Japanese learner will likely say:

"I'm going to dine with six hriends. We'll have a pot of flied lice each."

Another area is vocabulary. One case in point is the use of "come" and "go" in Vietnamese variety of English. In standard variety of English, "go" means moving to a place that is far from the speaker and the listener and "come" means moving to a place that is nearer to the hearer. For example, a student may say to his teacher: "May I come in, Sir?" and "Sir, may I go home now?" In the first case, the student is moving nearer to the teacher; in the second case, the student wants to move away from the teacher. This is the normal use in English. But, in Vietnamese variety of English, the use is reversed. The student usually says to the teacher who is in school with him, "Excuse me, Sir, I cannot go to school tomorrow. May I come back home now?" (Patil, 2002, pp. 14-16). Japanese speakers of English also tend to use these two verbs with reverse meanings

Let us look at one more example. Like the words "come" and "go" Vietnamese students use the words "bring" and "take" in a reverse way. In British English when I

bring something I carry it from another place to the place where the hearer is. Similarly, when I take something, I take it from where the hearer and I are to another place. But Vietnamese students use the two words in an exactly opposite way. As a teacher I often heard my students say: "Excuse me, teacher, I don't have this book at home. Can I bring it for a week, please?" and "I'm sorry, teacher, I forgot to take the book that I brought from you last week I'll take it tomorrow." Now, the important point here is: how do these readers interpret "come" and "go" and "bring" and "take" when they encounter them in a reading passage? Do they interpret them the English way or the Vietnamese way? My experience is that elementary and intermediate level Vietnamese learners of English interpret these words the Vietnamese way. They need to be told time and again that the usual meanings of "come" and "go" and "bring" and "take" are different.

Let us move on to grammar now. Here, mother tongue interference seems to be a major stumbling block. For example, Arabic does not have copula verb and so many Arab learners of English produce utterances such as "I student of Sultan Qaboos university Language Center." Vietnamese does not have relative pronouns; as a result, we encounter sentences such as "There are many children don't go to school." Japanese word order is subject + object + verb, and nouns do not have plural forms; consequently, we hear utterances like "I vegetable bought."

However, I think these grammar mistakes do not bother me so much as the pronunciation errors do. From the communication point of view it does not matter much whether the foreign language learner says, "I TV watch." or "I watch TV"; "I have two book" or "I have two books." "This is a girl beautiful." or "This is a beautiful girl." Communication is not affected in any serious way. But, there is certainly a communication problem when a Vietnamese learner wants to say he is going to dine, but says he is going to die; a Japanese learner wants to say he has got just two books, but says he has got just two bucks, and an Arab learner wants to say he bought a pear but says he bought a bear.

Conclusion: Let me tell you what I have told you

Before I conclude, let me record that the horizontal global spread of English and its vertical societal percolation is significantly altering its cultural composition. The language has been acquiring new formal properties and functional roles to be able to carry the connotations of its new cultural habitats. As a result, this formal

proliferation and functional diversification has been spurring scholars to challenge the traditional models and constructs, which have underpinned and informed the teaching of English for several decades. Consequently, the illusion that the English language is a monolithic entity is being interrogated. The framework that positions the native speaker at the center and the non-native speaker on the periphery is going short of subscribers today. The notions that traditional varieties are donors of norms to the new varieties, and that the latter are parasites of the former, will soon be things of the past. The utility (or futility?) of imported teaching materials is being questioned. The classroom practice that required the learner to emulate the native speaker is no longer in general use. In fact, with an increased understanding of the sociolinguistic realities and resultant reorientation of perspectives, a whole set of paradigms is going out of fashion, because not only are they inappropriate, they are also counter-productive. I agree with Honna and Takeshita's (1998) view that Japan's unrealistic goal has resulted into negative attitude to non-native varieties of English, linguistic inferiority complex, slow learning pace, and high failure rate. Evaluated against this background, Asia's current English teaching goals to transform its learners into speakers of American or British English fly in the face of pragmatism. Such goals are unrealistic unless we are training prospective air traffic controllers, pilots, and candidates for intelligence services. Instead, average learners would be satisfied with comfortable intelligibility of an easily understandable accent.

All this implies that the onus of giving added impetus to the process set in motion by journals like *World Englishes* and *Asian Englishes* lies with all of us. Admittedly, we need to do something about the still lingering propensity of the non-native speaker for native speaker English, and stop imposing foreign models on our learners, because it is the standard regional variety of English that most people in the region will want to use. Promoting our own respective standardized varieties of English as models for teaching and testing purposes should not be hard for we Asian teachers of English, because (i) many of us are in influential decision-making positions, and (ii) we are responsible for syllabus designing, materials production, teaching and evaluation. We know it better than anyone else that imported teaching materials with alien contexts, characters, cultural values, and assumptions are unsuitable, and traditional varieties of English as teaching and testing models are inappropriate for Asian learners (see Moritoshi 2001). No doubt, Asian speakers must develop a fluency in educated English, but we do not need native–speaker pronunciation as our target. I would say it

is as undesirable as it is unnecessary to expect Asian learners to emulate exact native—speaker accent. In contrast, we should train our learners to be educated speakers of their respective standardized regional variety. For example, I would be the last person to recommend spending large chunks of time on the teaching of aspiration, and weak forms, which characterize Received Pronunciation. Instead, I would suggest we spend more time on eradicating the confusion between /r/ and /l/ (leading to confusion between "room" and "loom", "grass house" and "glass house"), and /f/ and /h/ (resulting in confusion between "child food" and "childhood") which characterizes untutored variety of Japanese English and learner inter-language. In fact, adopting this perspective will lighten our learners' unnecessary burden of emulating the native speaker and will place them in a comfortable position. This view is already corroborated by Honna, et al's (cited in McMurray 2001) observation that Japanese students are happy with a standard Japanese accent of English.

Let me now summarize my views on how I have prioritized the objectives of teaching English as a second/foreign language. My general aim has always been to enable my learners to speak, read and write English fluently. To achieve this goal, I have to take them up the communication ladder. To make the climbing easy and comfortable I have to create opportunities for them to use English in meaningful, realistic, relevant situations. Games, role play activities, information gap tasks, brain storming exercises, riddles, puzzles, cartoons, anecdotes, jokes, songs, and other low-cost and easily available teaching materials come handy. Learners enjoy toying with the language, experimenting with it and gradually but surely feel confident and comfortable with the language. Once they have got rid of fear complex, they try to use English creatively. Since they are not scared of making mistakes, they try to use as much language as they can and in due course of time pick up more vocabulary and structures. Occasionally, I administer certain activities, which sensitize them to situational, social and interpersonal appropriateness and acceptability. I do not mind using examples from their native language. For example, how would they say "good morning" in Japanese to their classmates and to the principal of their school? Will they say, "Ohayo Gozaimasu" to their classmates and "Ohayo" to the principal? Will they say "Domo" (Thanks) to their teachers and "Domo Arigato Gozaimasu" (Thank you very much) to their schoolmates on the occasion of graduation ceremony? I think we should inculcate in our learners this sense of linguistic, paralinguistic and social appropriateness before we burden with doses of grammar. To sum up, we need to set

our priorities right: confidence, appropriateness, and correctness, all contributing to general fluency. Of course, this cannot happen unless we change examination patterns and accord priority to confidence and communication skills over grades, marks and grade points.

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