The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly
March 2009
Volume 11, Issue 1

Senior Editors:

Paul Robertson, Roger Nunn and Darren Lingley

ASIAN EFL JOURNAL — The EFL Professional's Written Forum

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Foreword

In this first issue of 2009, Dr. Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam provides our editorial opinion paper, *Issues and Insights for Promoting Agency, Voice and Subjecthood in Reading and Assessment.* Like many of our Ed. Op. pieces, this paper is a strong statement of one of our associate editor's educational values and beliefs. We hope that this will stimulate all of our readers to reconsider their approach to response-based reading assessment practices in EFL/ESL settings and to consider providing us with their own response to this paper for one of our next issues.

Zahra Akbari and M.H. Tahririan, in *Vocabulary Learning Strategies in an ESP Context: the case of para/medical English in Iran*, consider taxonomies of vocabulary learning strategies. They suggest that, "compared to other classification schemes, Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy seems to be the most exhaustive and has the advantage of being organized around an established scheme of language learning strategies." Their findings have led them to modify and develop Schmitt's taxonomy for ESP studies in their own local context. Akbari and Tahririan conclude that teachers and learners should try to integrate both knowledge-oriented and skill-oriented strategies.

In *Assessing the Level of English Language Exposure of Taiwanese College Students in Taiwan and the Philippines*, Carlo Magno and his research team examine the differences in English language exposure among Taiwanese college students living in Taiwan and in the Philippines. The results revealed that the Taiwanese in the Philippines showed significantly higher levels of English language exposure. As a result, they master a new array of social norms, attitudes and behaviours that enable them to become effective speakers of their second language.

Shu-Chen Huang (*The Efficacy of Setting Process Goals in Orienting EFL Learners to Attend to the Formal Aspects of Oral Production*) consider how process goals can facilitate the learning of foreign/second language reading and writing. She explores the effectiveness of setting form-focused process goals for EFL learners when they perform an oral communication task. Her analyses indicated that setting a form-focused process goal did *not* make a difference when learners performed the oral task. She interprets this to mean that the dominance of product goals in real-time communication made explicit attention to form difficult.

In *Reading-Writing Connection for EFL College Learners' Literacy Development*, Ming-Yueh Shen examines the impact of a reading-writing connection project on first-year college students taking a compulsory EFL course. A literacy environment that supported reading-writing connections involved explicit instruction of text structures and story elements, reflective reading journals (or reading logs) for each reading text, and creative writing based upon a story book of the learners' own choice of topic. She found that the learners' literacy developed not only linguistically but also in terms of critical thinking and personal growth. Her conclusion is that reading and writing should be integrated in teaching as they mutually reinforce skills.

Zifirdaus Adnan looks at an issue that has been of regular (but arguably insufficient) concern to the Asian EFL Journal. In *Some Potential Problems for Research Articles Written by Indonesian Academics when Submitted to International English Language Journals*, he examines feedback given to articles submitted by Indonesian Academics. To increase the acceptance rate of Indonesian manuscripts in international journals, he concludes pragmatically that emphasis should be put on teaching rhetorical structure that conforms to the observed requirements of many international journals. In the meantime, journals like AEJ clearly need to continue addressing the issue of intrinsic merit rather than implicit conformity to a limited model of rhetorical structure.

In *Foreign Language Speaking Assessment: Taiwanese College English Teachers' Scoring Performance in the Holistic and Analytic Rating Methods,* Ying-Ying Chuang investigates college English teachers' scoring performance using holistic and analytic rating methods. She finds that "comprehensibility" was of most concern, while "vocabulary/word choice" was not considered important. Significant differences were found in the factors of the teachers' age and academic major, but significant differences were not found in the in relation to teaching experience and rating training.

Mei-yun Ko and Tzu-fu Wang explore Taiwanese EFL teachers' perception of critical literacy in EFL teaching in *Introducing Critical Literacy to EFL Teaching: Three Taiwanese College Teachers' Conceptualization*. Participants considered the promotion of critical literacy in EFL teaching feasible and important but understood critical literacy differently. This qualitative study proposes a new perspective for students, teachers and researchers from which to re-think the implementation of critical literacy in ESL reading classes.

Use of the first language has often been debated in international journals. *Language*

Transfer as a Communication Strategy and a Language Learning Strategy in a Malaysian ESL Classroom by Shamala Paramasivam reports on the use of language transfer as a type of communication and language learning strategy. Paramasivam contributes to the debate by claiming that the first language can not only function as a strategy for communication but also as a means of enhancing second language learning.

Metadiscourse Knowledge and Use in Iranian EFL Writing by Shahla Simin and Manoochehr Tavangar highlights the need to consider the pragmatics of metadiscourse in EFL writing. The results of Simin and Tavangar's study allow them to claim that the more proficient learners are in a second language, the more they use metadiscourse markers. They also find that metadiscourse instruction has a positive effect on the correct use of metadiscourse markers.

In *Enhancing Oral Participation Across the Curriculum: Some Lessons from the EAP Classroom*, John Trent addresses the concern that efforts by universities to promote the use of the English language both inside and outside the classroom in Asia may be threatened by over-emphasizing the reticence of Asian learners. Trent challenges this alleged reticence in the Chinese context, providing evidence that learners in his study did not appear to have problems conceptualizing and adopting a variety of participation roles in classroom discussion, partly as a result of promoting learner agency. Trent suggests that these findings have implications for classroom practices in content classrooms traditionally dominated by a transmission mode of teaching.

Lixin Xiao, *in A New Paradigm of Teaching English in China: An Eclectic Model*, also addresses approaches to EFL in the Chinese context at university level. His proposed eclectic approach is also opposed to traditional teacher-centred practices. What Xiao identifies as the prevalent Chinese methods of teaching are complemented by his suggestions to cultivate learners' communicative competence as required by the revised curriculum for English majors.

Roger Nunn
Senior Associate Editor
Asian EFL Journal

Issues and Insights for Promoting Agency, Voice and Subjecthood in Reading and Assessment

Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam
The Petroleum Institute, Abu Dhabi, UAE

Bio Data:

Dr. Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam is Assistant Professor of Communication at the Petroleum Institute in Abu Dhabi. He also serves the Asian EFL Journal Editorial Board as Associate Editor. He has been a foreign language/ second language educator for over thirty years now and has taught English in India, Ethiopia, Thailand and Bahrain and Armenia. He holds an MA in English Literature from the University of Madras, India, an MA in (Linguistics) TESOL from the University of Surrey, U.K and a PhD in English Studies from the University of Nottingham, U.K. His research interests include response-centered reading/writing pedagogies, second language advocacy, narratives in language education, genre-based approaches to reading and writing in EAP.

Abstract
The paper invites teachers of reading to view response as a consequence of reading. By signposting a set of educational values and beliefs that underlie reading practices, the article urges the teachers of reading to factor in response in their assessment practices. It is believed that the theoretical issues and insights discussed in the article will strengthen the teachers' understanding of response-based assessment practices in EFL/ESL settings.

Introduction

At the outset, I wish to discuss the educational and social concerns that necessitate this study. It is hoped that the discussion will act as an awareness-building exercise and a point of departure for this research.

In an age that is characterized by a predominance of consumerism, electronic gadgetry, visual culture and information overload, reading appears to have declined as an educational practice. It saddens me to note that our university students read and write mainly in order to meet exam requirements and standards. As a result, they neither view reading as educating acts nor do they understand the sense of personal gratification it promotes. The current poverty of reading among our students points to the failure of a functional ability to read the world and their lives in a critical and

inter-connected way (Alter, 1996; Freire and Macedo, 1987; Sivasubramaniam, 2004).

A cause and effect analysis of our students' inability to read the world and the word alerts us to the following issues: a) a system of teaching and learning which looks upon getting through exams as its primary goal; b) denial of space and initiative for thinking, emotional engagement, response and reaction in the language classroom; c) socialization into a process of reading and writing that rewards correct grammar and comprehension instead of individual response, expressive use of language and tentativeness in thinking; d) a normative orientation to testing and assessment which ignores the qualitative aspects of reading processes.

Having explained how and why our students find it demotivating to read and write, the analysis further serves to explain the likely consequences of our students' incapacity to read the world. When students read and write just because they need to pass exams and graduate, it is unlikely that they will appreciate the value of what they read and write. It is also likely that such a situation will influence them to view literacy as a mechanical acquisition of reading and writing skills. Consequently, literacy fails to transcend its literal meaning for want of a meaning that will emphasize its educational and social nature. In short, our students become casualties of 'a cultural ignorance and categorical stupidity crucial to the silencing of all potentially critical voices' (Giroux in Freire and Macedo, 1987, p. 13).

It is argued that a mechanical acquisition of reading and writing skills does not presuppose that our students have acquired functional competencies in reading and writing. On the contrary, their mechanical acquisition of reading and writing skills points to a lack of capacity in them to understand how their world is affected by their reading and writing, and in turn how their reading and writing affect their world. In this respect, our students are illiterate even if they can read and write. This kind of illiteracy has far-reaching implications. It not only threatens the economic status of a society but also constitutes an injustice by preventing the illiterates from making decisions for themselves or from participating in the process of educational and social change. In short, it strikes at the foundations of democracy.

The issues and insights discussed so far can also help us understand the futility and unbeneficiality of reading research that has largely focused on referential meaning. Such a focus has entirely centred on bureaucratic efficiency aimed at a uniform curriculum for the majority of the students and a scheme of research and evaluation

based on recalls, think-alouds, cloze texts and multiple-choice questions in standardized texts. The overriding normative orientation has over-emphasized referential meaning as a basis for assessing how well readers approximate an ideal or an appropriate response. Instructional approaches that articulate schema-theoretic and text grammar models of reading were only concerned with cognitive frameworks directed at correct comprehension of school-based texts for the entire reading population (Barr, Kamil, Mosenthal and Pearson, 2000). While it might be argued that such investigative assessments yield valuable information, they can be criticized for their limitations in approximating non-academic reading situations and their insensitivity to differences among readers. However, reading assessment practices in EFL/ESL settings appear to center on one right reading, correct comprehension and grammatical correctness. Such practices not only deny subjecthood to students but also reduce them to statistical entities on spreadsheets. This does not augur well for their future educational development. Therefore, it is contingent upon us to view reading as a process of educational response and factor in response to reading as a mainstay in our reading assessment. A response-centered assessment of reading rejects the positivist notion that a text is a container of objective meaning and one, which can be marked correct or incorrect in any assessment. This is to suggest that the meanings constructed by the readers signpost 'the inferential processes of recovering prepositional attitudes and explicatures, deducing implicatures, trying out figurative interpretations, and creating a context in the attempt to make a text optimally relevant' (Mackenzie, 2002, p. 47). Thus, given their cultural backgrounds, their meanings and interpretations cannot be viewed as essentially incorrect.

What is Reading?

Many of us read all the time and yet our reasons for reading and what we understand by 'read' and 'reading' are as diverse as the texts we read and the means with which we talk about them to others. Most of us are led by the assumption that reading is a skill, not quite unlike riding a bicycle, which has to be learnt at an early age and once we have learned how to do it, we simply do it without much thought, whenever we are called to do it. In this way, a common-sense definition of reading would be taking in information from a printed page (McCormick, 1994). A commonsensical definition of reading restricts reading to information transfer and, as Freire and Macedo (1987) observe, it does not intertwine with knowledge of the world but severs the dynamic link between

language and reality. So reading, according to Freire (1972, 1973), would mean reading the world, perceiving the relationship between text and context. Freire points out that the texts, the words and the letters of the context of reading incarnate in a series of things, signs and objects, and perceiving these, should provide a basis for experience which in turn fosters a perceptual capacity in the reader.

In an attempt to examine the indestructible link between reading the word and the world, Freire (in Freire and Macedo, 1987, pp 30-31) observes:

> The texts, words, letters of that context were incarnated in the song of the birds- -tanager, flycatcher, thrush- -in the dance of the boughs blown by the strong winds announcing storms; in the thunder and lightning; in the rain waters playing with geography, creating lakes, islands, rivers and streams. The texts, words, letters of that context were incarnated as well in the whistle of the wind, the clouds in the sky, the sky's color, its movement; in the color of foliage, the shape of leaves, the fragrance of flowers (roses, jasmine); in tree trunks; in fruit rinds (the varying color tones of the same fruit at different times - the green of a mango when the fruit is first forming, the green of a mango fully formed, the greenish-yellow of the same mango ripening, the black spots of an overripe mango the relationship among these colors, the developing fruit, its resistance to our manipulation and its taste). It was possibly at this time, by doing it myself and seeing others do it, that I learned the meaning of the verb to squash.

Viewed from this perspective, reading the world will always precede reading the word and reading the word implies a continuous reading assessment of the world. In addition, reading the word is preceded by a certain way of writing it or rewriting it. This might be interpreted as a transforming process signifying the dynamics central to the literacy process.

Such a view comes close to Smith's (1983), which looks upon reading as an act that confers membership on the readers to the literacy club. The process of reading in that case rules out the need for: (a) reducing syntactical rules to diagrams (b) showing rules governing prepositions after specific verbs, agreement of gender and number contracting. On the contrary, all these will be opposed to the students' curiosity in a dynamic and living way so that the student would view these as objects to be discovered within the body of texts whether their own or those of established writers. If the students are asked to memorize the description of an object mechanically, their memorizing will not constitute knowledge of the object. That is why reading a text neither results in real reading nor in knowledge of the object to which the text refers (Freire and Macedo,

1987; McCormick, 1994).

Reading as an act of empowerment should provide the reader with access to a word universe that is, the readers' language used in his expression of his anxieties, fears, dreams and demands. This could be likened to a 'semiotic budget' (van Lier in Lantolf, 2000, p.252). The notion of semiotic budget is valuable to this paper as it encourages us to view our students' semiotic resources such as expressions of appreciation, empathy, understanding and host of other meaning making activities that represent their creative and critical thought. By strengthening the existential experience of the reader through a continuous development of his/her perceptive ability, it is possible to initiate an understanding of how culture as a form of human practice or work transforms the world. A reflective interpretation of the world will then be seen as an exercise in critical reading of reality. In sum, reading always entails critical perception, interpretation and an enthusiasm for reminding us of what has been read. I would, on the basis of this foregoing discussion, define reading as an act of empowering response which impacts on the reader, the text and the ensuing interaction between the text and the reader (Freire and Macedo, 1987; McCormick, 1994; Aebersold and Field, 1997).

What is response?

Reading specialists view response as a consequence of reading (Holland, 1968; Iser, 1978; Krashen, 1993; Langer, 1992; McCormick, 1994; Osborn, 2000; Rosenblatt, 1995; Smith, 1983). Thus, the term 'response' assumes prominence and substance in a context of reading. It implies any observable behaviour by a reader, which follows and is directly related to a specific act of reading. Such responses are unstructured and spontaneous. They can take many forms such as sighs, tears, laughter, re-reading, a personal recommendation, a book report, a verbal comment, a drawing or a dramatic presentation (Cairney, 1990).

Response is an indication of a process of engagement/involvement with a text. In other words it is a lived-through experience of a reader attempting to read (Rosenblatt, 1995). In light of this, it is not possible to quantify the reader's engagement with a text for the purpose of assessing reading objectively. The educational and the aesthetic value of response can only be understood and assessed impressionistically and qualitatively. Therefore, responses cannot and should not be likened to labelled consumer durables on a supermarket shelf (Sivasubramaniam,

2004).

In order to understand the centrality and primacy of response in the educational practice of reading, we need to attempt a comparison and contrast of cognitive and expressivist models of reading.

The Cognitive Model of the reading process has developed from cognitive psychology, which developed in the 1960s. The model relates reading to an 'access of word representations' and views decoding as a pivotal aspect of reading (McCormick, 1994, p. 14). Characterized by an objectivist tradition, the Cognitive Model, while stressing the importance of readers' prior knowledge, tends to overstate its usefulness in reading assessments. The objectivist tradition, which is guilty of excesses and over generalizations, as pointed out by Polanyi (1958), has in a way prevented the insights of readers' prior knowledge from moving beyond a measurable point. 'Schema Theory', which this model supports, needs to blend with culturally oriented concepts of reading. Otherwise, it will only result in pedagogical practices, which by disabling students from reading texts critically and from reading them with multiple perspectives, will serve to disempower them. Cognitive research, which claims to be able to quantify every aspect of the reading process, uses the computer as its main research tool and perhaps even as its writing metaphor. As Gardner (1985, p. 40) observes 'If a man-made machine can be said to reason, have goals, receive and revise behaviour, transform information and the like, human beings certainly deserve to be characterized in the same way'.

Such a perspective reduces reading to a hierarchy of skills and it is assumed that a reader must master a set of skills before he/she can advance to the next stage. The model points out the shift from a micro-level of letter and word recognition to the more complex thinking and comprehension abilities. The Cognitive Model has idealized the study of reading comprehension so that it could be taught effectively, on every level, word, sentence, paragraph, and text/story. Both expressivists such as Smith (1983) and Goodman (1988) and social-cultural proponent such as Heath (1983) have contested this position. Over the last three decades or so, one strand of cognitive research has favoured the interactive nature of reading, a position which views positively the relationship between the reading experience of a real reader and a text on one side, and the usefulness of the reader's prior knowledge in making sense of the texts on the other side (Davies, 1995).

Cognitive Theory, which underpins schema theory, asserts that there is a universal foundation that underlies knowledge and one which guarantees its truth and accuracy. I see this advocacy as an attempt to present reading in reductionist terms; that is, as a hierarchy of skills thereby reinforcing the notion that the primary function of language is communication. Cultural theorists do not accept this cognitivist position as they claim there are no universals. Thus what the cognitivists project as universals, are nothing more than temporarily situated points of agreement by those in a particular discourse community. In consequence, the full potential of Schema Theory cannot be realized without developing an understanding of how readers are constructed by larger social experiences and how they utilize these experiences in the construction of texts (McCormick, 1994). In light of this, we need to reject the Cognitive Model as it makes a deliberate attempt to disregard the students' cultural and social capital, i.e. their life experience, history and language. As such they will not be able to: foster critical reflection, respect their own practical experience, motivate their sense of involvement and celebrate their uniqueness as individuals.

The Expressivist Model, unlike the Cognitive Model, assigns a high order of priority to the reader's life experience in the reading process. Drawing on the Psycholinguistic Approach advocated by Smith (1983) and Reader-Response Approaches to the reading of literature defined by Rosenblatt (1995), Fish (1980) and Bleich (1978, 1985), this model lays the groundwork for a student-centered pedagogy of voice and experience. The following quotation from Rosenblatt (1995, p. 24) serves to identify the key elements of this model. According to her "there is no such thing as a generic reader or a generic literary work; there are in reality only the potential millions of individual readers of the potential millions of individual literary works."

Viewed from this perspective of self-empowerment, reading is an activity in which readers create their own personal or subjective meanings from the texts they read. Signposting the uniqueness of the cultural context in which reading takes place, the expressivists appreciate the richness and uniqueness of students' backgrounds and encourage them to develop their own individual and authentic response to texts. The individualistic credo articulated by this model could be traced back to the student-centered views of education advanced by Rousseau and Dewey. Thus the scope for

innovative pedagogies and active learning is a natural corollary to this model. Psycholinguists/reading specialists such as Smith (1983) and Goodman (in Carrell, Devine and Eskey, 1988, pp. 11-21), along with reader-response pedagogy specialists such as Rosenblatt (1978, 1995), Bleich (1978), and Fish (1980), have used this model to propose that language teachers use literature in the classroom, that students read stories from cover to cover without intrusion, that students discuss their reading of stories with each other and that they work collaboratively on reading projects.

The new literacy perspective (Willinsky, 1990), which assumes special substance in Frank Smith's work in early reading acquisition, views reading as a social practice. It advocates that teachers be free to choose their books and that students be allowed to read them without the continual bombardment of comprehension questions. By emphasizing the affective dimensions, this model succeeds in presenting reading as a joyful experience of self-discovery and social empowerment. Such a position articulates the urgent necessity to factor in social and anthropological approaches to reading, which espouse subjectivity and intersubjectivity as the focal points for assessing reading outcomes (Hudson, 2007).

In light of this perspective, the issues and insights to be explored in this engagement are a reiteration of the quintessential aspects of an ethnographic classroom study conducted at Assumption University, Bangkok (Sivasubramaniam, 2004). These issues and insights assume particular substance and prominence in this paper, as they constitute the pedagogical adjustments that I made to the reading course I coordinated in the College of Arts, University of Bahrain.

In order to nourish and promote response, open-ended texts dealing with themes of daily living were chosen. These ranged from episodic accounts of personal experiences to descriptions and narratives that targeted ideas/beliefs that constitute the common core of humanity. In this respect they were literature texts with a small 'l' (McRae, 1991). These texts by virtue of being able to relate to life provided the students (200 in all) an engaging basis to involve with the texts and personalize them. Some of the texts were used for shared reading and some of them for individual-cum-shared reading. As these students were being groomed to become schoolteachers in Bahrain, it was contingent on the course and its deliverers (we the teachers) to provide reading experiences that would center on their response potential. I used reading response questionnaire and response journals to foster a capacity for response in the

students.

The reading response questionnaire was intended to provide and promote a basis for transactions between individual readers and literary texts (Rosenblatt, 1995). In its own right, it was to become an ***opinionnaire*** *(*Rosenblatt, 1995) by asking students to express their opinions and feelings about what they read both in and out of class. I thought, in the long run this activity might became a powerful instrument for students to interpret complex elements of the texts that they would be asked to read. Thus this activity laid the groundwork for developing their response potential along with an awareness of their reading styles and strengths. The questionnaire had the following six questions and the students filled them out on a weekly basis:

1. What did you read? (Show your ideas in words or phrases only)
2. What problems did you have while reading?
3. What interested you in the reading?
4. What new vocabulary did you learn?
5. How would you connect your reading to your life?
6. Extra comments.

I used the reading response questionnaire to provoke response from students and to lay the groundwork for building a positive attitude to reading. I hypothesized that my students might use it as an instrument for nurturing awareness of reading thereby developing a keen aptitude for reading. The six questions I used in the questionnaire were meant to develop cognitive, affective or evaluative and actional dimensions in my students' reading. Therefore, I had to use this instrument with care and sensitivity. I did not impose the questionnaire on my students. On the contrary, I suggested that it might be good practice for them to fill it in on a regular basis so as to improve their thinking and understanding of what they read in the texts. However my students found it a motivating experience to fill in the questionnaires on a weekly basis and by the end of the sixty hour course, each student had filled in more than a hundred reading response questionnaires.

When I sifted through the questionnaires at the end of the reading programme, I noticed a number of similarities and uniformities in them. These appeared to form conceptual patterns and categories. A closer scrutiny revealed remarkable patterns of congruencies and connections in the responses expressed by the students during the programme. Interestingly enough, these patterns of congruencies and connections had a backwash effect on my perceptions of students' performance during the different

stages of the programme. In retrospect, the varying images of students' participation and response as evidenced by the questionnaires, matched with the intuitions, beliefs and value systems that underlay my understanding of their performance. Therefore, I decided to explore them through metaphorical categorizations. Given that metaphors 'create very colourful and persisting images, for example, of teacher's roles, hard working students, slow learners, the school as an institution, discipline and so on' (Jaatinen in Kohonen et al, 2001, p.134), I believed that these categorizations should provide the conceptual framework for analyzing students' reading responses. The following assertions (ibid: p.134) justify that: 'the teachers should be encouraged and helped to identify and analyze their metaphors concerning school life, learners and teacher's profession'.

Such metaphorical categorizations relate to my understanding of three types of students whose characteristics evolved as they progressed through the programme. The first type of students (i.e. the top 20% of the class) demonstrated the desire and the ability to be very successful in their studies. Their sense of involvement, fund of initiatives, perceptive and interpretive abilities made them the top-ranking students of the class. The second type of students (i.e. the middle 60% of the class) was not so brilliant as the first type, at least, in a qualitative sense. But they were well oriented to the learning experiences, hard working, reasonably intelligent/perceptive and were ever willing to try and succeed. One unique feature that could be recalled about them was that they were not shy about approaching 'the first type of students' in their respective groups for stimulus and synergy. Furthermore, they were my constant advisees in that they met me freely and frequently outside of their class hours. The third type of students (i.e. the bottom 20% of the class) for various undetermined reasons, made minimal progress. In a qualitative sense, they did not push themselves hard enough like the 'second type of students'. Their sense of engagement with the texts, classroom procedures and generally with their peers and teacher(s) was low. However, this does not presuppose that these students were demotivated or disoriented. Almost all of them stayed on and managed to pass the course.

Based on this understanding, I metaphorically categorized the first type of students as 'The Highfliers', the second type as 'The Seekers' and the third type as 'The Survivors'. By the same token, it was decided to analyze the data belonging only to three students in each category in order to provide a representative sampling of what happened in the programme. Given the enormous quantity of responses collected, it is

not possible to present all of them in their complete form. I hasten to point out, at this juncture, that this metaphorical categorization was done discretely for the purpose of analysis and interpretation only. At no point of time during the programme, were the students given any impression whatsoever, that they were being metaphorically categorized. So, it should be noted that they did not function in such metaphorically classified ability groups in the real world of their language classroom. Most importantly, the students in my classes following this programme were made to change their groups on a fortnightly basis so that they would get to know one another personally as well as possible. This was necessary because the study was envisaged to be an 'open dialogue' (Kohonen et al, 2001) in which the students did not fear the 'other.' Having said this, I wish to reemphasize that the responses to be presented here should be understood with reference to the three metaphorical categories described earlier. In this connection, they should be viewed as a cumulative educational process over a period of time. Furthermore, focusing on the individual student as the principal unit of analysis in this inquiry will only produce an incomplete and an unrepresentative classroom story (Willett, 1995). So the metaphorical grouping is necessary for the purpose of data analysis and interpretation of the findings in this research. Therefore, 'to assign it an exact and isolated role would be like asking the exact role of each blade of grass in a field' (Brumfit, 2001, p.11). Based on the beliefs and the values expressed I had expressed so far, I propose to: present the data from the reading response questionnaire as a summary of salient features and points with reference to each metaphorical categorization of students. (As more than 2000 reading response questionnaires needed to be sampled, it is impossible to present them in their complete form either here or in the appendix.)

Illustrating Some Student Responses

The following are students' responses to an excerpt from Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* presented in the anthology *Chapter And Verse* by John McRae and Luisa Pantaleoni (1990). The text in focus uses a striking contrast in that it equates Lord Henry with experience and Dorian Gray with inexperience that is characterized by his restless approach to things. The list of should-do's and should not-do's provides an interesting reference point for analyzing the text in terms of time content. The expressions of happiness used in the text proved to be particularly engaging to my students. I read and discussed certain parts of the text in class and asked my

students to reengage themselves with it outside the class.

➢ What did you read?

The Highfliers:	They identified Lord Henry's reminder to Dorian Gray. They referred to Lord Henry's advice, his experience and Dorian's inexperience.
The Seekers:	They talked about Dorian's picture. They were curious about Lord Henry's visit to Dorian and found the friendship between them particularly interesting.
The Survivors:	They referred to Dorian's talk with Lord Henry and focused on Dorian's sadness and Lord Henry's happiness.

➢ What problems did you have while reading?

The Highfliers:	They found the aesthetic message of the text difficult to understand. They referred to the time adverbials and the difficulties it posed.
The Seekers:	They found the connections between beauty and genius difficult to understand. They wanted to know how thought could "sear your forehead".
The Survivors:	They said they had problems grasping the assertive statements in the text.

➢ What interested you in the reading?

The Highfliers:	They were interested in Lord Henry's advice. They found references to youth particularly interesting.
The Seekers:	They were intrigued by expressions such as 'Don't squander the gold of your days listening to the tedious…the vulgar…' They were equally interested in the expressions that sounded exaggerated,
The Survivors:	They were interested in the literal meaning of the word 'sunburnt'. They expressed a keen desire to find out all about tanning.

➢ What new vocabulary did you learn?

The Highfliers:	They were moved by adjectives in the text such as 'marvellous, ugly, hideous, jealous and bitter'
The Seekers:	They were drawn to the verbs that figured in Lord Henry's advice to Dorian.
The Survivors:	They indicated a choice of words that reflected their fondness for simple words.

➢ How would you connect your reading to your life?

The Highfliers:	They felt that they should make use of the present time, the existing opportunities and follow Lord Henry's advice to the last letter.
The Seekers:	They related the text to their growing need for information and

| | ideas. They realized that reading mattered more in life than anything else, as they were able to see how Lord Henry could use his wisdom gained through reading. |
| The Survivors: | They mostly wanted to find out how to use the textual information for their quizzes and exams. |

(See appendix1 for additional samplings of student responses)

Due to the response-eliciting nature of the questionnaires the students completed, the testing in this course departed from a traditional, transfer of information comprehension model in that the questions asked were predominantly based on attempts to relate reading to personal experience. They were mostly open-ended questions that required the students to answer the how and why of what they read in the text. Furthermore, they were asked to write first person accounts of their reading experiences. The results obtained were not only supportive of the issues and insights that are being discussed in this article but were also helpful in formulating reading assessment practices that were response centered. Therefore, the express purpose of this article is to arm teachers of reading with an understanding of 'response' and to augment that understanding through a set of guidelines for suggestive practice and assessment.

How does a teacher of reading assess response?

Research findings in the field of reading suggest that readers' responses can be best assessed as indications/indicators of varying levels of engagement in reading (Barr, Kamil, Mosenthal and Pearson, 2000). In order to assess the quality and intensity of readers' engagement in reading we need to pose the following set of questions:

- Do the readers build up a mental picture by which they visit the scenes of a text as they would in real life?
- Do the readers anticipate and hypothesize about upcoming events or reflect on the text that they have been constructing?
- Do the readers become one with the text empathizing with characters and situations?
- Do the readers evaluate the text using their own set of value judgments on the events and persons in the text?

The questions posed above necessitate a response-centered approach to reading, one in which students not only personalize their reading of a text but also begin to value

their subjectivity as an educational benefit. Such a realization can motivate them into becoming better readers and thinkers. The use of response journals in the reading classroom can capture their lived through experiences of reading and such an outcome can lay the groundwork for using personal response questions in reading exams. Asking students to write first person narrations that relate to either their encounters with particular character(s) or their evaluation of people/place/time in a story/text can be particularly beneficial. Furthermore, response questions can be framed keeping in mind the emotional, social and moral values/judgements that accrue through students reading involvement.

The students' responses from their journals presented below can serve to illustrate their deeper sense of engagement with the texts that they read. Most importantly, they can provide some useful insights into the questions posed earlier. The students appear to have made a definitive attempt to draw on their experiences as their sense of involvement with the texts had been strengthened. In the views of Protherough (in Corcoran and Evans, 1987, p. 80) they learned:

> …how to project themselves into a character whose feelings and adventures they share, how to enter a situation close to the characters, how to establish links between their own lives and the people and events of the story, how to become a more distanced watcher of what is described. And we suspect that these different kinds of reader behaviour are incremental: that children extend their repertoire and are therefore progressively able to enjoy a wider variety of texts which make different demands on them.

The following responses can serve to support/illustrate the afore-mentioned points:

Highflier 1:   I read William Cowper's. *The Poplar Field*. This poem is the story of a writer talking about transformation of nature and time. He described the different perceptions in different time at the same place……… The poet uses powerful words to show his feeling such as 'winds play no longer and sing in the leaves' 'The tree is my seat' I now understand the implied meanings largely.

Highflier 2   I read the story, *The Tunnel*. It is about a youth couple………. For my opinion I think their love was on the wrong way. They are not ready to marry. Hence it can create many problems… if they have a child can they take care of their child?

Highflier 3:   I read *Catch 22* by Joseph Heller. It talks about the characters in order of importance, in the hierarchy of authority and kind of authority… I see the dilemma in the text, if you obey the order you will die. But if you don't obey the order you will still die. I think this is a sad situation. Authority uses power to kill.

Seeker 1:   I read the poem, *The Poplar Field*. I feel sad for the poet. He is shocked by the disappearance of poplar trees…. He always dreamt to come to this favourite place again. He realizes that time has   changed everything.

Seeker 2:   I read theme unit, *Family*. The first text was about the father and son. The father wants the son to do like him but the son didn't believe him. The second text was about the father and his family…. I think these two texts are different.

Seeker 3:   I read a sad story in *family*. The main problem was communication gap between the father and family. I thought the story was sad because the father always think about money.

Survivor 1:   I read *The Poplar Field*. In my opinion, I think this poem about transformation… If we are helpless to save environment like the poplar one day we will feel like the man in this poem.

Survivor 2:   I read the text *Sons and Lovers*. There is an angry father. Children fear him. I feel pity for Paul. He don't want to tell his father about his prize because he is so afraid.

Survivor 3:   I read about *The Father and Son*. Dad wants his son to grow slowly so that he can learn a lot of things by himself… I think if dad and son listen to each other's problem, the problem will not happen.

(See Appendix 2 for fuller versions of these responses)

It is evident from these responses that an affective/subjective engagement with reading literature lays the groundwork for the experience of literature as a space for reflecting in an atmosphere free of all fear. So, it is unlikely that such an experience of reading could either be diminished or superseded by a demand for public interpretation. The following explanation by Nelson and Zancanella (in Hayhoe and Parker, 1990, p. 42) not only attests to what the analysis has pointed but also demonstrates the power of the living-through experienced by the students, which is synonymous with response. It should be stressed here that this is the accrued benefit of involving students with reading and personalizing it as an educational endeavour. Such a position should be seen as a vital feature of a rewarding pedagogy of voice and experience:

> The 'lived-through' aesthetic experience is not short-circuited by the academic application of a formulaic approach to the derivation of meaning and value. For students to 'cast their own strand of thought and text into this network', those strands of thought and text must be derived from an authentic encounter with the text, not simply an encounter with the teacher's (or some other adult's text about (around, upon, against, outside) the text.

The responses point to an awareness in students, which encouraged them to think about aspects of human existence that they shared with their equals in other cultures. It gratifies me to note that the students made a definite attempt to relate the text to their own emotions and relationships. The element of self-referentiality evidenced in their curiosity and concern about the 'other' increased their urge to communicate it in

speech and writing. It is apparent that they were beginning to feel that their own use of English was more than a mere academic task.

If we relate our students' responses to these questions, we can get a clearer idea of how strong or weak their engagement in reading has been. Accordingly, it is feasible to assess their responses on a ten-point scale:

- 8-10 points can be awarded to responses that indicate strong engagement
The responses of the Highfliers qualify for strong engagement as they signal a strong sense of personalization and involvement.
- 5-7 points can be awarded for responses that indicate moderate engagement.
The responses of the Seekers qualify for moderate engagement as they signal discernible attempt to engage with the text in order to personalize it.
- 3- 4 points can be awarded for responses that indicate weak engagement.

The responses of the survivors qualify for weak engagement as they signal a certain degree of avoidance to personalize the text as this category of students appear to be more concerned about the givens in the text rather than the means available for them in the text to personalize it.

Assessments reflecting the above guidelines (were used)/ can be used both for reading response questionnaires, response journals and questions featured in exams. However, the above-mentioned guidelines are not absolutes. A teacher of reading ought to use the scale discreetly and judiciously. It will be beneficial both pedagogically and socially if 60% of the assessment is predicated on students' reading response questionnaires, response journals and 40% on the final exam.

* Given the institutional politics and practices of homogenization and control it may not be easy for us to implement the assessment practice(s) discussed in this inquiry. However, it should be easy for all of us as reading teachers to form ***focus groups of reading assessment*** and negotiate our well-informed practices of reading assessment with our institutional superiors in order to facilitate student-centered assessment practices. (***See Appendix 3 for some useful insights on this issue***)

What happens after assessment?

In retrospect, we realize that assessment takes us back to classroom practices and touches upon the following issues that were noticed and assessed in our students'

reading engagement (Bonilla, 1991). These issues are vital because they are believed to enhance and enrich the receptive dynamics of the response process and maximize the utilization of all the socio-affective means of meaning construction that accrue as a result of involved reading endeavors:

- What did they like/dislike in their reading/why
- How did they like the illustrations in the text?
- What did the text remind them of/how did the text relate to their life

When students personalize the texts they read, they are naturally encouraged to activate their hypothetical/ critical thinking about the issues they have encountered. Very often they wish a person or a place had been different from the way they have been placed in the text. They also feel that they have the power of their sensitivity/ understanding to change/alter the realities presented by the text, while at the same time appreciating the parallels between their lives and what they come across in the texts they read.

This is to suggest that the learners' emotional investment- affect, in learning is an integral part of reading. Therefore, understanding the emotional make-up of the learners and its influence on reading can have a contributory effect on the students' self-esteem. As observed by Stern (1983, p.386) 'the affective component contributes at least as much and often more to language learning than the cognitive skills.' Moreover, I believe that the various concepts and meanings a learner encounters can become part of his/her personal constructs only if they are experienced on a subjective and emotional level. In the light of this, we need to understand that 'emotions are not extras. They are the very center of human mental life… (They) link what is important for us to the world of people, things, and happenings' (Oately and Jenkins, 1996: 122). Thus, emotions are at the very root of our motivation to do or not to do something.

- What do they wish had happened?
- What do they wish the author had included?

When taken together, these two questions can have particular relevance to the students' immediate reading environment. When students personalize the texts they read, they are naturally encouraged to activate their hypothetical/ critical thought about the issues they have encountered. Very often they wish a person or a place had been different from the way they have been placed in the text. They also feel that they

have the power of their sensitivity/ understanding to change/alter the realities presented by the text.

- What do they think about the characters?

A question such as this one can encourage the students to reconstruct the identity of a character in the text and in doing so empower the students into reconstructing themselves. In addition, their reconstructions can help them either empathize or antipathize with a particular character.

- How good/bad are they are with their predictions
- How did the words in the text influence their feelings of acceptance or appreciation

Questions such as these evidence how and why the students use their values, beliefs and intuitions the way they do and how by doing so they nurture their agency, voice and subjecthood. Such realizations encourage the students to believe that they are 'a creative supplement rather than a recipient' (Mackenzie, 2002: 46) thereby giving them the remit to challenge the author's authority and to attempt understanding independently of the imposed textual conventions.

Conclusion: Signposting a Prospect and a Resolve

The ideas and insights stated so far, envisage an active role for the students to react to and reflect on their reading. Such a role can help both the learner and the teacher to take an associative/ facilitative/negotiative view of reading assessment. 'Consequently, we should think of language as an experience rather than as a repository of extractable meanings' (Fish, 1980, p. 67). In this regard, the students find it an educating experience to voice and share their perceptions of what has been read. The active utilization of reading response questionnaires, response journals and reading portfolios by students fosters in them a belief that they are as empowered as their teachers to propose meanings/ideas and translate them into perspectival/speculative knowledge by which they live by (Sivasubramaniam, 2004). As a result, reading assessment becomes a student-centered undertaking. This is not to suggest that the teacher will assess the students as they wish to be assessed. But it is to suggest that the participatory role of the students can make them take responsibility for reading and for taking control of how the tasks and strategies proposed by the teacher should be handled (Clark, 1987; Nunan, 1988). The accruing autonomy and involvement of the students can support constructivist practices in reading and its

assessment in addition to offering benefits to and motivating the students.

Very often teachers carry out policy decisions about subject matter and classroom management made by their institutions. In doing so, they become 'curriculum clerks' (Delawter in Langer, 1992, p. 101). In light of this, response-centered reading pedagogies can help them voice their professional beliefs and concerns in order to construct new perspectives on their role as reading teachers. It is argued that metaphors in current educational use liken educational practices to those followed in the fields of business, computer industry and the military. Such a likening projects educational practices as prescribed systems to be followed with utmost care. As a result the teachers' role gets banalized (Smith, 1988).

It is further argued that there is urgent need to discard the teacher-as-curriculum clerk metaphor and put in its place teacher-as-explorer metaphor. The prevalence of such a metaphor can reinforce a progressivist concern for teacher empowerment through reflective teaching practice. By voicing their beliefs and concerns, teachers can experience a new sense of freedom. This sense of freedom can alert them to new alternatives to perspectives on their teaching practices. Thus they can become explorers of knowledge and facilitators of constructive social change (Smith, 1988).

Currently, assessment and measurement procedures in higher education appear to center on calculable and quantifiable outcomes of reading/learning. This is to suggest that the institutional politics is noticeably biased in favour of only those outcomes of reading/ learning, which are easily quantifiable and computable. In light of this, correct comprehension, accurate answers, and information transfer are accorded a high degree of acceptance and priority much to the detriment of reading as an educational practice. These are symptoms of a fast spreading educational malaise, which needs urgent eradication. It is my belief that such an endeavour is possible only through encouraging our students to view reading as a process of educational response and empowerment.

If reading education is to bring about constructive social change, empowerment and democratic citizenry, it should provide substantial opportunity for our students to engage with it emotionally, aesthetically and applicatively (Mackenzie, 2002). Only then will our students realize the beneficial impact of their interpretive and imaginative abilities in the use of their language and only then, will our students realize the immediacy and primacy of their meaning creations through their use of language. Such endeavours and outcomes are not only vital to our students' language

development but are also crucial to their emotional and intellectual development without which they will be defenseless in a world characterized by a culture of categorical stupidity and illiteracy (Freire and Macedo, 1987).

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** Article Cited from Issues in Teenage Development in International Development
Magazine, 1997 Issue 3

Appendix 1- Reading Response Questionnaires

The following data are students' responses to Jenny Joseph's poem, *Warning* presented in *Modern Poetry* by Alex Martin and Robert Hill.

The text in focus challenges common ideas that predominate when we think of old people. We often think of them negatively – physical weakness, wrinkled skin, the approach of death and so on. We forget that old people can be interesting to talk to and eccentric in their habits. Thus, the text reminds us that old age can liberate people or make them look foolish in their old age.

- What did you read?

The Highfliers:	They read a warning in the poem. They thought that the poem was concerned about how to grow old without being made fun of by others.
The Seekers:	They read the poem as a preparation for old age and responsible conduct.
The Survivors:	They felt that an old woman could do crazy things.

- What problems did you have while reading?

The Highfliers:	They had some difficulty understanding why the poem uses 'I' in the first half and 'You' in the second half.
The Seekers:	They wanted to know how one could 'Make up for the sobriety of my youth' and eat three pounds of sausages at a go.
The Survivors:	They were not clear about 'wear purple', 'gobble samples', 'swear in the street' and 'hoard pens and pencils'.

- What interested you in the reading?

The Highfliers	They both referred to the actions of the old woman.
The Seekers:	They said that the poem could read better if the second half were to be moved up and first half were to be brought down.
The Survivors:	They liked the restless behavior of the old woman.

• What new vocabulary did you learn?

All the three groups listed words such as *purple, pension, sandals, pavement, gobble, hoard, swear, sobriety.*

• How would you connect your reading to your life?

The Highfliers:	They said they would behave more sensibly than the old woman in their old age.
The Seekers:	They pointed out it will not be easy for old people to be carefree and fun loving.
The Survivors:	They said they will be disappointed if old people behave like children.

Appendix 2- Response Journal Entries

Highflier 1

The Poplar Field

I read William Cowper's "The Poplar Field". This poem is the story of a writer talking about transformation of nature and time He described the different perceptions in different time at the same place. Twelve years ago, he first took a view of his favourite field. He was comfortable when he lived there. Everything in there was completed in him. The perfect nature interested him and helped him escape from busy life. So he took a long time to lay on the yard for permeating thoroughly that perfect environment. But twelve years later, now, as he comes back to his favourite field again, everything is changed. The poplars, a type of tree, which had given the shade now, have been transformed to be the seat for people to sit. So no wind sings in the leaves anymore, no blackbird which had lived in the tree is there anymore. The cut tree cannot be the retreat for him anymore. So when he comes back again, this place cannot provide him relaxation like in the past. Besides it is worse, it makes him be sad because of the terrible transformation of nature. These things inspire him to write this poem to interpret the sorrow of him to the environment. Even if man can create

beautiful things to substitute the destroyed environment, but they do not last long. Anyway that means "no substitution for destroyed environment" and "pleasure turns into poison and can kill the person who overindulges in it." I think this text is interesting. I got many things when I read this text. The poet uses powerful words to show his feeling such as "winds play no longer and sing in the leaves" "the tree is my seat" They made sense to my imagination and my reading. I now understand the implied meanings largely. And they let me be careful when I read the poem, because they show that only one word can be the climax, theme of the whole story. So it should be full of challenges for reading the poem to understand deeply. It requires the time, practices and spirit for reaching to the reading comprehensive. And I will try to reach that, even if it will take a long time and needs more patience.

Seeker 1

Environment: Text A

I read the poem, "the Poplar field" I feel sad for the poet. He is shocked by the disappearance of poplar trees because he used to have good memory with this place. It used to be the place of his rest. The song of birds charmed him, and everything around it made him feel calm in his mind. But now he has freedom after he had stayed in the prison for a long time. He came to this place first, and saw that the poplars are gone. They became wood seats, the birds also left from this place, there was no birds' song anymore. When he was a prisoner, he always dreamt to come to this favorite place again. And now his dream came true but it is not happy for him anymore. He realizes that time has changed everything. And this downhearted change came from the pleasures of men who want benefits from this place. And one day their pleasures will turn into poison and can kill the one who overindulges.

Survivor 1

Environment

 I read "The Poplar Field" This poem tries to talk about a man feeling disappoint and thinking aloud. The man in this poem feels very sad when he came back to the fields where he played when he was a boy. The place shows him the difference because the same place is changed now. Time changed everything very much. He feels that reality then or memories now are both sad because the poplars are felled. The people cut it down. There are no birds singing in this place any more and he saw the poplars became a seat. He is very disappointed, he is unhappy to see wood seat. In my opinion, I think this poem about transformation. Time change everything good and bad and both. If we are helpless to save environment like the poplar, one day we will feel like the man in this poem. The place that was ever fertile in our childhood disappeared and the rest of reality is memory now.

Appendix 3- A Provisional Framework for Testing Response to Reading

Text One

Read the following text and answer the questions that follow.

Azeri hills hold secret of long life

- You can see for kilometers from the mountains where Allahverdi Ibadov herds his small flock of sheep amid a sea of yellow, red and purple wildflowers. The view from Amburdere in southern Azerbaijan towards the Iranian border is spectacular, but Mr. Ibadov barely gives it a second glance.

- Why should he? He's been coming here nearly every day for 100 years.

- According to his carefully preserved passport, Mr.Ibadov, whose birth was not registered until he was a toddler, is at least 105 years old. His wife, who died two years ago, was even older. They are among the dozens of people in this beautiful, isolated region who live extraordinarily long lives.

- Mr.Ibadov's eldest son has just turned 70. He lost count long ago of how many grandchildren he has. "I'm an old man now. I look after the sheep and I prepare the wood for winter. I still have something to do."

- A lifetime of toil, it seems, takes very few people to an early grave in this region. Scientists admit there appears to be something in the Azeri mountains that gives local people a longer, healthier life than most.

- Miri Ismailov's family in the tiny village of Tatoni are convinced that they know what it is. Mr.Ismailov is 110; his great-great grandson is four. They share one proud boast: Neither has been to a doctor. "There are hundreds of herbs on the mountain, and we used them all in our cooking and for medicines," explained Mr.Ismailov's daughter, Emira. "We know exactly what they can do. We are our own doctors."

- There is one herb for high blood pressure, another for kidney stones, and a third for a hacking cough. They are carefully collected from the slopes surrounding the village. Experts from the Azerbaijan Academy of Science believe the herbs may be part of the answer. They have been studying longevity in this region for years. It began as a rare joint Soviet-American project in the 1980s, but most of the funds have long since dried up.

- Azeri scientists have isolated a type of saffron unique to the southern mountains as one thing that seems to increase longevity. Another plant, made into a paste, dramatically increases the amount of milk that animals are able to produce. "Now we have to examine these plants clinically to find out which substances have this effect," said Chingiz Gassimov, a scientist at the academy.

- The theory that local people have also developed a genetic predisposition to long life has been strengthened by the study of a group of Russian émigrés whose ancestors were exiled to the Caucasus 200 years ago. The Russians' life span is much shorter than that of the indigenous mountain folk- though it is appreciably longer than that of their ancestors left behind in the Russian heartland.

- "Over the decades I believe local conditions have begun to have a positive effect on the new arrivals," Prof. Gassimov said. "It's been slowly transferred down through the generations."

- But Mr.Ismailov, gripping his stout wooden cane, has been around for too long to get overexcited. "There's no secret," he shrugged dismissively. "I look after the cattle and I eat well. Life goes on."

(*From Strategic Reading 3 by Jack Richards and Samuela Eckstut-Didier, 2003, Cambridge University Press*)

Questions—TEXT ONE

VOCABULARY in CONTEXT   (10 points)

What do the following words or phrases from the text (*in bold italics below*) mean?
Write the meaning that you choose for each on the lines given.

1. *spectacular (para.1)***:** very extreme or sudden / full of purple flowers / breathtaking, beautiful and exciting
_____

2. *toddler (para.3):* newborn baby / teenager / a very young child

_____

3. *convinced (para.6):* believe strongly in something / not completely sure of something /
 not willing to believe something

_____

4. *longevity (para.7*): total length of an object / span of long life / short span of life

_____

5. *isolated (para.8):* combined / collected / separated

_____

RESPONSE   (10 points)

 Write a response in about 200-300 words answering the following questions**:**

Imagine you are Allahverdi Ibadov. Write about your life style and how you have lived long. What will be your advice to present day youngsters? Your writing should include reasons and examples. Use the first person singular "I" .

_____

_____

_____

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_____

_____

Now turn to the next page and read TEXT TWO

TEXT TWO
Read the following text and answer the questions that follow.

SPLITTING THE IMAGE

- When we were small my mother used to dress us in identical clothes. That was bad enough. But when we went on our first camping trip with the scouts, she went one better. We were only ten or so, and while all the other boys settled down for the night in their sleeping bags, we were very **embarrassed** when we had to snuggle inside a special double sleeping bag my mother had made for us out of two blankets.

- At school we were known as Hensfield One and Hensfield Two. We both had the same middle name, Owen, so people couldn't even **distinguish** us by our initials, as both of us were M.O. It was only when I went to college and began to have my own separate set of friends that I started to feel my own freedom of identity.

- Before I went to college during the sixth-form holidays, I got a job on a building site. Mike didn't work. He was resting. One week I said to the **foreman,** "Can I have a week off?" "Certainly," he said, "but you won't have a job when you get back." It was really hard work, mainly carrying sand and bricks. On the Friday night, I said to my brother, "Would you like to earn a week's money?" And he said, yes. So I told him about everything. Where the sand was, where the bricks were; and I described the eight workmen.

- On Monday morning, he went down in my jeans, jacket and woolly hat. He worked there all week and none of them knew the difference. Two years later I met the foreman in a pub and I bought him a drink. I told him the story, but he just laughed and said he didn't believe me. There was no way I could convince him.

- Now I feel very different from my brother. We still come together for some things but I feel quite **remote** from him. And he'll tell you the same. I suppose we have really been working towards that for forty-two years.

(Adapted from Issues in Teenage Development in International Development magazine, 1997 issue 3)

QUESTIONS- TEXT TWO

VOCABULARY in CONTEXT   (10 points)

What do the following words or phrases from the text (*in bold italics below*) mean?
Write the meaning that you choose for each on the lines given.

1.*embarrassed* (para.1): felt excited / felt ashamed / felt envious

_____

2. *distinguish* (para .2): recognize between two people / read two initials / look at two people as one

_____

3.*snuggle* (para.1): get into a comfortable, warm position / get out of a sleeping bag / take something inside

_____

4. *foreman* (para.3): a worker in charge of other workers / a worker who fills in for absentee workers / a worker who is in the front line of action.

_____

5. *remote* (para.5): close by / very near / far away

_____

RESPONSE   (10points)

Write a response of between 200-300 words answering the following questions**:**

Write about a funny or embarrassing experience from your childhood. Say:
   • when it happened and whom you were with
   • exactly what happened
   • how you felt at that time
   • how you feel about it now
   Use the first person singular "I"

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A Miscellany of Questions for Response Writing (*based on some of the texts read by the students*)

1. Imagine you are Philip Marlowe in Raymond Chandler's "Farewell, My Lovely". Use first person narration to construct a story of your experience with Lindsay Marriott. Your story should include sufficient descriptions of plot and setting.

2. Imagine you are 'Amanda Fergusson' in "The Mountain". Narrate your arduous journey to Mount Ararat with a focus on your observations of the people and the places that feature in your journey. Use the first person "I" in your narration.

3. Imagine you are Barbara, wife of Dr. Collins. Use first person narration 'to present your version of all the events and incidents in "Hypochondriac". You may, if you wish, think up an ending that you think will add further interest to the story and explain your reasons for doing so <u>as a way of response</u>.

4. Write a description of Mr. Singleton in "Learning to Swim" – from the point of view of:

> You-as his classmate at school
>
> You-as his teacher
>
> You-as his job interviewer.

Vocabulary Learning Strategies in an ESP Context: The Case of Para/medical English in Iran

Zahra Akbari

Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran

M.H. Tahririan

Sheikhbahaee University, Isfahan, Iran

Bio Data:

Dr. Zahra Akbari is an assistant professor in the English Department at Isfahan University of Medical Sciences. She has been teaching English to medical and paramedical students for 11 years. She received her B.A, M.A and Ph.D in TEFL from Isfahan University.

Dr. M.H. Tahririan is a professor of TEFL at Sheikhbahaee University. His main area of interest is in ESP. He has done research and taught TEFL courses for more than thirty years.

Abstract

Although taxonomies of a broad range of vocabulary learning strategies do exist, they tend to be incomplete in terms of strategies or factors arguably important for vocabulary learning. Compared to other classification schemes, Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy seems to be the most exhaustive and has the advantage of being organized around an established scheme of language learning strategies. In this study, attempt has been made to examine the extent to which her taxonomy keeps its relevance in ESP contexts. To do so, a qualitative study was designed and carried out in which 137 participants were selected randomly from among undergraduate medical and paramedical students who had enrolled in ESP I in Isfahan University of Medical Sciences. Data on vocabulary learning strategies in an ESP context were elicited by observation, interview and questionnaire. The findings of our study led to the modification of Schmitt's taxonomy and making it more comprehensive. The purpose behind challenging taxonomies of vocabulary learning strategy was to gain more insights about vocabulary learning process and point out to effective ways for teaching and learning vocabulary.

Key words: vocabulary learning strategies, Schmitt's taxonomy, English for specific purposes, specialized and non-specialized vocabulary

Introduction

Along with the movement away from the audio-lingual method in the 1970s and towards a communicative approach in the 1980s, second language acquisition (SLA)

also shifted from a focus on teachers to a focus on learners. This era also gave birth to the notion and importance of what we know today as learner strategies. The notion of learning strategies was born in two fields that have developed it independently: cognitive psychology and second language acquisition. The former tried to analyze the strategies that experts employ and then train novices to use them as well. The latter preferred to describe the kinds of strategies that are used (Griffiths and Parr, 2001).

Many interesting patterns have been followed in most quantitative studies on vocabulary acquisition and a variety of strategies have been identified; however, the current state of the art of vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) is typified by lack of a comprehensive taxonomy of lexically-focused strategies. So, there is urgent need for theoretical research to enhance the precision of our conception of strategies. Despite the interesting patterns seen in the quantitative studies (Gu & Johnson, 1996; Schmitt, 1997; Kojc-Sabo & Lightbown, 1999), they do not show how a particular type of strategy is used in the development of vocabulary. In this regard, the qualitative approach has been more insightful. In addition, extensive attention has been devoted to incidental learning through reading while intentional learning of vocabulary has not received its fair share of research effort (Gu, 2003).

In the area of VLS taxonomy, the most comprehensive effort has been that of Schmitt's (1997). Schmitt provides a classification scheme for a wide range of VLSs revising and expanding on Oxford's (1990) classification scheme in several important respects: (a) it is especially geared to vocabulary learning and, (b) compared to Oxford's typology of general language learning strategies, the potential overlap of multiple classification of strategies is minimized.

He distinguished the strategies which learners use to determine the meanings of the new words when they first encounter them from the ones they use to consolidate meanings when they encounter the words again. The former includes determination and social strategies and the latter includes social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies. The social strategies are included in the two categories because they can be used for both purposes.

Schmitt defined each category as follows. Determination strategies are used "when faced with discovering a new word's meaning without resource to another person's expertise" (p. 205). Social strategies are used to understand a word "by asking

someone who knows it" (p. 210). Memory strategies are "approaches which relate new materials to existing knowledge" (p. 205). The definition of cognitive strategies was adopted from Oxford (Oxford 1990) as "manipulation of transformation of the target language by the learner" (p. 43). Finally, metacognitive strategies are defined as "a conscious overview of the learning process and making decisions about planning, monitoring or evaluating the best ways to study" (p. 205). Although definitions are clear, it is unclear whether the strategies classified into the five categories really share the common underlying factors. This is because factor analysis was not run as an indication of the validity of the questionnaire (Kudo, 1999). Kudo (ibid), using factor analysis demonstrated that there were only two major factors involved in vocabulary learning activities which were identified as strategies directly involved in learning and strategies indirectly involved in learning. In this study, these activities are labeled as learning and comprehension strategies respectively and form the baseline data of our study.

However, strategies are affected by a number of factors (e.g., Riazi and Alavi, 2004; Riazi et al., 2005). Different intended purposes for a strategy in different situations can affect its classification. Different tasks also demand different strategies. In this regard, Gu (2003) mentions that the strategies a learner uses and the effectiveness of these strategies depend on the learner himself, the learning task at hand, and the learning environment.

What makes this study different from Schmitt's is that in an ESP context, words (mainly specialized vocabulary) are expected to be used both productively (i.e., interactional communication with their content teachers, doctors and peers in clinical settings and academic settings) and receptively (i.e., comprehension and/or translation of their references and information sources from the Internet). Unlike Schmitt's study, the participants of this study are relatively homogeneous group of learners, as far as their age, language proficiency and their field of study are concerned, with a commonly defined purpose to learn English (i.e. acquire mainly their frequently-used subject-specific vocabulary items) through reading academic subject-specific texts in ESP courses.

In addition, appealing to the innate characteristics of the new words whether specialized or non-specialized can facilitate the students' vocabulary learning while studying their ESP texts (Perry and MacDonald, 2001). Specialized or technical words

were made up of words that occurred frequently in a specialized text or subject area but did not occur or were of very low frequency in other fields (Nation, 2001, pp. 18-19). They can thus be identified by referring to specialists who have a good knowledge of the subject area. (Oh et al, 2000; Nation & Chung, 2004). Whereas non-specialized vocabulary are terms that may have one or several meanings in an every day setting but have a specific and sometimes different meaning or connotation in a scientific context (Childs & O'Farrell, 2003). They may also turn out to be pivotal in word sense disambiguation of specialized words or they are academic words that are used across content areas (Strevens et al, 2000). Taking into account the specific features of ESP contexts in the domain of VLSs and in the light of Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy, the following questions are raised:

1. What vocabulary comprehension strategies and vocabulary learning strategies do ESP students use for specialized and non-specialized words in different fields of study?
2. What factors affect the ESP students' choice of VLSs?
3. What relationships and/or groupings are there among the strategies used for comprehension and learning specialized and non-specialized vocabulary?
4. To what extent Schmitt's taxonomy keeps its relevance in an ESP context?

2. The Present Study

2.1. Participants

Table: The distribution of the participants by sex, degree, field of study, and language proficiency

Isfahan University of Medical Sciences	Population: Total number in each class	Ph.D	BSc	Assoc. degree	Mean of proficiency test	SD	Students with +_one SD	Male	Female
Medicine	17	*			28.82	6.47	14	5	9
Dentistry	17	*			28.18	5.07	13	0	13
Pharmacy	21	*			25.43	4.63	16	0	16
Midwifery	14		*		20.07	6.07	11	0	11
Nursing	17		*		21.24	4.20	13	3	10
Physiotherapy	15		*		23.47	6.09	9	2	7

Management and health care services	15		*		20.33	5.91	11	2	9
Medical records	21			*	18.24	4.61	15	0	16
Total	137						103	12	91

=have Ph.D, BSs or Associate degrees

The participants were selected randomly from among undergraduate medical and paramedical students (n=137) who had enrolled in ESP I in Isfahan University of Medical Sciences. A standardized language proficiency test (Intermediate TOEFL Test Practices by Keith S. Folse 1994) was given to them in each field (i.e. medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, midwifery, nursing, physiotherapy, health services management and medical records) and those whose scores fell beyond one standard deviation above or below the mean were excluded since they as the most successful and the least successful learners respectively may have certain unique characteristics which may lead to biased findings and interpretations and divert the orientation of the study. Then, 103 learners with mean ± 1SD were identified. 14% of the participants were male and 86% were female. The participants' mean of age was 20 ± 1.12.

This test was selected because of its standard format, the current level of language proficiency of the participants derived from a survey of their prior educational experience, ease of administration and scoring, and its availability. It was also selected after consulting with several experts in language testing. In addition, the test was critically read by some experts in applied linguistics to check for its validity. Although it was a standard test, it was piloted in conditions similar to our main study to ensure its reliability for the context of our study, its test- retest reliability was calculated. It turned out to be 0.75.

Three areas of language proficiency were tested using the multiple-choice format of the selected test: grammar (20 items), vocabulary (20 items), and reading comprehension (10 items). This test was performed as part of classroom evaluation activities with the help of the instructors.

Since it was a qualitative study and random sampling was not practically possible, from among the existing ESP I classes for each of the above-mentioned fields, one of them was selected randomly to form the participants of the study in a kind of stratified

sampling way. Since there was a small number of participants in each group, normality test was performed using Eviews software. Jarque_Bera statistics for all fields was less than 5.99 with confidence interval 95% and degrees of freedom equal to two which ensured the normality of the population in each field.

The participants had all studied the same textbooks in compulsory English courses at junior and senior high schools mainly based on grammar-translation method. They had all participated in a nation-wide university entrance exam which included an English test on high school English.

Those who got below 40% on their English test have to pass a four-credit pre-requisite English course called Pre-university English before taking their regular university courses. During this course, students in different fields of study are supposed to develop their language proficiency and to fill in the gaps in their grammatical and vocabulary knowledge through reading general short passages and doing vocabulary and grammatical exercises. Then, they move into the GPE (English for general purpose) course.

But those who got above 40% have to pass a three- credit GPE course. During this course, students in different fields of study read academic texts related to general topics in the field of medicine and not specifically related to their field of study. The aim of GPE is to develop reading comprehension ability of the learners by exposing them to semitechnical texts and at the same time develop their vocabulary size and also the grammatical knowledge necessary for understanding those texts. The GPE course is the pre-requisite for passing ESP courses.

The compiled reading passages called ESP books are supposed to be relevant to the learners' fields and the emphases are expected to be on developing the reading skill and contextualization of vocabulary exercises. It is necessary to mention that in this research, ESP books used by students in different fields of study have been approved and published by SAMT which is a center for studying and compiling university books in humanities.

2.2. Methodology

In order to elicit data on VLSs, a triangulation of methods was used: a) observing the students in person in the classroom and outside the classroom while studying their

academic texts, b) interviewing the students individually about their vocabulary comprehension and vocabulary learning activities while studying their academic texts, and c) using a questionnaire based on theoretical considerations of some previous attempts to study VLSs, including that of Schmitt's, to identify VLSs types.

At issue is the extent to which students spontaneously developed or adopted effective vocabulary comprehension and learning practices as a result of their language learning experience. This study focused observations on detecting the procedures students used in situations where they attempted some deliberate comprehension and acquisition of specialized and non-specialized vocabulary in an ESP context. Observational notes that pertained to vocabulary strategies in ESP classrooms in the eight fields were taken by the researcher during two semesters.

As far as the interviews are concerned, data were collected in individual sessions in which the researcher met with each student in a quiet room for about 30-45 minutes. To guarantee the quality of procedures, the researcher conducted all the data collection sessions. At the beginning of each session, the researcher informed students of the general purpose of the study and arranged a number of interviews in a friendly atmosphere with them about how they learned the specialized and non-specialized vocabulary items they faced while reading their ESP texts.

In order to motivate and encourage the participants to take part in the research project actively, the researcher told them that she wanted to explore their vocabulary comprehension and learning strategies as thoroughly as possible to detect their weaknesses and problems and then help them improve the depth and breadth of their vocabulary knowledge and enable them to retain vocabulary items in their memory for a longer period by informing them of effective VLSs. The researcher also promised to announce the results of the research to the participants of the study in a formal session.

In this study, both structured and semi-structured interviews (Mackey & Gass 2005) were also used. The advantage of the structured approach is in its ease in data classification and interpretation (Cohen 1998). To capture information on strategies that other instruments could not reveal, interviews were conducted. The purpose of the interviews was to elicit task-specific VLSs and to uncover general VLSs and beliefs/attitudes as well as emotional reactions to vocabulary learning. The interviews

were conducted in the participants' first language, thus removing concerns about the proficiency of the participants in L2 affecting the quality and quantity of data provided.

In addition, to help students recall what they really did for determination and consolidation of the meaning of the new words, they were asked to bring their ESP books in their interview sessions and to illustrate what they report by mentioning cases from their books.

To account for interrater reliability in coding the data derived from observations and interviews, two steps were taken. The first step dealt with the segmentation of data and the creating of coding categories. Because segmentation of data and the creation of the coding categories are judgmental decisions (Gass & Mackey 2000, p.102), the researcher felt data needed to be rated by more than one person to provide for higher levels of validity in the study. The second step involved a third rater and dealt with using the coding scheme and verifying the coding categories.

With regard to the questionnaire, its final version which was used in the main study was constructed by the researcher based on theoretical considerations of some previous attempts to study VLSs (e.g., Schmitt 1997, Kudo 1999, Winke 2002, Segler 2002) and the piloted students' responses to questions in Schmitt's VLSs questionnaire and their answers in interviews. The final version of the questionnaire was used in a pilot group. As for reliability, the result turned out to be satisfying (Cronbach alpha= 0.82 questionnaire for specialized vocabulary and alpha=0.84 questionnaire for non-specialized vocabulary). It was also read critically by some experts in applied linguistics to clarify its possible problems. The questionnaire was constructed for the collection of data on what the participants actually do while comprehending and learning the vocabulary items in their ESP texts and it contained 62 items.

To check for the validity of the questionnaire, factor analysis with varimax rotation was run. Factor analysis was attempted specifying the number of factors as two with the hope of showing that the 62 strategies fit into the two main tentative factors as originally hypothesized (i.e., discovery and consolidation strategies). The KMO was 0.607 which was satisfactory.

2.3. Data Analysis

To answer question one of the study, the findings of the questionnaire revealed that the major strategies for learning specialized and non-specialized vocabulary did not differ in general among ESP students in different fields of study, that is, the most frequent comprehension strategy was using bilingual dictionaries and the most commonly used learning strategy was oral and/written repetition. In addition, three main VLSs were elicited from observations and interviews and the rationale for using these strategies were explained according to some underlying factors (answer to question two). It is necessary to mention that the factors affecting the kind of strategies used by the participants might not have been revealed solely by using questionnaires yet they were detected mainly through observations and interviews.

2.3.1. Person-related factors

Motivation. Students who had integrative motivation in addition to instrumental motivation, for instance those who were determined to continue their education at post graduate levels or had a great tendency to use the original English terminology in their speech instead of their Persian equivalents, reported that they spent more time and energy specially for learning specialized vocabulary. They were determined to learn the specialized words due to their key role in following their current academic studies and performing effectively in their current simulated (i.e., training courses) and future occupational settings (e.g. in the clinics or hospitals).

Attitudes/Beliefs. Students (60%) reported that using English words in Persian speech unconsciously would bring about some kind of prestige for them and consequently they would be encouraged to use more English words (specialized in academic settings and non-specialized in ordinary conversations depending on their interlocutors' knowledge of English language).

 In contrast, there were students (35%) who did not like to switch to English while they were speaking Persian and some (40%) who believed that learning English was very difficult especially due to their low language proficiency and/or their prior unpleasant learning experiences during their course of education. They, therefore, reported that learning English in general and learning English vocabulary in particular

is a time-consuming activity; and the only way to learn it is to memorize it; at least to fulfill their immediate needs.

Learning Style. It was observed that students (65%) who were more dependent on their auditory skills were normally good at memorization and employed it for learning both specialized and non-specialized vocabulary. They preferred to use bilingual lists and repeat the words as many times as required to memorize them. In other words, they preferred to employ more cognitive processing activities.

While students (35%) who were dependent on their visual skills in learning the new words preferred to visualize the meaning of the new words, to imagine themselves in the situations in which they were supposed to use the new word or the situation in which they learned the word for the first time, to write the new word several times or to visualize its spelling letter by letter.

Some (60%) students were good at memorization (i.e., learning the word together with its Persian equivalent) while some others (40%) were good at learning English in context (i.e., learning the word in an English sentence or learning the word together with its English synonym).

Awareness of Useful Strategies. Students (65%) reported that as they became aware of the analogies that exist between English and Persian words, knew how to derive the meaning of a word by word analysis, how to relate the English pronunciation of the word to its Persian meaning, how to find the synonyms of the English words in the same passage, and how to use the contextual clues and rhetorical features to comprehend the meaning of the new words, they preferred to use these strategies to make their learning more meaningful rather than use a kind of pure memorization and consequently they could retain the word in their memory for a longer time.

It was observed that relating the English pronunciation of the word to its Persian meaning, or relating the English spelling of the English word to that of its Persian equivalent depended, to a great extent, on the degree of students' imaginative power and their motivation for learning the specialized vocabulary. For instance, one of students said that the first part of the word "tortuous" reminded her of the word "toor" in Persian which is associated with complexity. Or for the word "mobilize" meaning "basij shodan" in Persian, she said that "har basiji bayad hamishe dar dastres bashe v baraye in manzoor bayad mobile dashteh bashe". (every Basiji must be at hand when

he is required and therefore must have a mobile phone to be called up when it is necessary.)

In contrast, there were students (35%) who resisted bringing about any changes in their previously internalized strategies in order to learn the new words.

Using English synonyms. Students (35%) also reported that in cases especially when they had already learned the synonym of the new word, they used it since it was of great help in facilitating the learning of the new word. For example, when the students encountered the word "emesis" and the teacher gave them the word "vomiting" as its synonym, they said that they could learn the former easily in relation to the latter.

Using the word in a phrase. There were also some cases which students (25%) reported that they learned the meaning of the new word by using the words following it. In other words, they learned the new word in its collocational phrase. For instance, one of the students said that she learned the meaning of "rupture" easily as it occurred in this phrase "rupture of amniotic sac".

Knowledge of content. It was observed that the knowledge of the topic or especially the content of the passage also helped students (85%) to guess the meaning of the new word reflectively and this, to a great extent, facilitated their learning when their guesses were confirmed by the dictionary. For instance, one of the students said that when she encountered the word "congenital" in the passage, since there was the word "anomaly" after it, she told herself that, according to her background knowledge, "anomalies" were either "ektesabi" or "madarzadi". Regarding the meaning of the whole paragraph, she guessed that "congenital" must have been "madar zadi" and after referring to the dictionary she was assured that her guess was true.

Making bilingual lists. In this regard, the participants also mentioned that they had made lists at an earlier stage of their studies when they were in junior high school and high school but stopped making lists when they reached a higher level of proficiency. Students first highlighted the unfamiliar word by underlining or coloring it; then they wrote its relevant Persian meaning above it and in this way they mainly relied on the linguistic context in which the word occurred and their knowledge of the content acquired (i.e., internalized) in their specialized courses to comprehend and learn the

meaning of the new words. In this way, they utilized more contextualized strategies.

Using the word as the need arises. It was observed that ESP students (75%) were also more inclined to use skill-oriented strategies since there were many cases in which it was necessary to understand their academic fellows' speech infested with English specialized vocabulary and to use the English specialized vocabulary themselves in order to be understood by their counterparts and to convey their intended message in the most effective and shortest possible way.

2.3.2. Task-related factors

It must be taken into account that different types of task materials, task purposes and tasks at various difficulty levels demand different learner strategies.

Materials. An equally important consideration emerging from this research was the role of ESP texts in the development of students' VLSs. It was observed that some of these materials (55%) contained long, difficult and sometimes not closely subject-related passages with excessive number of vocabulary items. And ESP students reported that they are eager to read short subject-related comprehensible passages adapted from their references to obtain up-to-date information about their field of study and at the same time become familiar with and learn the most frequently used vocabulary items in their field of study. In this way after repeated exposure to these vocabulary items, they easily learn their usage and use in real contexts.

   In this case, depending on the force of their intrinsic drive, their instrumental motivation, or the congruity between the content of their ESP course and their specialized courses, ESP students either resorted to pure memorization to pass the ESP course or memorization and some kind of mental analysis to make a somewhat meaningful connection, whether formal, vocal or conceptual, between the pronunciation and/or form of the new English word and its Persian meaning to retain the word in their memory for a longer time.

Field variables. Students in the fields of medicine, dentistry and pharmacy were at MD level. They study the physiology and the anatomy of the body thoroughly in the first four semesters after entering the university. They are frequently required to deal

with English texts as their references. Their references and body atlases are full of pictures and medical terminology and as an MD student, in order to follow their academic studies efficiently and effectively in each semester, they know that developing their English proficiency progressively is an essential requirement. They also know that as a doctor in future they would be expected to have access to up-to-date information about their field of study and also in order to become a specialist in one of the branches of medicine, a high level of English language proficiency including a large vocabulary would be required.

The ESP students in these fields also pass a medical terminology course together with their ESP course in order to understand and learn their specialized terminology through word analysis. Therefore, visualizing the concept of the word, analogy between English and Persian forms and word analysis are among the elaborative strategies used by medical students.

Students in nursing, midwifery, physiotherapy and management were at BSc level. As with students of medicine, dentistry and pharmacy, students of midwifery, nursing and physiotherapy are required to use the English specialized terms rather than their Persian equivalents when they talk to their content teachers or when they present reports to their classmates in academic settings. However, since the latter group, except physiotherapy students, took part in training courses in clinical settings after the third semester, they are required to use the medical terminology there when they talk to their classmates, professors or doctors. Thus, it can be inferred that using English terms in different contexts as the need arises is one of the facilitating skill-oriented strategies in vocabulary learning which is utilized by these ESP students.

It was also observed that repeated exposure to and frequent use of specialized vocabulary in specialized courses and clinical training sessions provide favorable conditions for automatic learning of such vocabulary in their real contexts to the extent that they became part of their routine Persian repertoire. For instance, consider the following cases:

Nursing student: "Bar asar bi harekati bimar dochare bed sor (bed sore) shodeh ast." (*Due to immobility, the patient is affected by bed sore.*)

Nurse: "Pishgiri az anemi (anemia) dar zanane bar dar az ahammiyate zyadi barkhor dar ast." (*It is very important to prevent anemia in pregnant women.*)

Nursing student: "Ba'd az jarrahi bimar dochare chest pein (chest pain) shodeh ast."

(*After surgery, the patient has had chest pain*).

Although most (about 80%) of the midwifery, nursing, medicine, dentistry and pharmacy references were translated into Persian, their translated texts are still infested with English specialized vocabulary (whether in Persian transcription system in the text with footnotes or in English in the text) and they would also confront them while listening to their content teachers or searching articles in the Internet. Since ESP students experience the immediate use and the vital role of specialized words to satisfy their academic and clinical needs, they try to focus on elaborative strategies which are effective for long term purposes.

In contrast, management references are in Persian with few if any English specialized terminology (mainly in the footnotes) and their content teachers also use very few terms in English. Whereas students of physiotherapy reported that most of their references are in English and in each term their content teachers choose one part of it, distribute it among students and ask them to translate that section and give them a test based on their translation. These teachers believe that what they present in the classroom is only the essence of that section due to time limits and students must have access to its details.

Although management students have training courses in clinical settings but they are not concerned with medical terminology. They have already learned some standards in their specialized courses and then they examine to what extent these standards are taken into account in each ward of the hospital or clinics.

Medical records students were at post diploma level. They have the course medical terminology together with their ESP. They need to give codes to the name of the diseases, the organ or part of the body in which the illness occurred and the cause of the disease. Therefore, it is necessary to know their English terms to give codes to them properly. Their content teachers use very few English terms in their speech and the students are not necessarily required to use them either. In their training courses, they read the patients' medical records and give codes to the name of the diseases, the organ or part of the body in which the illness occurred and the cause of the disease.

Students of health care services management mainly (98% of cases) used repetition and memorization strategies which they believed to be more helpful for their short term purposes (i.e., passing the ESP exam). They believed that most of their references were translated into Persian and since they had Persian equivalents for specialized words, it was not necessary to learn the English terms for long term

purposes.

In sum, students in different fields of study (95%) believed that learning English is important but they are not well-motivated enough to improve their English proficiency because they did not have to do so any way, their English language proficiency is not so good, or they do not have enough time. Therefore, they usually (in 85% of cases) resorted to the easiest and shortest way to learn English words, i.e., memorization.

The nature of the word to be learned. They (85%) mentioned that they made use of the following properties to learn a new word: the word's pronunciation, its orthography, the degree of correspondence between how the word is written and how it is pronounced, its phonological relationship with its equivalent in their native language (analogy), morphology, and part of speech.

They also resorted to the innate features of specialized vocabulary to learn them. For instance, specialized words were reported to be more tangible and concrete (i.e, they are either the name of a process, technique or an instrument which they can easily visulaize), more amenable to word analysis, more conspicuous and fewer than non-specialized ones in a passage. In addition, specialized words often have one consistent meaning in different contexts, are closely related to the subject matter of the passage and are elaborated in different ways such as description, exemplification and illustration.

In addition, students who had already acquired the concepts of English specialized vocabulary in their specialized courses exploited such knowledge in learning the new specialized words to a great extent. What further facilitated their learning is that in some fields like medicine, midwifery and nursing, depending on the nature of field, a lot of analogies (75%) were used in Persian and English. (e.g., "angajman" for "engagement", "diabet" for "diabetes", "anemi" for "aenemia").

Furthermore, due to the linguistic nature of the specialized words, it was difficult for language and content teachers to provide the same language synonyms for them let alone with providing their translation in another language. Therefore, ESP students preferred to learn their concepts together with their pronunciation in Persian pronunciation system without necessarily translating them into their own language.

2.3.3. Context-related Strategies

Educational background. The participants in different fields of study reported that in the university they followed mainly (85%) the same VLSs as those they used during their English studies at junior high school and high school. Since junior high school they experienced that there is one way to learn a word together with its meaning: to memorize a list of words together with their Persian equivalents in order to understand the meaning of a passage/ translate it into Persian (they had a list of new words at the end of each lesson and a bilingual list at the end of their books in which the new words of each lesson were classified) and they were provided with few opportunities to use what they had learned outside the classroom. Therefore, they got accustomed to such a strategy to the extent that it is difficult for them to replace or supplement it with other productive strategies. Neither their books nor their English teachers provide hits and exercises about how to develop effective vocabulary comprehension and VLSs and vocabulary exercises test their knowledge of vocabulary rather than teach them VLSs.

Cultural background. There were also few students (25%) who were grown in educated and socially and economically high class families. They were motivated, encouraged and supported by their families to attend foreign language classes (they had a rather high tuition for each semester for low and average economic class) to develop their English language proficiency by listening to tapes/CD's, watching films, reading interesting passages/conversations with colorful pictures and become familiar with the authentic use of language in real situations (in a shop, in an airport, etc.). In fact, they would mainly develop their speaking skill and this would develop the sense of self-achievement and self-satisfaction in them. Furthermore, this, in turn, would facilitate their learning and remove their fear of learning English as a difficult language significantly (65%) since they would have enough opportunities to use/practice what they learned in the same class or upper levels with their classmates. Another advantage of such classes is that from the first term, they begin to learn how to use a monolingual dictionary.

Linguistic background. Considering the general educational and cultural background of the students who entered the university and regarding the fact that what they learned in junior high school and high school was not frequently recycled and used, students usually entered the university mostly (75%) with below the average level of English language proficiency. As ESP students reported, they had forgotten many of the words and grammatical rules they had already learned/ memorized.

Curriculum requirements. In ESP, students in each field of study are required to read a book whose content is supposed to be related to their field of study. In this way they get familiar with their specialized vocabulary. There are no grammatical points explained in ESP books. Students who take ESP course after they have learned/experienced the basic concepts (e.g., devices, processes, etc.) in their field of study, learn the specialized English terms much easier than those who have not. In addition, the congruity between the ESP content and what these students would pass in their specialized courses can facilitate the learning of specialized vocabulary to a great extent since students experience what they learned in their ESP course is practically useful for them.

With regard to the relationship between ESP content and the students' training courses, the more students are required to use the specialized vocabulary they had already learned in their ESP course in their training sessions, the more motivated they become to learn more new words and use them as the need arises. On the other hand, the simultaneous presentation of ESP and training courses helped the students to experience the practical use (application) of the specialized vocabulary items in authentic (real) contexts such as clinics, hospitals or drugstores.

Prior presentation of training courses to ESP courses also raised the ESP students' consciousness about the importance and necessity of learning specialized vocabulary in satisfying their academic needs.

Classroom environment. Students in an ESP context frequently encounter unknown words in text material; some of which they urgently need to learn and retain for later use. In such situations, they are likely to adopt some deliberate strategies which facilitate long-term retention of word meaning. Effective strategies for them also

included the ability to select words they were likely to need and it implied awareness of a realistic purpose for their learning.

It was observed that the participants' VLSs in an ESP context are also derived from the way the words are taught by their ESP teacher. If all that was required by the teacher was superficial understanding of the word through quick explanation of the word's meaning in English, the participants would be directed toward using more superficial strategies such as repetition and memorization of the definition of new words in Persian.

However, if deep understanding of a word was especially important in the classroom, the students would be directed toward relating the meaning of new words to their previous knowledge, focusing on different aspects of the word's knowledge including its part of speech, its constituents, its grammatical and semantic relation to other words in the textual context, its pronunciation, its difference with similar words in terms of phonology and orthography and the way it was used in context in addition to its definitional information.

Students in this study usually (75%) did not spend much time to guess the meaning of the new words from the available clues due to their small vocabulary size. According to them, guessing is a time consuming activity. So, they often proceeded to look up almost all of the new words. In fact, through finding the meaning of the word mainly in a bilingual dictionary, part of learning was achieved since both dictionary use and dealing with the new word in the context and challenging the passage through understanding its new words promoted students' vocabulary learning.

They only wrote the English synonym if their teacher gave them the synonyms in the classroom. Writing L1 translation cost very little in terms of time and note taking effort and also satisfied their immediate purpose of learning. This kind of cost benefit analysis was at the heart of participants' decision as to what kind of VLS to choose, when to use a given strategy and what kind of words to learn or skip.

Although the ESP teacher spoke English in the classroom and expected the students to find the English meaning of the new words in monolingual dictionaries, most of the students (85%) had already referred to bilingual dictionaries and in the classroom, they searched their English mental lexicon to find an English equivalent for the Persian meanings of the original English word. For instance, they first translated "chain" as "halghe" and accordingly they used "circle" as the synonym for "chain".

The ESP teacher usually asked the meanings of the new non-specialized vocabulary since he supposed that students knew the meaning (concept) of specialized vocabulary better than him.

Because students did not usually (75%) have access to a specialized dictionary, they preferred to use the following ways to find the meaning of specialized words: a general bilingual dictionary, copy the Persian synonyms from the ESP books of the students who had already passed the course or from the guide to the ESP books available in the market, and asking the synonyms from their classmates or their teacher.

In addition, it was observed that in using the dictionary they highly relied on the relevant meaning of the new word in the context and their background knowledge of the content and in learning the meaning of the words, since they usually had a definite purpose behind their learning, they tried to make their learning more meaningful rather than mechanical by relying on the context in which the word occurred and their knowledge of the content.

As far as the role of the students' content teachers were concerned, if these teachers used many English words in their speech as they presented the lessons, students through repeated exposures to these words gradually learned them somewhat effortlessly. On the other hand, in most cases (96%), it implied that students should also use these words in their speech when they want to discuss an academic topic with their content teachers or their classmates. This, in its turn, also facilitated students' vocabulary learning since they experienced the practical usefulness of what they learned. Furthermore, if content teachers make their students use their references anyway and even assign some grades to it in the course exam, students become more motivated to learn English especially English vocabulary in their ESP courses by using elaborative strategies.

3. Conclusion and Discussion

3.1. Taxonomy of VLSs for an ESP context

To answer question three, the resulting taxonomy will reflect important issues and dimensions not having received explicit attention in the building of taxonomies of VLSs so far.

First, the VLSs are divided into two major groups: strategies for the discovery of a

new word's meaning (comprehension strategies) and strategies for consolidating a word once it has been encountered (learning/acquisition strategies). Comprehension strategies included determination strategies and transactional strategies. Determination strategies are divided into three main substrategies: guessing meaning from the context, word analysis and looking up the word in the dictionary. With regard to transactional strategies, since asking the meaning from the teacher or classmates was not the way by which words were learned in social interactions, this strategy was called transactional strategy.

Learning strategies are subdivided into two categories: the knowledge-oriented strategies and skill-/use-oriented strategies. The former involves using each or a combination of linguistic features of a word such as its part of speech, pronunciation, spelling, and morphology, collocation, rhetorical organization (i.e., definition and exemplification) to learn the meaning of a word. The more features involves in vocabulary learning process, the more the depth of processing is. The latter, in turn, includes learning the word automatically by its frequent use and through frequent exposures to it in related contexts as the need arises.

While knowledge-oriented strategies consisted of memory strategies, cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies, skill-oriented strategies are made up of interactional strategies and affective strategies.

3.2. Revisions required in Schmitt's Taxonomy

To answer question four, in Schmitt's study (1997), neither the context nor the purpose of vocabulary learning has been defined precisely and clearly. Since the participants of Schmitt's study were from different age groups, they would have different purposes for vocabulary learning ranging from utilitarian purposes such as passing an exam to learning English vocabulary for occupational purposes. And in her study, "use" was mainly defined as vocabulary practice rather than interactional communication.

Furthermore, if multiple sources of information had been used more insights into what learners actually would have been gained. Since the questionnaire is a self-report and the single source of information, the participants' responses may be just their beliefs or thoughts about their use of strategies.

Moreover, although the operationalization of frequency followed the dictionary

definitions for the six Likert-type-scale continuum, "never" to "always" may have been fuzzy because interpretation of these scales can change according to context. For example, the participants may have thought of different contexts when they were asked how frequently they use a bilingual dictionary. They might have thought of home context, school context or dorm context. Their answers might have been "it depends".

Based on evaluating the implementation of Schmitt's theoretical positions in Iranian ESP context, several factors that were not an explicit part of Schmitt's taxonomy but seemed to be essential issues for vocabulary acquisition are suggested.

As far as the critical role of motivation in vocabulary learning is concerned, it seems that one of the gaps in Schmitt's taxonomy is that a category for affective strategies was not included in it probably because it was not clear how they are sufficiently associated with VLSs.

Closely related to motivation was the purpose of learning the new words, whether specialized or non-specialized, which played a significant role in deciding whether to spend the necessary time and effort in learning them or to skip them. In other words, depth of processing is a crucial variable for vocabulary retention, it seems worthwhile to accommodate it as a valid dimension in the resulting typology.

The participants' anxiety was another affective factor which determined the kind of VLSs used by participants while learning the new words. Anxious learners avoided using the new words with their classmates and/or teachers because of the fear of making mistakes either in pronouncing them or in their linguistic and pragmatic use.

3.3. Implications

One of the main concerns for those of us working in an ESP context is how to help our students deal with authentic academic texts which by its nature requires a fairly advanced level of language proficiency. By "advanced level of proficiency", it is meant, in fact, a good vocabulary size.

There are several approaches one can adopt in order to develop students' vocabulary. It seems clear that students in ESP contexts need some explicit teaching of specific vocabulary items together with some kind of strategy training for improving and managing their learning plus extensive reading of their original references in order to gain the required exposure to vocabulary items and build up

word knowledge. It needs the collaboration of both language teachers and content teachers as content teachers can make students read their references, present the derived information in the classroom and assign some grade to it in their final exam.

In order to allow ESP students to achieve their second aim, i.e., using the specialized and non-specialized vocabulary items productively in written and/or spoken forms in simulated occupational settings (training courses) and ultimately in their future occupational settings (clinical in this study), their content teachers should frequently use the specialized and non-specialized vocabulary items while presenting issues in students' field of study and ask students to use them in their theoretical and training courses and assign some grade or penalty for their use or not using them respectively in their final course grade. In this way, students feel responsible to learn these words as well as use them.

Language teachers, however, need to increase their awareness of their students' strategy usage and needs in order to be able to facilitate their language learning process. Students should be taught how to develop both breadth and depth of their vocabulary knowledge so that they, as autonomous learners, would be able to use their vocabulary knowledge both receptively and productively as the need arises. In other words, teachers and learners should aim for integration of knowledge-oriented and skill-oriented strategies.

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Assessing the Level of English Language Exposure of Taiwanese College Students in Taiwan and the Philippines

Carlo Magno
De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines
Moisés Kirk de Carvalho Filho
Kyoto University, Japan
Jennifer Ann Lajom, Joanne Rashel Regodon, Katrine S. Bunagan
De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines

Bio Data:

The principal author, **Dr. Carlo Magno**, is presently an assistant professor at the Counseling and Educational Psychology Department of De La Salle University-Manila. He obtained his PhD in Educational Psychology major in measurement and evaluation. He teaches courses on methods of research, advance statistics, educational psychology, and measurement and evaluation. His research interests are in line with psycholinguistics, language learning, self-regulation, teacher performance, and parenting.

Dr. Moises Kirk de Carvalho is presently a professor at Kyoto University, Japan. **Jennifer Ann Lajom** is presently a faculty member in the Psychology Department also in De La Salle University-Manila. **Joanne Rashel Regodon** and **Kay Bunagan** are graduate students in Psychology major in Human Development at the Psychology Department of De La Salle University-Manila. This study was part of a larger research agenda on psycholinguistics and language development.

Abstract

This study examines the differences in English language exposure among Taiwanese college students living in Taiwan and in the Philippines. One-hundred and eighty participants completed an English language exposure questionnaire. The results revealed that the Taiwanese in the Philippines significantly showed higher levels of English language exposure than their counterpart in Taiwan $t(180)=8.99$, $p<.05$. A large effect size on exposure ($d=1.34$) was observed for that difference. English learners within an English-speaking context are more exposed to the language, which enables them to imbibe and internalize the English language through communication.

Keywords: English language exposure, English exposure scale

Introduction

College students living and studying in the Philippines are more exposed to the English language than college students in Taiwan, however, there are very limited published empirical reports that support this hypothesis. Considering that the English language in many cultures such as in Taiwan is in demand to be learned, many Taiwanese are seeking to learn English in a context where exposure to this language is high. The Philippines as one of the English speaking countries in Asia provides a good environment where foreign students gets exposed and learn the English language. In the Philippines, exposure to the English language started since American colonization. Gradually, English started to be utilize in the Philippine barrios and municipalities through the public elementary school system and eventually, in 1901, the Department of Education made English the sole medium of instruction in the Philippines (Gonzalez, 1997; Martin, 1999). Even after gaining independence from the Americans, English remained to be widely used in the country. This is shown in many different studies, for example Bautista (2000) revealed that 51.43% of the families in member schools of the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines spoke English at home. A study commissioned by the Linguistic Society of the Philippines (Social Weather Stations as cited in Gonzales, 1997) reflected similar findings. In their sample, 56% were found to have the ability to speak English, 73% have the ability to read English, and 59% have the ability to write in English. For those reasons among others, English has been declared as one of the official languages of the Philippines (Garcia, 1997; Gonzales, 1997; Villacorta, 1999). Provided these assumptions, it is necessary to test the hypothesis that exposure to English is high in a context where English is used. The main objective of this study is to establish a basis and provide empirical support for the assumption that Taiwanese college students living and studying in the Philippines are more exposed to the English language than their counterparts in Taiwan.

It is known in studies that second language acquisition is influenced by personal characteristics, such as metacognition and motivation, and different environmental factors, such as language exposure and sociocultural context. Previous studies on oral proficiency in English show its direct link to cognitive factors (Bremner, 1999; Hsiao & Oxford, 2002; Lee, 2003; O'Malley et al., 1985; Peacock & Ho, 2003; Victori & Lockhart, 1995). These cognitive factors are better facilitated if an English learner is placed in an environment where they are exposed to the English language making

them use the English as part of their daily communication. Exposure to English then enables the English learner to improve their ability to express the English language and eventually becomes more proficient.

Exposure to the Second Language

Exposure, as defined in this study, refers to the total amount of time in which an individual has contact with a language, may it be in verbal or written form, formal or informal ways of communications and in which the individual may have either an active or a passive role. Adopting this definition, exposure to a second language occurs whenever individuals engage in conversations in the second language with family members, friends, classmates, and colleagues; whenever they read books, magazines, and newspapers written in that language; whenever they come across information being disseminated in different multimedia sources; or even when they are mere passive listeners in any activity or place in which the second language is being spoken. Chiswick & Miller (1998) defined exposure as the features of formal learning and "learning by doing" that impact the acquisition of fluency in the target language. There are many dimensions of exposure, but the current study only focuses on the intensity of exposure per unit of time in the context. These dimensions include the different external cues like print, media, and audiovisual materials. This exposure enhances English language skills even for non-native English speakers (de Carvalho, Magno, Lajom, Bunagan, & Regodon, 2006).

  Previous studies have shown that exposure to the second language is one of the environmental factors that can enhance language proficiency (Jia, 2003; Ji, Zhang, & Nisbett, 2004; Kim & Margolis, 2000). Jia (2003) found that learners' proficiency in the second language increases as they experience richer language environments. Prior to Jia (2003), Reber (1985) explains that through exposure an individual becomes involved in a socialization process, thereby acquiring the knowledge, values, and social skills required in learning a second language. The socialization process includes interaction with an English speaker or other English learners. This results in the learner's opportunity to master a new array of social norms, attitudes, and mannerisms enable the learner to become an effective speaker of the second language (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Chen, 1993; Levine, Baxter, & McNulty, 1987). Furthermore, a study on migrants to the US showed that those who were nine years

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old or younger preferred second language (L2) to first language (L1) and are more proficient in L2 as early as their first year of stay in the new context (Jia & Aaronson, 2003). Although young children have been established to readily discern differences among the phonetic units used in language and thus acquire language more efficiently (Kuhl, Tsao, & Liu, 2003). Other important factors interact resulting to the observed L2 preference and proficiency (in this case, the dominant language) in the young migrants include L1 proficiency, peer interactions, social abilities, and cultural preferences (Jia & Aaronson, 2003). Many of these factors are embedded in the context where the learner acquires the destination language.

Bachman (1990) and Chapelle (1998) characterize the use of language as interactionalist, where both knowledge or competence and the capacity for implementing and executing that competence in language use are in context. In this view, language acquisition is socially and culturally-mediated. There is an interaction between the language user, the context, and the discourse. Bachman (1990) emphasizes that context is important to the extent it allows the expression of language and thus develops language abilities.

Exposure to the second language can also influence a learner's motivation to learn that second language. As Kim and Margolis (2000) reported, students who were exposed to a greater amount of English material or learn English from native English speakers were highly motivated. As a result, the level of exposure that an individual has to the second language is directly related to language proficiency in that language.

In many Asian countries, such as Korea, Taiwan, and Japan, students often acquire insufficient communication skills in English (Chen, 2002). Particularly, these students in Korea, Taiwan, and Japan's weakness in communication skills emphasize on oral skills in English. In these three countries, it was reported that many of the native teachers do not have enough training to teach English adequately (Butler, 2004). In Taiwan, the government introduced English as part of their curriculum only in 1999, with teachers who still need further training to adequately acquire English. Despite efforts in their educational system, they faced a serious shortage of qualified teachers (Butler, 2004). It appear to indicate that the context in Taiwan offers less opportunity for exposure in the second language.

In the present study, a questionnaire was constructed and administered to Taiwanese students in Taiwan and in the Philippines. It is hypothesized that Taiwanese in the

Philippines will have higher level of exposure given that English is one of the country's official languages.

Method
Participants

The participants were 180 Taiwanese college students. There were 98 students living and studying in Taiwanese universities, while the other 82 are Taiwanese living and studying in the Philippines Universities for not less than 6 months. Participants in the study were voluntary and no extra course credits were given for participation.

Procedure

The data gathering was conducted in the Philippines and in Taiwan. The researchers themselves administered the Checklist for English Language Exposure (CELE) to the participants. The participants were instructed to read each statement and check how often the situation applies to them. They were then informed that there was no right or wrong answer and they could answer the items at their own pace. Respondents were asked to check in the 5-point scale (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never) how often each situation applies to them. After administering the checklist, the participants were debriefed about the study.

Instruments

An English language exposure survey questionnaire was constructed to determine the frequency of time in which an individual has contact with the second language (see appendix A). The instrument was developed for students whose second language is English.

The items for the English exposure questionnaire reflect different situations where English is spoken in the home (e.g., speaking and conversing in English at home), friends (e.g., conversing in the English language with friends), school (e.g., teachers and classmates speaking in English, activities in school conducted in English), and media (e.g., watching English television shows, listening to English music, reading English books). There is a total of 23 unidimensional items that depict situations where an individual comes in contact with the English language.

An initial 21-item questionnaire was reviewed by two English professors and two

psychologists who specialize in psycholinguistic research. The items were assessed by way of their relevance and whether they are representative of the domains of English language exposure. In the final form, 23 items were arrived at, after considering the revisions and changes that were suggested.

The exposure checklist was pre-tested in 67 students taking courses in general psychology in two different universities. The pretest was administered to the students in groups and they were instructed to think about the use of the English language around them and to answer the checklist as it applies to their own experience.

The internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha from all participants indicated high reliability of scores with a value of .91. This shows that at least 91% of the total within-test score variance was due to true score variance rather than to item content heterogeneity or poor item quality.

The mean of the scores obtained was 71.54 with a standard deviation of 13.55. The percentile performance based on all 180 participants was 88.5 for the 90th percentile and 53.5 for the 10th percentile.

In examining the shape of the score distribution, the calculated skewness was .09 with a kurtosis coefficient of -.25. In sum, the distribution of scores indicates a low peak and it is normally distributed.

Data Analysis

The t-test for two independent samples was used to determine the difference in the level of exposure between the two context groups (Taiwanese students in Taiwan and Taiwanese students in the Philippines). The Cohen's *d* was used to determine the effect size of context on English exposure. Measures of effect size was used to determine how large would the effect of context on the English exposure (.20 and below: small effect size, .21-.50: medium effect size, .60 and above: large effect size). The results in using inferential statistics such as the t-test is subject to large sample size (Reyes & Magno, 2007). Hence, the Cohen's *d* formula can partial out the influence of large sample size on the result. Levene's test was used to analyze the variance in the absolute deviation of values from each group mean. Since there are unequal groups being compared, the Brown-Forsythe test was conducted to check the homogeneity of variances of the two groups compared.

Results

The participants' scores on the questionnaire for English language exposure were grouped according to their context (Taiwanese students in Taiwan and Taiwanese students in the Philippines). The English language exposure scores ranged from 23 to 115 (M=71.54, SD=13.55) for the overall group. The difference between the Taiwanese participants in the Philippines (M=79.80, SD=10.95) and the Taiwanese participants from Taiwan (M=64.63, SD=11.13) was significantly different, t(180)=8.99, p<.05. This means that the Taiwanese in the Philippines are more exposed to the English language as compared to the Taiwanese in Taiwan.

The effect size of context on exposure among the Taiwanese college students is large with a Cohen's d value of 1.34 and an estimated effect-size r of 0.56. The large effect size value is noted to be independent of the sample size of the study. The large effect size of 1.34 accounts for a 65.3% of nonoverlap between the two context groups.

Figure 1

Difference among Taiwanese in Taiwan and in the Philippines in their English Exposure.
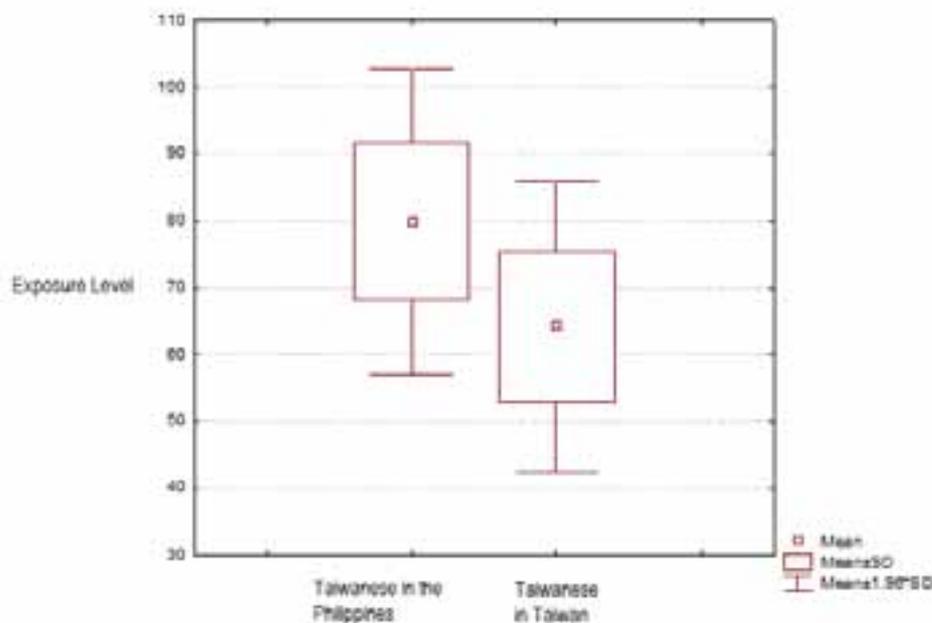
Table 1

Mean and standard Deviation of Context Groups

Context Group	*M*	*SD*	*N*
Taiwanese in the Philippines	79.80	11.64	82
Taiwanese in Taiwan	64.63	10.95	98

It can be seen in Figure 1 that the mean of exposure of the Taiwanese in the Philippies is higher (*M*=79.80) as compared to the mean of exposure of the Taiwanese in Taiwan (*M*=64.63). Having this difference in the mean scores of English exposure for the two groups with a total sample size of 180 reached significance, *p*<.05. There is also a large effect size of English exposure (*d*=1.34) in performing the meta-analysis. Based on the standard deviation, a large variability of scores occurred in both context groups and this was further tested using the Levene's test to determine the significance in the homogeneity of the given variance. The Levene's test also showed significant difference of the two groups despite the difference in the samples for the Taiwanese in Taiwan (N=98) and Taiwanese in the Philippines (N=82).

Discussion

Results showed that the Taiwanese in the Philippines had significantly higher English language exposure compared with the Taiwanese in Taiwan. The context where a Taiwanese uses the English language can strongly explain the differences in their exposure as indicated in the effect size. This results further recommends that learning an English language is strengthened if exposure to the language is high. These findings support literature where high levels of exposure are expected among the Taiwanese students in an English-speaking country like the Philippines (Jia & Aaronson, 2003; Reber, 1985). The English learner within an English-speaking context is more exposed enabling the learner to imbibe and internalize the English language through communication. Given that the Philippines is an English-speaking country, the Taiwanese in that context are more exposed since there are many opportunities for them to use the English language. The results support recent studies

that show 51.43% of the families in private schools of the Philippines spoke English at home (Bautista, 2000). With the time Taiwanese students spends in the Philippines, they come in contact with the English language may it be in verbal or written form, formal or informal ways of communication. This contact in the English language makes them actively socialize enabling them to become proficient in that language (Reber, 1985).

The Taiwanese students need to be exposed more with the English language through engaging in conversations in the second language with family members, friends, classmates, and colleagues; whenever they read books, magazines, and newspapers written in that language; whenever they come across information being disseminated in different multimedia sources; or even when they are mere passive listeners in any activity or place in which the second language is being spoken to further enrich their English proficiency. Through these socialization processes, they master a new array of social norms, attitudes and mannerisms that enable them to become effective speakers of the second language (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Chen, 1993; Levine, Baxter, & McNulty, 1987).

Further study is recommended to explore the cognitive processes that occur among language learners in second language acquisition across contexts with varying levels of exposure. Future research needs to address the specific cognitive processes involved in language acquisition, such as strategy use and metacognition since they strongly mediate language learning (Victori & Lockhart, 1995; Bremner, 1999; Lee, 2003).

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Appendix A

Items for the Checklist for English Language Exposure

Gender: ___ Male   ___ Female
Nationality:_____
Age: _____
School: _____

Instruction: Read each item and check how often is the situation applied to you. Shade the bubble corresponding to your answer

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Home	O	O	O	O	O
1. My parents talk in English.	O	O	O	O	O
2. English is spoken at home.	O	O	O	O	O
3. I converse in English among my family.	O	O	O	O	O
4. I engage in activities where English is used.	O	O	O	O	O
Friends	O	O	O	O	O
5. My friends speak in English.	O	O	O	O	O
6. I attend social gatherings where English is spoken.	O	O	O	O	O
7. I talk with my friends in English.	O	O	O	O	O
School	O	O	O	O	O
8. My teachers speak in English.	O	O	O	O	O
9. The activities in my school are conducted in English.	O	O	O	O	O
10. My classmates speak in English.	O	O	O	O	O
11. My school encourages students to speak in English.	O	O	O	O	O
12. The medium of instruction used in the classroom is English.	O	O	O	O	O
Media	O	O	O	O	O
13. I chat online in English.	O	O	O	O	O
14. I send text messages in English.	O	O	O	O	O
15. I receive text messages in English.	O	O	O	O	O
16. I browse webpages that are written in English.	O	O	O	O	O
17. I listen to songs in English.	O	O	O	O	O
18. I watch movies in English.	O	O	O	O	O
19. I watch TV shows in English.	O	O	O	O	O
20. I magazines written in English.	O	O	O	O	O
21. I read newspapers written in English.	O	O	O	O	O
22. I read books written in English.	O	O	O	O	O
23. The information I read around is in English.	O	O	O	O	O

The Efficacy of Setting Process Goals in Orienting EFL Learners to Attend to the Formal Aspects of Oral Production

Shu-Chen Huang
National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan

Bio Data:

Shu-Chen Huang is an Assistant Professor in the Foreign Language Center at National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan. Her research interests center on learning motivation and oral skill development. She has published in international journals such as the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, System, IRAL: International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching,* etc.

Abstract

Breaking down and setting process goals have been shown to facilitate the learning of foreign/second language reading and writing. Whether the same goal-setting mechanism works as well in real-time EFL speaking tasks needs further investigation. This study explored the efficacy of setting form-focused process goals for EFL learners when they perform an oral communication task. Seventy-two college students were randomly paired within three experimental groups – form-focused, meaning-focused, and no goal – for a ten-minute communication task and their dialogues were transcribed and analyzed in terms of the quality (number of c-units, number of words per c-units, type-token ration, and error rates) and quantity (number of words and turn counts) of oral output. Statistical analyses indicated that setting a form-focused process goal did not make a difference when learners performed the oral task. The contradiction between this study and previous ones suggests that the dominance of product goals in real-time communication made explicit attention to form in the process difficult. In addition, level of learner involvement may have been lower when an explicit process goal was present.

Keywords: English as a foreign language (EFL), goal-setting, oral communication, focus on form

Introduction

When EFL learners try to communicate and eventually get their meaning across, more likely than not their interlanguage is flawed with mispronunciation, unnecessary pauses, inappropriate usage, and grammatical mistakes. One major objective of EFL teaching is to develop learners' communicative competency and at the same time

improve the accuracy and fluency of their interlanguage. With their emphasis on treating language forms within communicative contexts, *focus on form* studies have become one major area in second language acquisition in past years (e.g., Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 2001; Long, 1991). Long (1991) was the first one to distinguish between *focus on form* and the more traditional *focus on formS* approach. He argues that the traditional pedagogy for language forms in the classroom is more analytical, treating linguistic forms as discrete elements and trying to help students accumulate knowledge over time, hence the plural *focus on formS*. However, in the refined *focus on form* approach, the fundamental focus is on meaning, with students' attention being drawn overtly to linguistic elements when the timing is considered appropriate by the language teacher.

Recent focus on form studies emphasize the importance of learner-generated, rather than the more traditional teacher-initiated, attention to form (Williams, 2001). But how can we ensure that learners themselves take the initiative and attend to the formal aspects of language? Will such attention lead to improved learner output? More empirical investigations are needed to help us answer this question.

In the following, we propose looking into goal-setting theory and its application in various language learning situations. The potential and challenges of goal setting in EFL oral tasks are also discussed. Next, we review relevant focus on form studies and highlight how researchers think learners' own attention to form may be fostered. We then describe the specific learning and social context of a particular learner group to justify our proposed approach. Finally, the research question and the study are presented.

Goal-setting Mechanism and Its Application in Language Learning

Locke and Latham's goal-setting theory (1990) asserts that human action is caused by purpose, and for action to take place, goals have to be explicitly set and pursued. The value of goal-setting is also observed in second/foreign language (L2) learning situations and has been incorporated into Dörnyei's (2001) process model of L2 motivation. In his model, it is delineated that learners' intention formation is influenced by goal, commitment, and action plan. In fact, goal-setting has been widely applied in various learning situations and found useful. Goals are seen as

regulators of actions and goal-setting serves as a significant source of task motivation (Locke & Latham, 1990).

To better facilitate learning, different types of goals can be set for various learning tasks. For example, Schunk and Rice (1989) used goals in teaching reading and compared (a) a product goal of answering questions, (b) a process goal of learning to use the strategy, and (c) a control condition whereby students were only told to work productively. Their findings suggest that both process and product goal students had higher self-efficacy than the control group and process goal children achieved higher comprehension. Graham, MacArthur, Schwartz, and Page-Voth (1992) used product and process goals in teaching writing. They found that the use of both product and process goals helped students positively on their essay writing performance and knowledge of the writing process, and such effects were maintained over time.

The aforementioned findings have suggested that setting process goals could be a useful regulator in the L2 classroom, but its applicability to other contexts and to the development of other skills needs more research. In reading and writing, learners may occasionally pause to consciously monitor their decoding or encoding of the target language. But in the case of real-time listening and speaking, learners' tasks are much more challenging. They have to attend to form and meaning concurrently, causing possible overloading of the brain's limited capacity (Ellis, 2001; Spada, 1997). Proposed solutions include pre-task planning (Foster & Skehan, 1996; Ortega, 1999; Yuan & Ellis, 2003) and separating grammar instruction to a later time when the communicative activities are completed (Lightbown, 1998). However, whether learners can still successfully focus their attention on the formal aspects of an L2 through process goals similar to those used in Schunk and Rice (1989) and Graham et al. (1992), particularly in communication-oriented oral tasks, has not yet been reported.

Lack of Learner-generated Attention to Form

Focus on form, unlike *focus on formS* which treats language forms as discrete objects of language instruction, is an approach seeking to direct learners' attention to form when problems occur incidentally in meaning-focused communication (Long, 1991; Long & Robinson, 1998). Research efforts have been centered on how form-focused

instruction can be made more facilitative for second language acquisition (Ellis, 2001). Recently, the emphasis has been placed on the importance of learners' self-initiated attention, rather than teachers', as well as examination of the existence of learner-generated attention to form (Williams, 2001). In an intact class where intervention was kept to a minimum, Williams found that although learners can and do attend to the formal aspects of language, it occurred rather infrequently. Learner-initiated language related episodes (LREs) occurred in more structured activities such as correcting homework and tasks from the textbooks, but LREs were rare in communication-based activities. Teachers in William's study claimed that they did not distinguish classroom activities and did not ask learners to focus more on form in some activities over others. Further examination of more objective classroom transcripts largely supported teachers' claims. But students seemed to be influenced by more subtle cues and tended to believe that they should be more careful about grammar when they do not use much of their own self-generated language, and they should just communicate clearly when they engage in communication tasks and create more of their own language.

Williams concluded that "the likelihood of learner-generated attention to form seems to be linked to learners' perception of the goals of the activity" (p. 304). In addition, Ortega (1999), in her research on the effect of planning on oral performance, indicated that learner "choices regarding focus on form were also affected by speakers' interpretation of the task" (p.128). Their findings seem to suggest that teachers should, in addition to designing communication tasks for learners to use the language, inform students explicitly of the language-related goals of classroom language tasks.

EFL Learners in an Asian Context

One potential problem with making focus on form an explicit process goal for learners in performing communicative tasks is whether they have the knowledge of language forms. For many learners, especially those who have not received much *focus on formS* training, their grammatical knowledge is still in the process of active formation when they practice carrying out communication tasks. Thus, even if they consciously attend to their language production, they do not know what has gone

wrong or what could be improved. However, such concern may not be as necessary for learners who have previously engaged in extensive *focus on formS* education for the target language.

In many Asian contexts, English is an important school subject, but it is not a language commonly used outside of the classroom. Getting high scores on entrance examinations is critical in helping students enter their ideal high schools and universities (Chen, Warden, & Chang, 2005). In order to perform well on these discrete-point examinations, learners gradually develop the competency to identify and analyze language problems. On the other hand, the opportunities for them to actually use the language for communication purposes are relatively rare. For example, according to a survey conducted by Savignon and Wang (2003) in Taiwan, grammatical rule explanations and drill practices still take the majority of class time in most high school English classrooms. Although the situation is not ideal in promoting communicative language use, students' developed declarative knowledge (Johnson, 1996) and analytical ability may serve as a good basis for teachers to facilitate student self-monitoring and make *focus on form* more student-oriented.

Making Attention to Form Explicit by Setting Process Goals

In fact, classroom oral production tasks have inherent goals of both kinds. On the one hand, students are expected to complete the task, and the completion of the task is usually oriented toward communication. But in order to communicate, another goal of no less importance is set, that is to enhance the formal aspects of language, and hopefully the tasks will push learners' interlanguage further toward a more target-like stage. Classroom tasks or activities, if not language related or for the purpose of enhancing the quality or quantity of language, may not be so well justified in a language classroom. Language teachers are generally aware of the purpose of practicing language forms when assigning communication tasks. But students, if not appropriately reminded, may focus exclusively on completing the task and fail to attend to the formal aspects of their language output. If bringing student awareness of formal language to a surface level may improve the quality of their interlanguage, then it seems legitimate to make language goals more explicit to students.

Method

In this study, a goal-setting approach intending to transfer the responsibility of form-focused attention from the instructor to the learners was investigated. Prior to the task when students were planning for their communication, one group of learners was given a process goal that directed their attention to language form. The inherent product goal of the task was not highlighted. A meaning-focused process-goal group and a control group with no particular process goal were designed for comparison purposes. Dependent variables, including task involvement, and the accuracy and complexity of the output, were analyzed to see if students performed differently under these conditions. The specific research question was "Did learners focus more on form when attending to form was set explicitly set as a process goal for an oral production task?"

Participants and Procedures

Participants were seventy-two non-English-major college students in northern Taiwan. Students admitted to this college, which was generally ranked among the top three to five on the island, have a proficiency in the high-intermediate level. Many started learning English as a foreign language (EFL) since elementary school or even earlier. However, their EFL learning during junior and senior high school was mainly geared toward the preparation of joint entrance examinations, which were predominantly in the multiple-choice format.

The study employed a quasi-experimental design in which participants were randomly assigned to one of three experimental groups – the control group was given (1) the do-your-best goal, while the other two groups were given (2) a meaning-focused goal, and (3) a form-focused goal. Participants were paired with one classmate of the same goal type to carry out a conversation task together in their usual weekly EFL class meeting. The explicitly stated goals focused on the *processes* of the tasks. The product goal of reaching an agreement, however, which was inherent in the task, was not highlighted. The three sets of instructions translated from learners' L1 Chinese (see Appendix) were printed in boldface on their task preparation sheets.

This communication task was drawn from Dörnyei and Kormos (2000) and has been employed in a related study by the author (Huang, 2008). In the first ten minutes

when students each individually prepared for the task, they were informed of their particular process goals (control, meaning-focused, and form-focused). Under the respective process goals, learners were given the task to select five among a list of ten student activities for voluntary community services. During the ten-minute pair discussion time, they tried to convince their partners and eventually reach a consensus on three mutually agreed items.

Data analysis

Number of LREs as well as data on interlanguage complexity, accuracy, and quantity were collected to examine if the three process goal groups differed in performance. For the LREs, learner dialogues were examined to find "all interaction in which learners draw attention to form, including those that focus on form in the course of meaningful communication as well as those that are set apart from such communication and simply revolve around questions of form itself" (Williams, 2001; p. 316). For language complexity, we followed Foster and Skehan (1996) and Mehnert (1998) and used c-units (communication units) as an indication of language complexity because of the conversational nature of the learner language output. The number of c-units and the number of words per c-unit were calculated. In addition, type-token ratio was included as well because it has been used widely as a measure of lexical range (e.g., Ortega, 1999), calculated by dividing the total number of words (tokens) by the number of different words (types). Non-target-language words and partial words were excluded from the calculation. For accuracy measures, the percentage of the number of error clauses over the total number of clauses was used. Other than the quality of the interlanguage, the quantity was investigated through word and turn counts. As Kormos and Dörnyei (2004) illustrated, the number of conversational turns is "a function of the interlocutor's active contribution" and thus is an indicator of learner involvement in the task.

Results

Fifty-two complete data sets remained after the initial screening. Descriptive statistics for dependent variables by groups were summarized by goal type groups, as is shown in Table 1, including number of participants in each group, means, standard

deviations, and the minimums and maximums of all dependent variables, i.e., number of c-units, number of words per c-unit, type-token ration, number of error clauses over total number of clauses, number of words, and number of turns. We found only two LREs in the entire transcript. Therefore, LREs were not included in the statistical analysis. One-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine if the three experimental groups were significantly different from one another. A moderately significant difference was found:, Wilks' λ = .604, F (2, 49) = 2.1, p = .025, multivariate η^2 = .22. For follow-up ANOVAs, the significance level was set at p = .008 (.05 divided by 6, the total number of dependent variables). ANOVA summary of turn counts, where the three groups differed most clearly, is shown in Table 2. However, this p value did not reach our significance level.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of dependent variables for three experimental groups

Measure	Goal types	*Mean*	*SD*	*Min.*	*Max.*
Number of c-units	No goal (*n*=16)	54.3	25.4	18	98
	Form (*n*=20)	52.8	21.1	24	94
	Meaning (*n*=16)	52.1	31.9	13	127
Number of words per c-unit	No goal (*n*=16)	5.34	1.26	3.35	8.22
	Form (*n*=20)	5.49	0.65	4.51	7.34
	Meaning (*n*=16)	6.26	2.67	4.23	15.54
Type-token ratio	No goal (*n*=16)	39%	7%	27%	48%
	Form (*n*=20)	36%	7%	25%	49%
	Meaning (*n*=16)	37%	10%	23%	67%
Number of error clauses over total number of clauses	No goal (*n*=16)	29%	12%	14%	50%
	Form (*n*=20)	26%	8%	7%	42%
	Meaning (*n*=16)	26%	15%	11%	71%
Number of words	No goal (*n*=16)	275	121	146	494
	Form (*n*=20)	286	109	134	533
	Meaning (*n*=16)	299	158	55	587
Number of turns	No goal (*n*=16)	21.8	14.9	6	48
	Form (*n*=20)	11.8	5.9	3	24
	Meaning (*n*=16)	13.2	13.0	1	47

Table 2   ANOVA summary of turn counts

Dep. variable	Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Turn counts	Between groups	1004.331	2	502.165	3.854	.028
	Within groups	6515.141	50	130.303		
	Total	7519.472	52			

Discussion

Results from MANOVA analysis on various language measures indicated that the three groups of different process goals – form-focused goal, meaning-focused goal, and do-your-best, no goal – did not differ from each other significantly. In this section, the results will be discussed from the following aspects, including the impact of cognitive overloading on learners' attention, the tradeoff between attention to form and task involvement, and the implication of lack of communication breakdown.

Overloading of Learners' Cognitive Capacity

The three groups were indistinguishable except in the number of turns taken by students. Those participants who were given no process goal took many more conversational turns than the other two groups, but the result is not significant in a strict statistical sense. According to Kormos and Dörnyei (2004), the number of turns serves as an indicator of learner involvement. More turn taking means fewer stretches of long monologue and more give-and-take in the conversation. It seems that the no goal group, while not having to attend to the process but merely having to focused just on communicating, was somewhat more involved in the oral task, although our evidence does not support a strong claim on this issue.

Being aware of the possible overloading that the process goals may have posed on students (Ellis, 2001; Spada, 1997), the researcher, based on previous literature (Foster & Skehan, 1996; Ortega, 1999; Yuan & Ellis, 2003), allowed students time to do pre-task planning. But the results seemed to indicate that students in the form-focused group failed to attend more to forms any more than the other groups even though forms were explicitly set as a process goal. Another possible explanation is that such real-time awareness and attention to form needs more practice and has to be cultivated over time. Thus, effects of such process goals on oral task could not be observable in a one-off situation.

Tradeoff between Attention in the Process and Task Involvement

The results seemed counter-intuitive at first sight. According to goal-setting theory, explicit goals should help regulate learners' behavior and lead to more learning effort.

As discussed earlier, Ortega (1999) and Williams' (2001) focus on form studies suggest the possible efficacy of goals in guiding learners to attend to form. Studies in teaching reading (Schunk & Rice, 1989) and writing (Graham et al., 1992) also found that both product and process goals positively influenced student performance.

The contradiction between this study and previous ones may have to do with the nature of the task. In reading and writing, learners have the luxury of going back to previous lines or editing what has already been written. But a co-constructed conversation requires that the speakers present their work in real time leaving few clues for online repair. Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen (2002) also acknowledged the dominance of a product goal in oral tasks. Our findings suggest that such dominance can hardly be mitigated by merely setting process goals. Moreover, the fact that the control group produced more turns on average indicates that there may be a price to pay, i.e., lower task involvement, for drawing learners' attention to form in real time. Teachers have to seriously take into consideration the brain's limited capacity and weigh between the cost and gain of learners' attention to form.

Looking beyond Communication Breakdowns

LREs, digressions from mainstream communication, have been regarded as an indication of learners' attention to formal aspects of language. Williams (2001) calculated the number of LREs in language classrooms and concluded that students seldom attend to forms spontaneously. Our finding was in line with Williams (2001) in that only two LREs were found, suggesting that there were few communication breakdowns and no need for interlocutors to stop for clarification. It seems we may conclude that the learners in this study could at least get their ideas across. But having few LREs and breakdowns does not mean that communication is smooth. Learners may have already resorted to avoidance (Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989) of more difficult structures and expressions. Such a phenomenon may be more prevalent in homogeneous classes where students share similar backgrounds. In teaching such classes, the teachers have to be more careful in finding ways to ensure optimal language practice and acquisition.

Conclusion and Limitations

This study adds one more piece of empirical evidence on the efficacy of a goal-setting approach in specific areas of language learning. The positive effects of goal-setting on the learning of reading and writing found in previous studies were not observed in this case of oral communication. The phenomenon was attributed to the higher level of real-time cognitive demand required in speaking than in reading and writing. However, the limitation of the present research report lies in the one-off treatment of the task. Future studies giving learners more opportunities to engage in similar tasks with similar process goals over an extended period of time may help us evaluate more adequately the efficacy of setting process goals in oral communication tasks.

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Appendix: Process goal instructions

<u>Form-focused:</u> The purpose of this task is to give you a chance to practice using English. During both the preparation and the actual communication stages, your major concern is to produce as many error-free clauses as you can, making sure that your pronunciation is correct, that you attend to grammatical details, and that you use well-structured sentences.

<u>Meaning-focused:</u> The purpose of this task is to give you a chance to practice using English. During both the preparation and the actual communication stages, your major concern is to produce as many idea points as you can. Make sure that you have good reasons for your choices and that your partner clearly understands your decision and reasons. On the other hand, you should also try to understand the reasons behind your partner's choices.

<u>Control:</u> The purpose of this task is to give you a chance to practice using English. Please prepare your talk using the space provided below.

Reading-Writing Connection for EFL College Learners' Literacy Development

Ming-Yueh Shen
National Formosa University, Taiwan

Bio Data:
Dr. Ming-Yueh Shen is currently an associate professor at the National Formosa University in Taiwan. She has taught English at the college level for more than ten years. Her main research interests include developing reading/writing literacy for EFL learners, learner autonomy and reading strategies instruction.

Abstract
This study aimed to examine the impact of a reading-writing connection project on the first-year EFL college students who studied English as a required subject in the first semester of 2005. A literacy environment that was supportive of reading-writing connections involved explicit instruction of text structures and story elements, reflective reading journals (or reading logs) on each reading text, and creative writing based upon the story book of the learners' own interest. Data were collected from the students' reading log entries, creative writing, and the follow-up interviews. Results indicated that the learners' literacy developed not only in linguistic progress but also in critical thinking as well as in personal growth. Reading helped the EFL learners' development of their writing with the stimulus, structures, vocabulary, and prior experience (schema). The reading-writing connection also had a positive impact on the EFL college students' reading metacognitive awareness (i.e., looking back what they read), as well as their reflection of personal values and experience transaction. Evidence arising out of these findings suggests that reading and writing should be integrated in teaching for the reason that they are not separated skills, but mutually reinforced in EFL classroom.

Keywords: reading-writing connections, literacy development, reading metacognitive awareness

Introduction

The relationship between reading and writing has long been recognized. Most educators suggested that reading and writing share similar process and kinds of knowledge (Stosky, 1983; Quinn, 1995; Lindsey, 1996; Risemberg, 1996; Ruiz-Funes, 1999; Abadiano & Turner, 2002). Other researchers have proposed that reading and writing skills are interconnected (Dahl & Smith, 1984; Noyce & Christe, 1989; Ferris & Hedgecock, 1998; Nelson & Calfee, 1998; Lee, 2000). They all

supported the belief that reading and writing are active and constructive process for meaning. Most of their findings have demonstrated that better writers tend to read more than poor writers, and better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing. Those empirical evidences have pointed out the importance of integrated approach on reading and writing. They also implied that experience with one skill consequently fosters development in another.

In EFL learning context, it seems that reading and writing in EFL context has often taught for many years as a separated skill that puts its emphasis on grammar and mechanics without developing learners' ability to express their ideas. A significant number of college students get accustomed to the pencil-and–paper tests and over-rely on grammar-translation approach to "understanding" the reading texts. The problem is that while learners master the grammar rules, they still find it difficult to read or write a whole text. Such multiple factors as inadequate learning habits and educational preparation might consequently result in poor literacy development. It is thus imperative for educators to provide effective instruction and academic support that allows for appropriate literacy development.

This study addressed the following questions: First, how does reading-writing connection project help EFL college learners' literacy development? Second, how does reading-writing connection project impact on the EFL college learners' personal growth?

Review of Literature

Reading-Writing-Connection

Reading and writing connections have been proposed under the constructive orientation. That is, both reading and writing require learners to actively involve in constructing meaning (Spivey, 1989, 1990; Risemberg, 1996; Nelson & Calfee, 1998; Lee, 2000). For both readers and writers, they have to actively involve themselves in interpreting and constructing meaning from the texts. That is, a reader has to bring meaning to the text and make inferences on the basis of the prior knowledge and background experience. Similarly, a writer constructs meaning by using his/her own background experience to generate ideas. Nelson and Calfee (1998) suggest that while constructing meaning for the whole text, the writer has to specify "the functional aspects of language to readers for organizing, selecting and connecting content"

(p.26). A writer also uses a text structure to plan out what they want to express (Gleason, 1995). In this view, it seems that writing is more obviously than reading a constructive process. However, the process is recursive. A writer has to be immersed in the texts that can serve as a model for writing.

Schema theory also underscores the close connections between reading and writing. In order to construct meaning and obtain the most comprehension, a reader needs to activate the existing schema to interact with the text information. Noryce and Christie (1989), in particular, indicate that a writer utilizes the same schemata that are used for reading comprehension. In order to write a topic, a writer needs to have an access to the prior knowledge (schemata) of that topic. Thus, these schemata serve as resources for the content of writing. This view of schema shared by both reading and writing lead us to infer that reading can play a role in the writing process by providing schemata (ideas) to write about. Conversely, writing a prediction during the pre-reading activity activates the learner's schemata about the topic and thus facilitates reading comprehension.

Research has also indicated that reading and writing share the parallel composing process. Tierney and Pearson (1983) developed "a composing model" of reading that explains how reading and writing share similar process of meaning construction. According to Tierney and Pearson, reading and writing share the similar characteristics as follows: planning (goal-setting to approach a text), aligning (decision making for how), drafting (meaning refining), monitoring (evaluating), and revising (reflecting). Those aspects are continuous and recursive during the reading and writing processes.

To sum up, this theoretical evidence lends support for the close relationship between reading and writing. Those theoretical models lead us to assume that reading and writing are "integrally connected" (Reid, 1993, p.64) and reading and writing ability tend to develop concurrently rather than sequentially (Nelson & Calfee, 1989).

Reading-To-write

The value of reading as a prewriting resource has been demonstrated in many studies (Smith & Dahl, 1984; Noyce & Christie & 1989; Raimes, 1983; Falk-Ross, 2002). Those research propose calls our attention to the fact that reading serves as a stimulus, causing readers to arouse the feeling and generate the ideas in response to the reading texts. Readers provide personal response and feelings that can be transacted into

expressive writing. In this way, reading is used to stimulate writing as a source of motivation. Other researchers have indicated that a large amount of reading can have positive effect on learners' overall writing ability. Krashen (1984) compared six co-relational studies that found that good writers tend to do more reading outside of class than poor writers.

Reading can do more than serve as a stimulus for writing. Joyce and Christie (1989) emphasize that it also plays an important role in acquiring students with the rules and characteristics of skilled writing. Reading can "expose students to models of different types of writing" (Joyce & Christie, 1989, p.105), e.g. literature, expository or other modes of texts. Eckhoff (1984) analyzed the writing of 2-graders who had been trained to read two different basal readers series: one read books with simple structures and the other with more complex style. She found that the learners' writing transferred certain characteristics of passages they had been reading. In her study, learners who read stories with more complex sentence patterns used more complex syntax in their writing, while the other learners wrote with simpler structure after reading the stories with simpler patterns. Butler and Turbill (1984) also showed that the 8-year-old boy's nonfiction writing resembled the narrative stories to which he had wider exposure.

There is more evidence indicating learners transfer words, content and structure from their reading to use in writing. Corden (2000) argues that "interactive discourse" impacts on learners' reading-writing connection. He illustrates how children are able to discuss and evaluate texts and to transfer the knowledge and insights gained to their own writing. Through "interactive discourse", learners' attention was called to particular story elements of setting, characters, plot, and style. As a result, children develop their awareness of how texts are constructed and eventually transfer their knowledge and understanding to their writing.

Smith's "Reading Like a Writer Theory" helps to explain that reading has its positive effects on writing. Smith (1983) has proposed that one will unconsciously learn the rules and conventions of writing while reading given certain conditions, such as absence of anxiety, a clear understanding of the text being read, and the perception of self as a writer. In other words, when given those factors, the reader subconsciously becomes sensitive to the style and mechanics of the text, and read like a writer.

Methodology

Participants

The participants were students at a technical university in the central part of Taiwan. All of them were enrolled in a class entitled General English. Those students have been defined as less skilled and less efficient learners (Lin, 1995) compared to others in Taiwan. All of them *never* had any writing course at the time being studied. All that they had experienced in writing is short answers with only one to three sentences in length.

During the interview at the prewriting stage, I found that all the students had little confidence in writing. They were unsure of their ability to write more than three sentences or one paragraph. Such psychological suffering seems unavoidable for the students when they were required to write in a new language. Additionally, the students' language competence was just at either low intermediate or high intermediate level. They had limited vocabulary and sentence structures that were believed to serve as foundation for writing. When asked if assigned free writing on given topics were acceptable tasks, all of them admitted that it would require painful efforts to write with limited language competence and to express themselves clearly with the 'blank' mind. They said, "I can't think of anything to write."

All the participants were divided into several groups of six. There were nine groups in total in the class. They read, discuss, and then write together for this semester-long program.

Text Selection

Narrative text was determined as the material to help connect the learners' reading and writing literacy. Generally speaking, narrative text (i.e. fiction) is easier to comprehend and remember than expository text (i.e. factual and informational material) (Williams, 2000). In this study, all the students chose the literary texts from Heinemann ELT Guided Readers Series and compiled a preference reading list. To meet the diversity of the students' proficiency levels, the instructor selected three books among the list, according to the difficulty level, as the required reading assignments for one semester. The first book, Nick McIver's love story, "*Dear Jan...,*" was a beginner's work with approximate 30 pages, 600-basic word vocabulary level. The second book, "A Christmas Carol," written by Charles Dickens, has 58 pages with 1200 vocabulary level. The last one was "Wuthering Heights," written by Emily

Bronte, with approximately 90 pages, 2000 words of vocabulary range.

Implementation of Reading-Writing Connection Activity

This study attempted to connect reading and writing together by guiding the students to read the simplified graded storybooks and then write the response journals as well as creative writing based on the book they read.

Story Frames. The activity was designed to help readers organize their ideas about what they have read by completing a story frame. The categories included 1) plot and suspense, 2) characters and relationships, 3) major themes, 4) methods writer uses to communicate his/her attitudes, 5) reader's response (Murdoch, 1992). They made students being aware of the relationship between the reader and writers. The students' attention was also guided to analyze the roles of the different characters and the relationship to one another, and to identify the main themes of the story, and so on. Each student read his or her story book and kept the draft notes in any format they liked. Those notes helped them recall when they started to write.

Reading Log/ Response Journals. The students completed weekly reading assignments which included chapters from the course texts. To support the students' engagement with reading and help them make connections with the story, a reader-response prompt was given to each student for the discussion on the fourth week. They were required to respond to those questions on the prompts and write a short essay to each question for discussion on the following week. This was considered important to help students construct meaning from the text. Those questions, guiding the students' thinking after they read, were listed as follows:

1. Which character do you like or dislike most? Why or why not?
2. Do you share any feelings of characters in the story? Explain.
3. What does this story (characters, incidents, or ideas) remind you of in your own life?

Response journals allowed students to record how they felt about a character, how they identified with a particular character, how they felt about the text, how the text related to their lives and how they predicted or reacted to the story ending.

Response journals were collected and reviewed each week by the instructors. At the end of the course, the reading log entries were collected and photocopied for analysis.

The instructors provided feedback by writing comments and questions in the margins.

Teacher-Students Conference. During the 18-week periods, every group of students was assigned 2 sections of teacher-students conferences with the teacher, with one hour for each. For the first section, the conference focused on solving the grammar, vocabulary and comprehension problems, together with the guided categories of text analysis. During the teacher-students conference, the teacher made sure if the students could readily follow and sequence the events, if they grasp the basic plot structure, and if they were alerted to the way the writer created suspense. The second section involved questions about the writing process, listening to what the students said about why and how they wrote, and guidance to the following writing activity.

Making Creative Writing. The students had to read the three literary books and then were required to choose one of them to write a piece of creative writing in English according to their own interest and language levels. The creative writing was required as the final report which substituted the traditional test with multiple-choice test. They were free to write as they wished, e.g. a continuation of the story, a changed ending, or a rewrite of the story, etc. In the coaching process, the students were encouraged to interact with the reading text highly actively. Most of reading was cooperatively done outside of the classroom in the students' free time to ensure a tension-free environment.

   The students started to write from the twelfth week. They planned their stories based on the framework they liked. Before the end of the study, they were allowed to meet the teacher any time for their writing problems, in addition to one-to-one conference for revision and informal interviews.

   At the sixteenth week, the students showed their draft writing which they put their ideas and feeling on. They already created their own story sequences. What we did, at this stage, was to just focus on the organization of the writing itself. It was a process of moving back and forth from paragraph to paragraph, removing the irrelevant details and adding more highlighting incidents. At the final week, we worked on the grammar, vocabulary and mechanics. The instructor helped them with rhetorical techniques, making their expression more elaborate and effective. This also helped make students aware of the necessary rhetorical techniques for writing.

Data Analysis

This study examined the students' literacy development by looking into their written entries, including reading log entries and their creative writing, to find the effects of reading on writing. The results of the informal interviews on two students in each group also served as data sources.

Three reading log entries from each group were collected for analysis. Entries ranged in length from one to two pages. The constant comparative method of analysis was used for analysis of the reading log entries (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to provide a determination of major patterns in changes in the students' reading comprehension. The key words were sorted by the researcher according to categories which emerged from the initial reading of the full entries and were refined during the sorting process.

The data analysis of the creative writing first focused on the quantity (how many pages) the students wrote, which was evidenced as their initially observable ability to write. Then, the analysis further examined whether they transformed and were transformed by the text. That is, this study examined how students transferred words, contents, and structures from their reading to writing.

Results

Results from Reading Log / Reflective Journal

As evidenced by the entries, the students engaged in critical thinking and interpretive response[1] more frequently. They collaboratively used high level forms of information analysis, such as relating the text to previous experience. The following excerpts collected from each group show the overall trend on the part of the students' active engagement with the text. The reading text acts as vicarious experience for personal growth and evaluation of value.

In responding to the second prompt question "Do you share any of the feelings of the characters in this story? "most of the students activated their previous experience by using visualization to make sense of the text as they reacted to the author's description of the character's change into a different person. Some excerpts from different groups are as follows:

> *"I can feel how happy Scrooge is when he was surrounded by a group of orphans. He never cared the poor people before. Scrooge changed from a*

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[1]All quotations are presented in English for a consistent use of the language use in this paper, although the interviews were conducted and transcribed in Chinese. The English version of transcript was reconfirmed with the students in order not to change their original meaning.

> *mean, unkind and unhappy man into a man who showed love to people around him. I think he must feel happiness he never experienced before."* (from Group 1, A Christmas Carol)

> *"I can imagine how sad Bob was when his boss, Scooge, refused to pay him more. What a difficult situation to support a family without money." (from Group 5, A Christmas Carol)*

Some students engaged in the metacognitive process, activating their own previous experience.

> *"Scrooge was too stingy before. He should be nice to Bob, because he is a boss. Bob has five kids and is a poor man. I think Scrooge can finally understand that money can not bring him happy. For me, I found I was a stingy person too. I found I am too mean to my younger brother. Maybe I need to be nice to my brother. I think help others make us happy." (from Group 3, A Christmas Carol)*

> *"I think people should choose their true love. It is stupid to get married just because the man is rich. We know the cases from many movie stars or TV actresses who marry with a rich family. They usually have a unhappy marriage. They divorced finally." (from Group 2, Dear Jan…)*

> *"Well, Ruth is a brave girl who chose her true love. But, I am not sure whether or not I can do so if I meet the same problems. I'm afraid I will hurt my parents." (from Group 5, Dear Jan…)*

The response emerged from the students with better proficiency level was particularly in-depth. The responses implicitly reflected the students' life experience and personal growth.

> *"I feel sympathy for Heathcliff, the center character in this story. From childhood on, he was planning revenge. How terrible! But in some way, I can understand why he did the revenge because his heart is filled with hatred. I remember when my father died, my aunt didn't want to lend money to my family. At that time, I hated my aunt and even people around me. I still can recall the hatred in my mind." (from Group7, Wuthering Heights)*

> *"In fact, I chose this book, Wuthering Heights, because the characters and their individual personality strongly touch my heart. They become what they are like because they came from different living backgrounds.*
> *Think of Cathy Linton and Hareton Earnshaws… Their childhood is different. The childhood and their family backgrounds affect their personality." (from Group 8, Wuthering Heights)*

In the study, the students encountered the values the characters live by. The responses to *A Christmas Carol* Annie and *Dear Jan* judged the characters' behaviors and furthermore compared those behaviors with theirs in the real life. Through

sharing and evaluating different images of life, each student reader felt sympathy and antipathy for persons quite different from his or hers and built his or her own sense of values. For example, one student in group 3 was able to experience vicariously the emotion of Scrooge and compared these experiences with hers, recalling she shouldn't have been mean to her brother. Some students reflected back their own feelings when compared with Ruth in the story. One student in group 7 expressed his feeling "How terrible!" to show his reaction to the character's method of revenge. Through reading the literary work, he was offered a chance to evaluate moral values. Based on his own experience in childhood, he was able to understand what the main character Heathcliff faces by sharing Heathcliff's problems and showing his concerns. He helped formulate reasons for their personal dilemmas of one character: the upbringing of each affects their characters.

In this case, keeping reading log, as vicarious experience, helped reveal the significance of the learners' emotion and actions, and self-understanding. Through the reflective journals / reading log, the students integrated a lot of new information concerning other people's experiences. They learned to react to the reading text in a more critical and personalized manner.

Results from the Creative Written Production Entries

In this program, three out of nine groups chose "*Dear Jan…*" to develop their story; four groups of them preferred "*A Christmas Carol;*" only two groups chose the more challenging and intricate story "*Wuthering Heights.*" The findings showed in the participants' written production entries are categorized as follows. Positive changes occurred in their understanding and use of proper English from the amount of reading and being able to transfer what they read to their writing.

Evidence of Transfer of Rules and Structures

Each group of participants finished reading the chosen story and then wrote a creative story based on one of the books their read. As shown in Table 1, the participants transferred certain characteristics of the passages they had been reading.

Table 1. *Evidence of Transfer of Rules and Structures from the Reading Text*

Groups	Pages	Approach to Creative Story	Story Structure		
			Title	Person	Dialogue
1	7	*A Christmas Carol* To continue the story by	yes	3rd	yes

2	5	*Dear Jan...* To rewrite the story	yes	3rd	yes
3	8	*A Christmas Carol* To rewrite the story	yes	3rd	yes
4	4	*Dear Jan...* To rewrite the ending	yes	3rd	yes
5	6	*A Christmas Carol* To rewrite the ending	yes	3rd	yes
6	7	*A Christmas Carol* To rewrite the story	yes	3rd	yes
7	3	*Dear Jan...* To rewrite the ending	yes	3rd	no
8	10	*Wuthering Heights* To rewrite the story	no	3rd	yes
9	6	*Wuthering Heights* To write the reflections	no	1st	no

The students demonstrated in their writing a transfer of story structure from the reading text in the use of title, person, and dialogue, as shown in Table 1. For example, the students in group 1 started with one chapter followed by another chapter with a title, respectively. Their first chapter was titled as, "A Brand New Life," followed by "The Little Angels," "The Very Miserable Thing," "A Surprised Visitor," and ended with "A Plan." It might be possible that they created their own story following the structure in the story they chose. Moreover, as the narrator did in *A Christmas Carol*, the students adopted the third person to begin their creative story and introduced the main character Scrooge. In each chapter, they began with a short introduction followed by dialogues between characters. It indicated a transfer of the story structure from the text they chose.

In contrast, the students in group 8 introduced each chapter without a title, although *Wuthering Heights* begins its chapters with titles. A possible explanation might be that their story was structured with a sequence of time rather than with a topic or event. However, it seems that they followed the structure in *Wuthering Heights* by introducing the setting and background as Bronte did. Additionally, like *Wuthering Height, they* began their creative story directly with a first person narrative, the servant who took care of one boy and one girl. The use of dialogues also demonstrated a transfer of story structure from the text thy chose. Another example from showing the transfer of story structure was found in the creative story entitled as "A Different Ending." The students didn't structure their story with several sections due to the reason that they focused on the ending instead of some other plots. They

adopted the third person to tell their story as the original story "Dear Jan…" did.

The dialogue-driven style in the creative writing also demonstrated the influence from the original story. Interestingly, most of the groups illustrated in their creative writing transfer of this story structure from the reading text. In their creative writing revealed a large amount of dialogues as similarly employed by the author of the original literary work.

Evidence of Reading As a Stimulus for Imaginative World. Another finding from the students' written production was that the students, by using their own imagination, involved themselves with the character's world in the story. There is obvious evidence that reading stories may promote our students' own creativity. Students showed that reading the stories helpful as they made connections between the reading text and their creative writing. For example, the students in the first group wrote a continuation of the ending for the original story, *An Christmas Carol*, in which Scrooge, a rich but mean old man, changed his attitudes toward his own life and people around him after four ghosts visited him on Christmas Eve. In this continuation of the original story, they described Scrooge as a kind man who visited his employee's house and the orphanage to show his kindness and care. They imagined that both Scrooge's sister and the orphanage administrator died and came to visit him in his dream. Instead of frightening Scrooge as the four ghosts did in the original story, the two visitors in the continuation of the story came as angels urging Scrooge to help the poor.

Another example was found in the fourth group's love story in which they rewrote the clichéd and plain ending into a different one. Instead of accepting the arranged marriage, the character Ruth became a brave girl who chose her true love. The students designed more intricate plots, including more detailed illustration. They imagined Ruth sitting in deep thought, bursting into tears when informed about the arranged marriage, and screaming hysterically. Furthermore they described Mommy's dream and secret arrangement, the sad departure of Ruth and finally, at the airport, a sad father with a look of desperation in the eyes and with tears flooding down his face. Based on the original story, they expanded and visualized their ideas in a deliberate way.

The students in group eight with the more proficient learners created a more complicated plot for their story. They adapted the story from the original text, the

Wuthering Heights, but moved the setting from England to Taiwan during the period of Japanese colonization. All the characters belonged to two Japanese families. The students created the main character as an adopted orphan with an entangled relationship with his Japanese girl friend. In this way, the students could see in the literary situation some analogy to the problems common among most young students in the real world.

Evidence of Transfer of Use of Vocabulary from the Text

In addition to the imagination and creativity demonstrated in this reading-writing connection project, there is also evidence indicating that learners transferred words from the reading to use in writing. Table 2 presents sample vocabulary used in the student writers' creative writings. Some of the words they used were borrowed from the simplified version of one work they chose to read. Most of them were looked up in the dictionary when they found it necessary to describe the feelings of the characters and the major theme.

In this study, the first group created a seven-page (single space typing) continuous story, reacting to the story about a cold, hard man, Scrooge. The students hoped to create a changed character, by using compound words such as "love-giving," "heart-warming," "the orphanage administrator," etc. They wrote a Chinese version before looking up the words they needed to translate her story.

The students in Group 4 and Group 7 chose a very beginning-level book with a cliché love story but they managed to rewrite the plain ending into a more intricate denouement. For instance, in the three-page story by Group 7, it seems that they used several words and compound sentences beyond their current proficiency level. They borrowed the verb "arrange" in the story and expanded the vocabulary use into the phrase "burst into tears" and "with tears flooding down his face" by looking up the dictionary reading for "tear" intending to describe a character's reactions toward an arranged marriage. The students in Group 4 asked the researcher for help during the one-to-one conference for more descriptive vocabulary for their characters, such as "a look of desperation," and "in desperation." They employed the new words to describe the character's emotional reaction. Some of the excerpts indicating the expansion of vocabulary are as follows.

> "Ruth <u>burst into tears</u> when she knew she would be <u>arranged</u> to marry a man she doesn't love."

> "Ruth screamed <u>hysterically</u> when she was lost <u>in desperation</u> (*sic*).
> "Ruth's father rushed to the airport only to see his daughter leaving. He stood there with <u>a look of desperation </u>in his eyes and <u>with tears flooding down his face</u>."

The students in Group 8 finished their story in ten pages. They demonstrated a great potential to be the fluent and efficient readers and writers. One possible reason might be that they devoted themselves to studying English more frequently than the others. Compared with the other participants, they used more adverbs and adjectives to describe the intricate plot, such as "disapprovingly," "admirable," "unbearable, and "obedient," etc, which made the sentences more complex.

Table 2. *Sample Vocabulary in the Student Writers' Creative Writing*

● *A Christmas Carol*

(I.) Words used from the reading text---

A hard man (p.1); clerk (p.2); shut (p.5); sat down by the fire (p. 5); put an arm around him (p.13); round the fire (p.29); watch with open eyes (p.21); cold money-lover (p.22)

(II.) New words expanded from reading---Group 1

Continuation; orphanage; wooden crutch; creak; destination; administration; mean; miserable; knock; allocated; urged; sobbed; flowing; leant; departed; rush; distributed

● *Dear Jan*

(I.)[1] Words used from the reading text---

Lonely (p.10); repeated (p. 10); notice (p.11); knocked on the door (p. 17); lay on her bed (p. 20); shouted (p. 20); run upstairs (p. 20); miserable (p.22); hall (p. 22); leant out of the window (p. 24)

(II.)[2] New words expanded from reading---

Armchair, response; tragedy; sob; scream; allow; force; disappear; reluctantly; hysterically; inquisitively; deep in though; burst into tears; in a fit of panic

● *Wuthering Heights*

(I.) Words used from the reading text---

Evil-looking (p.2); admit (p.3) remark (p.3); Admirable (p.5); fiercely (p.5); with a trembling lip (p. 30) ;remained unconscious of (p.41); look scornfully at (p. 45); consciousness (p.63); grief (p.63); obedient (p. 124); disapprovingly (p. 127); ashamed of (p. 128); unbearable (p. 141); came unexpectedly (p. 122, 126)

(II.) New words expanded from reading---

Successor; consciousness; appearance; treatment; governed; depart; escape; inherited; mention; prohibited; betray; persuaded; convince; retorted; immigrated; promised; bullied; disobey; fantastic; splendid; unfair; rational

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1.*"Words in reading" refers to the words shown in the reading texts, but borrowed by the student writers in their creative stories. Page numbers indicate where these words appear in each of the reading texts.*

2. *"Words expanded from reading" refers to the words the student writers looked up in a dictionary to describe the characters and themes in their creative stories.*

Results from the Interviews

To further understand the students' reaction to the reading-to-writing activity, informal interviews about how they felt were conducted at the end of the study. Two major themes were identified from the interview data, as shown in the following section: (1) reading serves as a resource for what to write; (2) students become more reflective and perceptive.

When asked what benefit they gained from reading a literary work, all the participants said that the literary work had served as a resource for what they had to write. They also responded that for them, the reading-to-writing activity was meaningful because they were able to find something to write. They also found it helpful as they made connections to ideas and themes expressed in what they read. Additionally, they realized that the act of writing is thinking about reading which in turn produces writing. As the above statements, they were amazed with their written production as this was their first experience of writing formally and at length.

> *"I've never believed that I can write so much. You know....I often write one or two sentences and I just stop there without any idea to write..."(from Group5)*
> *"When I read the story, I couldn't t help but have something to say. So many characters, so many things happen...I found there was a lot in my mind." (from Group 6)*
> *"You didn't tell me how many pages I needed to write. In the beginning, I doubt I could write. But, when I started to write, I was caught by the intricate plot and setting. Wow...I kept on reading and found more to write. It is not difficult to write a story based on a novel." (from Group 8)*
> *"When I read the story and then wrote our own story, I imitated the structure from the story by following the dialogue-driven style. It's not so difficult to develop a five-page writing. It's so fun!" (from Group 4)*
> *"I hope you can let us read the novels like this. I love story and would like to read more. I found it easier and more fun to learn and use the vocabulary in the story." (from Group 2)*

With regards to the question of if they had learned something from the book, the students claimed that they had become more reflective about their ideas and more perceptive about the people or events around them.

> *"I'm okay with any materials you brought into the class. But, if you let us read the short stories, there will be fewer classmates sleeping in class. We can also discuss the story and the characters, and try to solve the problems the characters meet." (from Group 1)*
> *"To tell the truth, reading novels is more interesting than reading the other articles you provided us in class. I hate the way that we went over the article*

and then had to remember the vocabulary. It's more exciting to read the story and immerse myself in the world which the characters are in." (from Group 9)

"I feel it meaningful to connect the character's experience with mine. I learned to express myself and understand myself. " (from Group 9)

Discussion

The present study provides a number of important findings. These findings lend support to the previous research by Noyce and Christie (1989), as well as Butler and Turbill (1984), indicating that reading text can be more than a stimulus for writing. It also acquaints students with the rules and characteristics of skilled writing. As Smith (1983) proposed, a reader will be subconsciously sensitive to the style and mechanics of the reading text, and unconsciously acquire the rules and conventions of writing while reading. Through "interactive discourse," the reader's attention is called to particular story elements of setting, characters, plot and style and "he or she reads like a writer" (Corden, 2000).

In this study, most of the participants' attention was called to the dialogue-driven style in the reading text and presented their story with dialogues. The dialogue-ridden style in their creative writing demonstrated the influence from the original story. For instance, the students in Group 4 particularly paid their attention to Ruth's emotional reaction toward love and rewrote a different ending for her. Those in Group 8 focused their attention on Heathcliff's rage and revenge on his enemy's family. They structured the creative story by describing the complicated relationship between a Taiwanese orphan Te and two families, the Maruyamas and the Suzukis. In this way, reading text benefits students in developing linguistic knowledge, both on a usage level and a use level (Mckay, 1987).

Moreover, reading a variety of resources may promote our students' own creativity. There is obvious evidence that reading literature may promote our students' own creativity. As this research has indicated, reading offers opportunities for personally gratifying experience through the use of ones' imagination, participation in vicarious experiences of adventure, and involvement with human behaviors in many different situations (Mckay, 1987). The reader needs not have lived with the Earnshaws and the Lintons in *Wuthering Heights* to experience the sufferings of the two unfortunate families. By interacting, and transacting with the reading text, the students came to the world in which the characters existed.

A learner's language proficiency might be a factor that influences the use of words and sentence structures in writing. In this study, the participants in the different groups chose the texts with different difficulty levels; therefore, it was difficult to compare the use of sentence structures in their creative writing. However, the reading texts they chose indicate different difficult levels with different vocabulary sizes. In this case, we might claim that reading served not only as a stimulus for expansion of ideas but also as a linguistic model for the use of words and sentence structures. This finding lends support to Eckhoff's (1984) which indicated learners who read stories with more complex patterns use more complex structures in their writing.

Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

Underpinned by the Reading-to-Writing Model (Corden, 2000; Smith, 1983)**, t**his study aimed to investigate how a reading to reading connection project helped EFL learners' literacy development by guiding them to read simplified graded books and produce creative writing in responding to the text. It also sought to examine how reading serves as a stimulus, causing reading to arouse the feeling and generate the ideas in response to the reading texts (Smith & Dahl, 1984; Noyce & Christie, 1989; Falk-Ross, 2002). These results support the view that reading plays an important role in acquiring students with the rules and characteristics of skilled writing. They also are in accord with previous studies which have suggested that reading and writing should be mutually reinforced; that is, reading helps writing with the stimulus, structures, feeling and prior experience (schema), just as writing helps readers look back what they read (metacognitive skills).

This study adopted guided categories for text analysis to help beginning EFL learners become involved in the plot, characters' relationships, major themes, reader's responses and so on. Through the guided reading of the texts, they were able to comprehend the reading text easily and experience vicariously the actions and emotions of the characters in the story and shared their problems and concerns. As shown in the findings in this study, reading the text offered students opportunities to experience vicariously the actions and emotions of the characters in the reading text. The participants compared and contrasted these experiences with their own and showed their responses to what they read and felt. In this way, reading stories can be a vicarious experience providing students important insights about themselves and the world around them.

The results indicate that reading the simplified graded work can not only be a stimulus for creative writing, but also acquaint students with the use of words, as well as the rules. Additionally, the students also became aware of the text structure, the skills and characteristics the author deliberately used to begin the story and then subconsciously transferred them to their own writing. Evidence for this transformation can be seen in the students' pages of creative writing, within which the students transferred the imaginative energy from the literary text. That is, reading can be a stimulus to spur readers' imaginative writing. Thus, in EFL learning, reading stories helps to promote the students' creativity.

The results of this study implied that EFL students have to learn to read beyond the words and beginning EFL readers need guidance from the teacher. They can read the simplified graded work assigned by their teacher or bring their own for story sharing with the other learners. What the teacher does is to bridge the gap whenever student readers meet difficulties in understanding the text. The teacher then comments on the story's organization, the characters, and the plot. The world of students and the world of the novel will be connected, too. Moreover, the classroom discussions help to develop the reflective thought processes and writing skills in the students.

Based on the schema theory, we suggest that teachers should provide students with as various reading materials as possible, leading to more input as Krashen suggests. Through more access to reading stories and evaluating different modes of construct, students gain valuable experience to deepen and expand their consciousness of the richness of life. A short story, a newspaper article, a letter, an advertisement, or a poem can work as a content to provide for writing. Other activities such as summaries, responses, outlining or pre-reading writing are believed to be useful to examine and facilitate reading comprehension.

Although the study showed positive with EFL college students in term of their linguistic development and personal growth, however, this reading-writing project was a required course assignment through a semester. It is worth further study to investigate the relationship between the value the individual student associates with success from the reading-to-write project and their motivation to read in English in terms of each different constructs, e.g. intrinsic value of reading, attainment value of reading, and extrinsic value of reading, etc..

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Some Potential Problems for Research Articles Written by Indonesian Academics when Submitted to International English Language Journals

Zifirdaus Adnan
University of New England, NSW, Australia

Bio Data:
Dr. Adnan is a researcher in genre analysis of academic writing, Second Language Acquisition and in Applied Linguistics generally. He completed an undergraduate degree in English as a Foreign Language at IKIP Padang (now UNP), Indonesia, in 1984, an MA in Applied Linguistics at the University of Melbourne in 2005, and a PhD at Curtin University of Technology in languages and intercultural education in 2006, with a dissertation on rhetorical patterns of Indonesian Humanities research articles. He has published both in Australia and Indonesia. His latest book is *Merebut Hati Audiens International: Strategi Ampuh Meraih Publikasi di Jurnal Ilmiah* (Winning International Audience: Effective Strategies to Gain Publication in International Journals), with Indrawati Zifirdaus, MA (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2005). Dr. Adnan has taught at several universities in Australia including the University of Melbourne, Murdoch University (Perth). Currently, Dr. Adnan is a lecturer in the Indonesian Language and Studies at the School of Arts, University of New England, Armidale (NSW), Australia. Email: zadnan@une.edu.au

Abstract
Publishing in international journals by non-native speakers of English has attracted considerable attention recently (Flowerdew, 2001). With the exception of Mirahayuni (2002), no author has looked at feedback to articles written by Indonesian authors when submitted to international English language international journals. This paper presents such issues concerning Indonesian research articles. The data are drawn from an analysis of 63 Indonesian research articles (RA) using the CARS model (Swales 1990), interviews with national and international journal editors, and recent literature on publishing in international journals by non-native English speakers. Based on these the findings and the literature, this paper suggests that emphasis should be put on teaching RA rhetorical structure acceptable to international journals. Further research into English manuscripts by Indonesian and other Asian authors is also recommended.

Key Words: research article, academic discourse, publishing internationally

Introduction

Issues related to publishing in international English language journals by non-native speakers of English have attracted considerable attention from both the Indonesian

government authorities, specifically the Directorate of Higher Education (abbreviated in Indonesian as DIKTI), as well as universities and researchers. DIKTI has provided both 'carrots and sticks' to encourage academics to publish internationally. 'Carrots' (incentives) have been presented in the form of financial incentives for researchers to publish internationally; and 'sticks' (pressures) in the form of stricter requirements for academics at senior level for promotion unless they publish internationally (interview with Director of Research and Community Service at the Directorate of Higher Education in 2000).

For their part, many universities have organised a series of workshops to improve the skills of their academics to publish their research in journals. For example, Airlangga University recently organised a workshop for this purpose (11-12 September 2005). Among researchers who have undertaken research into these issues are Gosden (1993), Canagarajah (1996), Flowerdew 1999a, 1999b, 2000, Mirahayuni (2001, 2002), and Swales (2004). With the exception of Mirahayuni (2001, 2002), no author has looked at the possible problems articles written by Indonesian authors would experience when reviewed by international English journal editors. This paper considers these issues, but first it will review the literature. This review will be followed by the methodology, results, discussion, conclusion and practical suggestions, and implications for further research.

Literature Review

The study by Gosden (1993) surveyed editors in hard sciences (shortened as MIPA in Indonesian) in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America (USA) focusing on their attitudes toward and treatment of RA manuscripts from Non-Native Speakers of English (NNSs). He found a number of problems such as lack of clarity in presenting results, isolation, the longer time taken to write RAs (and submit), and mediocre research methodology. Isolation refers to many causes such as "not carefully reading 'Instructions to Authors', unfamiliarity with the journal and its academic level, not reviewing previous literature well and relating own study with other studies …" (p. 33).

In Hong Kong, Flowerdew (1999a; 1999b; 2000; 2001) has conducted extensive research examining different aspects of publishing in international journals. His informants were mainly Hong Kong scholars who used English as their instructional language. He has surveyed these scholars' experience and views on publishing in

international journals (Flowerdew 1999b); conducted in depth interviews (Flowerdew 1999a); and undertaken an ethnographic case study of the process of submitting manuscripts by one of those scholars (Flowerdew 2000). These studies concentrated mainly on authors trying to have their RAs published in international journals. Flowerdew (2001) has also looked at the 'other side of the coin' i.e. the international editors' side of the story, and in particular the common problems they found in NNSs' manuscripts. He conducted in depth interviews with editors of major international journals in applied linguistics and language teaching. Some of these journals are: *Applied Linguistics, English Language Teaching Journal, English for Specific Purposes Journal, Journal of Second Language Writing, TESOL Quarterly* and *World Englishes.*

In his studies of Hong Kong scholars submitting papers to international journals, Flowerdew (1999b) found difficulties in writing the Introduction and Discussion sections, particularly with rhetorical or discursive structures. For example, the scholars found it problematic to structure a literature review, to imply or emphasise the significant contribution of the study, and to make convincing arguments. Flowerdew considered that such issues could 'critically affect what gets published by NNSs on global scale' (p. 259). Indeed, difficulties in writing the Introduction and Discussion sections have also been identified by other scholars as it is from these sections that editors judge whether the research reported in the article is 'sound, significant, and worthy of publication' (Atkinson, 1990; Swales, 1990, cited in Flowerdew, 1999b).

In his 2001 study on 'the other side of the coin', Flowerdew explored publishing problems from the perspective of editors through in depth interviews. He found that the two sections i.e. introduction and discussion sections were also problematic for the NNS authors to write. One of the major problems was a failure to establish a niche (Swales 1990) through an adequate literature review. The problem regarding establishing a niche means that the author failed to show the reader where their study stands in relation to other studies, and subsequently why the study is important to the field.

These studies have contributed significantly to our understanding of issues related to publishing in international journals. However, all of them were conducted specifically in the Hong Kong context where authors use English as their instructional language, a significant contrast to most Indonesian teaching contexts.

Mirahayuni (2002) studied RAs written by Indonesian authors. She examined the rhetorical patterns of the crucial but difficult sections of RAs namely the Introductions and Discussions of three groups of articles, namely (1) 10 English articles written by native speakers (NSs) of English, (2) 10 English articles by non-native speakers (NNSs) of English (Indonesian authors), and (3) 10 Indonesian articles written by native speakers (NSs) of Indonesian. Mirahayuni identified some major problems she found in Indonesian RAs. These problems were also found in the 'introductions' and 'discussions' of the RAs she analyzed. In the 'introduction' section Mirahayuni inferred problems from her findings, which support Flowerdew's findings namely (1) parochialism and (2) a lack of literature review. In terms of parochialism, Mirahayuni found that the 'introduction' opening strategy of both the English articles written by the Indonesian authors and those articles written in Indonesian 'tend to be oriented around localized space and time rather than towards the general knowledge in the area of study' (p.38). With the second problem i.e. the lack of literature review, Mirahayuni found that the majority of the Indonesian RAs reviewed literature that situate their study amongst other studies much less than the native English RAs. Similar findings were also found in Safnil's study (Safnil 2000).

The above findings contribute considerably to our understanding of problems Indonesian could have when their RAs are sent to international journals. However, Mirahayuni's sample data was too small to represent RAs written by Indonesian authors. She used only 30 RAs (10 RAs written in Indonesian by Indonesian authors (Ind. NSs), 10 RAs written in English by Indonesian authors (English NNSs) and 10 RAs written by native speakers of English (Eng NSs). All these RAs belonged only to one discipline i.e. Language and Language Teaching. So, it is difficult to generalise from them. My study attempted to overcome these methodological problems by using a much bigger and broader data size with RAs representing 3 disciplines.

My basic theoretical assumption of my argument in this paper is that of language transfer (Selinker & Gass 1992, Ellis 1994, Oldlin 1989), which essentially postulates that writers tend to transfer elements and patterns of their first language when they perform in a second or foreign language.

The Issue of Language Transfer

The issue of language transfer from one's first language to their second language has

been widely debated. Some researchers view transfer negatively as an impediment for second language acquisition, but others see positively as a resource that helps leaners in their performance in the second language. However, Ellis (1994: 343) concludes that there is 'clear evidence' that transfer is a factor that influences performance in a second language. Never the less, in regard to the possible problems that Indonesian authors may face when writing in English for international journals, transfer could be seen as an impediment to successful publication of their papers if editors or reviewers reject the papers. Reasons for rejections can include inability to follow the flow of ideas in their papers or if they don't find them convincing when they are influenced by the authors' first language discourse patterns.

Transfer can occur at different levels including lexis, grammar and discourse (p. 334). A PhD study by Mirahayuni (2001) shows how discourse patterns of the first language of Indonesian authors appear in their articles published in English. Another PhD study by Rusdi (2002) also suggests the transfer of information sequence (discourse structure) when Indonesian and Australian students gave presentations in their respective second languages. So, there is little doubt that the first language discourse patterns of Indonesian authors can influence their writing in English.

I will now turn to the methodology employed in this study and then present some of the findings of the study, outlining some possible problems Indonesian RAs may experience when they are sent to international journals.

Methods

Primary Data

The corpus consists of 63 RAs, twenty-one from each of the disciplines of Education, Linguistics and Social and Political Sciences. They were selected randomly from accredited journals published by major research institutes and universities. These journals were selected mostly because of their accreditation status and quality. Three were not accredited, but were chosen because they are well known for their quality. The selected editions were published between 1990-2000. See Appendix 1 for the details of the journals.

Secondary Data

The secondary information was gathered from interviews with national and international editors, authors and academics. The interviews were conducted with four

groups of people, namely: (1) nine Indonesian journal editors (three from each discipline), (2) nine authors, (3) 6 international editors, and (4) 15 Indonesian academics. The interviews with international editors were conducted during several conferences in Hong Kong (2000), Adelaide (2004), and Brisbane (2005), while the interviews with Indonesian authors and editors were conducted in Indonesia during my field-work visits to Indonesia in December 2002-January 2003 and December 2004-January 2005. The interviews were conducted on campuses in cities including in Padang (West Sumatra), Jakarta, Yogyakarta (Central Java), Malang (East Java) and Singaraja and Denpasar (Bali).

Informants were from different universities and Institutes of Sciences (LIPI). The interviews were semi-structured in that some basic questions were prepared, but some of them were expanded to probe more detailed information. The purpose of the interviews with the editors was to collect information concerning the editors' criteria for selecting (and rejecting) articles and other relevant matters. Examples of the questions are 'What are the criteria you use to accept or reject an article and why?' 'Do you expect authors to critically review the literature in their introductions?' The purpose of the interviews with the authors was to discover the ways they structured their RAs and problems they have in preparing and writing RAs. Two examples of the questions is 'Can you describe the structure you follow when writing your article introductions and why?'; 'Do you critically review other relevant studies in your introductions?'. The information was basically employed to either confirm or otherwise the findings from the primary data and to explain them.

Data Analysis of Rhetorical Patterns of the Introductions

A number of models have been proposed for the study of Introductions, but in the research for this paper only the CARS model was used because it was the most famous and widely used model. The CARS model was also considered the most robust model among the models that were developed based on English RA introductions (RAIs) and has been supported by findings in other studies on English RAs, e.g. Samraj (2005), and Mirahayuni (2002). So, it can be argued that this model is the most representative of the rhetorical patterns of English RAs, especially those that follow the Introduction-Method-Results-Discussion (IMRD) pattern. Before detailing the CARS model, I should describe briefly an important and essential aspect of the model, that of 'discourse community'.

Discourse Community

A 'discourse community' is defined as a specialised group of people. They share six characteristics, i.e. common goals, a participatory mechanism, information exchange, community specific genres, a highly specialised terminology, and a high general level of expertise (Swales, 1990: 29). When applying these characteristics in an academic context, the 'discourse community' will not consist of members of the general public, but of researchers belonging to a particular discipline or field of study.

The CARS Model

As shown in Figure 1, this model was introduced by Swales who used an ecological analogy to describe the model (Swales, 1990, p. 140). The introductions Swales used to describe his model were taken from hard sciences (natural sciences) (Swales, 1990, p. 141). The model consists of three obligatory moves: (1) Establishing a territory, (2) Creating a niche, and (3) Occupying the niche. These moves have a number of obligatory and optional steps. The notes used on the right hand column of the figure, i.e. 'Declining rhetorical effort', 'Weakening knowledge claim' and 'Increasing explicitness' are original. These notes indicate the state of rhetorical efforts made by the RA authors. They start with a strong rhetorical effort in order to persuade or convince the readers to accept the RAs and continue reading (Steps 1 and/or 2 of Move 1). This rhetorical effort decreases as the authors review previous studies, which represent a strengthening of knowledge. This knowledge claim weakens as the authors begin detailing their studies in Move 3.

Figure 1 the CARS model (Swales, 1990: 141)

MOVE 1: Establishing a territory	
Step 1 Claiming centrality	
and/or	
Step 2 Making topic generalization(s)	
and/or	
Step 3 Reviewing items of previous research	Declining rhetorical effort
MOVE 2: Establishing a niche	
Step 1A Counter claiming	

or

Step 1B   Indicating a gap

or

Step 1C   Question-raising

or

Step 1D   Continuing a tradition

MOVE 3: Occupying the niche

Step 1A   Outlining purposes

                                              Weakening knowledge claim

or

Step 1B   Announcing present research

and

Step 2   Announcing principal findings

Step 3   Indicating RA structure   Increasing explicitness

Move 1: Establishing a territory

When establishing a territory, Swales shows that a writer needs to 're-establish in the eyes of the discourse community the significance of the research field itself' (Swales 1990: 142). This may be carried out by one or more of these steps: Step 1 (Claiming centrality), Step 2 (Making topic generalisation[s]), Step 3 (Reviewing items of previous research). Steps 1 and 2 are optional.

   In Step 1, an author can indicate that the topic to be reported has received interest previously, e.g.

> Recently, there has been a spate of interest in how to ...
>
> (Swales 1990: 144)

Hence, in claiming centrality RA authors may claim that there is considerable interest in the field by researchers (1990: 144).

   Step 2 is making topic generalisations. RA authors may make a topic generalisation by making a statement about the current state of *knowledge* or *practice* (italics in original) such as techniques, or current requirements for future progress. For example,

> 'There is now much evidence to support the hypothesis that ...'
>
> (Swales 1990: 146)

Or, they may make a statement about current phenomena, e.g.

> '... is a common finding in patients with ...'
>
> (Swales 1990: 146)

Step 3 Reviewing the literature is obligatory. The author should review what studies have been conducted and by whom, what has been found, and what their view is in regards to those studies (Swales 1990).

Move 2: Establishing a niche

Step 3 of Move 1 leads to Move 2, i.e. Establishing a niche. A niche can be established by one or more of the following options: Step 1A (Counter claiming), Step 1B (Indicating a gap), Step 1C (Question-raising), and/or Step 1D (Continuing a tradition). At least one of these should be present in a RA Introduction.

In Step 1A, an author makes a counter claim against a previous claim or view made in a previous study(s) by indicating its shortcomings, problems, or limitations. For example, (all examples here are taken from Swales 1980: 154-156)

> '*However,* the previously mentioned methods *suffer from some limitations ...*'

This step is usually marked with an adversative sentence connector such as 'however', 'nevertheless', 'yet', or 'unfortunately'.

The author may also take Step 1B, i.e. indicating a gap of knowledge in the literature reviewed in Move 1. For example,

> 'The first group *cannot* treat ... and is *limited to ...*'

In Step 1C, i.e. raising a question(s), an author raises a question(s) which has not been answered in previous studies, e.g.

> 'A question remains whether ...'

In Step 1D, continuing a tradition, an author may indicate that he/she is continuing a research tradition developed in one or more of previous studies. For example,

> 'The differences need to be analysed...'

Move 3: Occupying the niche

Move 3 is a statement about how the author(s) will occupy the niche. This may be done by four possible steps: Step 1A (Outlining the purpose of the present research), Step 1B (Announcing the present research), Step 2 (Announcing principal findings), and Step 3 (Indicating RA structure).

In summary, Move 1 is an attempt to convince the audience that the research to be

reported is of significance to the research field. This should be shown at least by reviewing what previous studies have been conducted. Move 2 is an attempt to convince them that there is a 'space' in the research field that is significant to be investigated; and in Move Three, the author shows how the space is to be occupied.

Data Analysis of the Use of References (Citations)

To analyse how the authors use references, a set of citation functions was formulated based on findings from other studies (Swales 1990; Gilbert 1977; Safnil 2000). These functions are as follows:

> 1. to show the innovative aspects of the study,
>
> 2. to support an argument or points of an argument,
>
> 3. to provide background information or to elaborate upon a research topic,
>
> 4. to justify the choice of a particular approach or method to situate the study in the literature, and
>
> 5. to compare results or findings.

These functions were evaluated against the data.

Findings
Results of the Analysis of the Rhetorical Patterns of the Introductions

The results the Analysis of the Rhetorical Patterns of the Introductions show that the majority of the 63 RAs did not match the CARS model. Major problems were found in the absence of the obligatory steps of Moves 1 and 2. Most of the RAs (over 90%) match Move 3 of the model. Table 1 summarises the findings.

Table 1 Summary of the results of the analysis of the Introductions

Discipline	Number of RAs	Move 1	Move 2	Move 3
Education	N = 21	1 (4.76%)	3 (14.28)	20 (95.23%)
Linguistics	N = 21	7 (33.33%)	8 (38.09%)	19 (90.47%)
Socpol	N = 21	4 (19.04%)	9 (42.85%)	19 (90.47%)

   Table 1 shows that overall, a small number of RAs employed Moves 1 and 2. The majority of the RAs did not fit Move 1, with only 1,7, and 4 RAs in their respective

disciplines employing it. Likewise, only a marginally higher number of RAs employed Move 2 (3, 8, and 9 RAs in each respective discipline). This indicates that overall, the RAs failed to include crucial aspects of the CARS model. They fail to provide adequate literature reviews to situate their studies amongst previous studies, or show the innovative aspects of their research.

Use of references (Citations)

The results show that low numbers of references were used to show the innovative aspects of the RAs through reviews of previous studies. As shown in Table 2, Linguistics RAs used the largest percentage i.e. 16.29% of 21 RAs, Socpol RAs used 4.43% (of 21 RAs), and Education 1.58% of 21 RAs. The majority of references were used to provide background information including defining key terms, discussing the theoretical framework, and narrating the setting of the research etc.

Table 2 Summary of the Use of References in the 63 RAs

N = 63	Edu RAs	Ling RAs	Socpol RAs
To provide background information	57.91%	58.05%	54.74%
To support points of an argument or an argument	33.54%	16.20%	38.29%
To show innovative aspect(s)	1.58%	16.29%	4.43%
To compare findings	6.01%	4.11%	2.53%
To justify the use of a particular method or approach	2.53%	5.43%	0.00%

The 63 RAs also used a low number of references in order to compare their findings with the findings of other studies. In this case Edu RAs used the highest number, with 6.01% of the total references being used by the 21 Edu RAs; Linguistics used 4.11%, and Socpol RAs used only 2.53% of the total references cited in the 21 Socpol RAs.

These results suggest that the majority of the references were not used for the purposes that matter more for publishing in international journals, namely to emphasise the innovative aspects of the research through reviewing literature, and to show the significance of the findings for knowledge development.

Discussion

The main question of this paper is: What are the possible problems Indonesian RAs could have when sent to international journals? To answer this question we need to interpret the findings from the results presented earlier.

If these findings are interpreted in terms of the findings in other studies reviewed earlier, we will experience the following crucial problems:

- Lack of rhetorical 'appeal to an international discourse community to accept the article (Swales, 1990)
- Parochialism (Flowerdew, 2001)
- The lack of appropriate literature reviewed (Flowerdew, 2001)
- Lack of efforts to show the significance of the study findings in relation to the existing literature (Gilbert, 1977).

Lack of Rhetorical Efforts

According to Swales (1990), generally, RAs published in English appeal to the international discourse community to accept the paper. This is carried out by stating that the research to be reported belongs to a lively research field (Move 1, Step 1). For example, an author may state that the field has attracted a lot of studies, or that the subject is considered a complex issue for researchers. The majority of the RAs examined in this study did not do so. Instead, the majority began their introduction with a definition, a thesis statement, or a narrative about the origins of research in the field which presented no power to persuade the discourse community to accept and read on.

Parochialism

Parochialism means having a location that is too specific, be it local, provincial or national in scope. Safnil (2000) and Mirahayuni (2001) also inferred a similar problem. Many authors began their introduction by referring to specific government documents such as the Indonesian Constitution, the national curriculum, a speech by a minister, etc.

This problem of parochialism is reinforced by the inclusion of practical benefits of the study. This was also found by Mirahayuni (2001) and Safnil (2000). However, this was only applicable to certain disciplines, especially education. Only a few of the

Linguistics RAs included practical benefits of the study. So it cannot be generalised to all disciplines. The problem of parochialism is that because the parochial statements are too specific, they may not be relevant to an international audience.

Lack of proper literature reviews

According to the CARS model, the main purpose of reviewing literature is to situate the study amongst other studies, so that a clear narrative can be made between what has been previously studied and found, and what the current study has established and is presenting (Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995). These two authors have candidly described how their biologist informant had to undergo a long process of correspondence with the editor of an international journal in order to develop the narrative. The majority of Indonesian RAs however, use other studies to define and develop a long discussion of their theoretical framework. Although making a definition and a theoretical framework is important, it should not be presented at the expense of situating the study amongst other literature. This lack of effort to situate the study is reflected in the low number RAs that fit Step 3 of Move 1 (Review of the Literature), and Move 2 (Establishing a niche) of the CARS model. This is crucial for the acceptance of an article because it shows how the study contributes to the existing knowledge. Without it, there is no reason for publishing the article (interview with an editor in Hong Kong in 2000, and with another editor in Adelaide in 2004).

Lack of efforts to show the significance of the study findings to the existing literature

To show the significance of the findings of a study to the existing literature an author should relate and compare the findings of their study with those in previous studies (Gilbert, 1997). They should also show the significance of the study to the existing literature. The number of references used for this purpose was small suggesting a failure to do so.

  Mirahayuni (2002) suggests that one of the reasons for the absence of the above crucial elements is unfamiliarity with English RA rhetorical structure. This could be the case because I have not seen any book that describes the common rhetorical structure of English RAs in the Indonesian market apart from the one published recently (Adnan & Zifirdaus, 2005). However, this is not to say that all Indonesian authors do not know how research should be presented at least in theses. My quick

reading of about 10 Indonesian theses at Masters and PhD levels written by students at the University of Malang (previously IKIP Malang, East Java), Padjadjaran University (Bandung, West Java) and University of Bandung (formely IKIP Bandung) revealed that they do know how to write an introduction that fit the CARS model. One possible reason is that there is a belief that an article does not require such a pattern. One of my informants (an editor) from the Indonesian Institute of Sciences mentioned that when she asked an author to provide a proper literature review to situate his study, he replied that he was only writing an article, not a Ph.D thesis. So he declined to write it. However, some of my interview informants were unaware of the rhetorical structure of research article introductions as described in the CARS model.

One might argue that the authors of the 63 RAs written for Indonesian journals certainly would not meet the criteria of international journals. This argument might have some merit, but is not necessarily true for two reasons. First, as mentioned in the literature review, research by Mirahayuni (2001) shows that the articles written for English journals by Indonesian authors also followed basic rhetorical patterns found in the articles written in Indonesian. Second, here we are dealing with the issue of structural (discourse) transfer in Second Language Acquisition. The question is: Do speakers transfer the rhetorical structure from their first language (L1) to a second language (L2)? Research reviewed earlier strongly suggests that transfer does occur and it occurs not only at the morphology and syntax levels, but also at a discourse level.

Conclusion and Suggestions

International editors expect RA manuscripts to contain certain information structured according to a certain rhetorical pattern. The manuscripts that do not follow this pattern with the relevant information are likely to encounter problems and even rejection as shown in the studies reviewed earlier. The CARS model represents this common pattern. The results of the study show that the large majority of the Indonesian 63 RAs did not follow the pattern, particularly its obligatory steps which expect critical information such as reviewing literature that situates the study among other studies, thus showing its innovative aspects and the significance of the study. Research has demonstrated that Indonesians tend to follow common Indonesian RA patterns when writing in English (Mirahayuni, 2002). Research by Rusdi (2000) has

also demonstrated that Indonesian speakers transfer rhetorical structure when speaking in second language academic settings. Therefore, it is likely that Indonesian authors tend to write in a similar pattern as the majority of the 63 RAs examined in this study. Consequently, their manuscripts are likely to encounter problems and even rejection when sent to international journals. One might emphasize on the scientific/academic value of articles and ignore the importance of rhetorical patterns, but in practice, many articles *are* rejected because they are not written in accordance with the common rhetorical patterns. This problem is quite real as there have been many editors especially in the United States who simply reject articles from non-English speaker authors when their rhetorical patterns do not match the common rhetorical English patterns*.

To increase the likelihood of Indonesian manuscripts being accepted for publication in international journals, it is suggested that lecturers give more attention to developing awareness of the acceptable rhetorical patterns in international journals and provide adequate exercises for their students to write articles that follow the CARS model.

Implication for further research

This study only involves journal articles written by Indonesian authors in Indonesian and the problems are inferred from the results. A study on research articles written in English by Indonesian authors with a similar or larger data size is recommended to confirm the findings. This study only used articles in 3 selected Humanities disciplines. The use of articles from other disciplines especially those of Hard Sciences would also help confirm the findings. The findings of this study potentially apply to manuscripts written by authors from other Asian countries. Therefore, research on those scripts may also contribute to the field. Interviews with more English editors would also shed further light on the matter.

Notes: *Interview with William Eggington, a researcher on journal article publication and a presenter at Applied Linguistic Association of Australia (ALAA) Conference in Brisbane, Australia, on 8 July 2006.

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Appendix 1

Details of the Selected Journals

(1)   *Linguistik Indonesia* (Indonesian Society of Linguist, National, Jakarta),

(2)   *Cakrawala Pendidikan* (State University of Yogyakarta,UNY).

(3)   *Forum Pendidikan* (State University of Padang, UNP),

(4)   *Antropologi Indonesia* (University of Indonesia, UI, Jakarta),

(5)   *Humanus* (UNP),

(6)   *Prisma* (the LP3ES, a Non-Governmental Organization).

(7)   *Journal Pendidikan Humaniora dan Sains* (State University of Malang, UNMA)

(8)   *Masyarakat Kebudayaan dan politik* (Airlangga University, UNAIR, Surabaya),

(9)   *Jurnal Ilmu Politik* (Indonesian Society of Political Science, National, Jakarta*)*,

(10)   *Aneka Widya* (Teachers College, STKIP, Singaraja, Bali),

(11)   *Linguistika* (Udayana University, Denpasar, Bali),

(12)   *Pellba* (Atmajaya University, Private University, Jakarta),

(13)   *Humaniora* (Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta).

(14)   *Masyarakat Indonesia* (The Indonesian Institute of Sciences).

Of these journals, those that have no accreditation status were *Masyarakat Indonesia* (The Indonesian Institute of Sciences), *Pellba* (Atmajaya University, Private University, Jakarta) and *Prisma* (the LP3ES, a Non-Governmental Organization).

Appendix 2: A sample of the introductions from the discipline of Education

(Translated from research article number 5, coded as Edu 5).

(1) Effectiveness of teaching is affected, among other things, by individual differences amongst students. (2) According to Witherington (1986), these differences are due to things such as (a) gender, (b) degree of intelligence, and (c) capability, including cognitive strategies and learning opportunities. (3) The implication according to Gagne (1974) is that (one needs to adopt) a teaching strategy that is closer to and relatively fulfils different individual needs, for example by small group work, tutorials, independent learning. This is known as an individual learning system (approach).

(4) So far, teaching at *Jurusan Teknik Mesin* (Department of Mechanical Engineering), FPTK (Faculty of Engineering), IKIP (Institute for Teacher Training) Malang, still uses mainly the classical approach, which in practice does not recognize individual differences (Sutadji 1990). (5) This applies also to the teaching method used in the Energy Converter unit. (6) The classical approach mostly uses lectures, with a small percentage of individual assignments. (7) Feedback from lecturers is general, overlooking both the nature and the degree of errors made by individual students.

(8) The learning outcomes achieved by students taught by the classical approach show up as variations in scores, (statistically) the curve skews to the left. (9) This means that the majority of the score is medium and low, with only a small number [of students] receiving higher scores. In other words, the internal effectiveness level of teaching in the Mechanical Engineering Department, FPTK IKIP Malang (including the Energy Converter unit) is still low. (10) This shows how important it is to find an alternative approach in order to increase teaching effectiveness.

(11) The alternative teaching method that has been tested, in search of higher effectiveness, is an individual approach. (12) This strategy (method) is developed based on *Aptitude Treatment Interaction* (ATI), which assumes one teaching method does not suit every learner (Jonassen, 1972).

(13) According to Gagne (1979), this method suits the individuals who study in a group of 25 people.
(14) This number matches the number of students in a class including in the Energy Converter unit, Department of Mechanical Engineering, FPTK, IKIP Malang. (15) Therefore, in theory, this alternative strategy can be employed in the department's classes.

(16) Based on a review of the theories, an individual teaching strategy is better at achieving objectives as compared to the classical approach. (17) However, so far there has been no research to obtain empirical evidence to support this. (18) Hence, this kind of research is necessary in an attempt to develop an individual teaching strategy.

A Case Study into Teacher Perceptions of the Introduction of Student Evaluation of Teaching Surveys (SETs) in Japanese Tertiary Education

Peter Burden
Okayama Shoka University, Japan

Bio Data:

Peter Burden has been teaching and researching in Japanese tertiary education context for nearly twenty years. His main research area is dissonance between teacher and learner perspectives of classroom learning experiences. He recently gained his doctorate in TESOL from Exeter University in his native country, Britain. He can be contacted at <burden-p@po.osu.ac.jp>

Abstract

For over five years, student evaluation of teaching through end of semester questionnaires (SETs) has been mandatory in Japan. Evaluation has been conceived by a centralized bureaucracy and delivered to schools as an imperative, but often without clarification of aims or purposes. This paper, utilizing a case study methodology, examines through interviews the perspectives of 6 ELT teachers working within a Japanese university about the introduction of SETs. Trends emerged which suggested that teachers saw the threat of evaluation differently. Tenured teachers saw a potential threat in the future, but part-time and limited-term contracted teachers felt disadvantaged in terms of job conditions, and extremely vulnerable to retention decisions. As a by-product of status issues, an atmosphere of mistrust, data manipulation and an "us" versus "them" viewpoint emerged, surely at odds with an effective evaluation system which should lead to improvement and be beneficial to teachers and learners. Although the study is from a Japanese perspective, the findings of the study are pertinent to wherever, generic, cross-curricular ratings forms are administered.

Key words: teacher, perceptions, student evaluation, Japan

Introduction

This case study examines the reactions of six teachers each employed under different working conditions within a recently "corporatized" former national university in western Japan to the introduction of mandatory, end-of-semester student evaluation of teaching surveys (SETs). It has been suggested that Japan has entered an "epoch-making phase in the history of higher education" (Arimoto, 1997, p.206) whereby a "Big Bang" (Goodman, 2005, p. 2) has led to a Ministry of Education initiated rush

for reform. The introduction of SETs is one part of sweeping changes in the ways universities are organized in response to market forces.

The expansion in the use of SETs in Japan came as a more economic centered, more market sensitive, decentralization movement emerged at the start of a new millennium in partial response to the expected decline in the 18 year-old population (Yamada, 2001). As universities total capacity to accommodate new entrants will reach 100% in 2009 (Tsurata, 2003), universities are "now subject to buyer's market where students are courted customers rather than supplicants for admission" (Kitamura, 1997, p. 145). In a time when the public has become more critical of government spending, a market agenda underpinning government strategy to determine accountability in education led to the introduction of SETs. The Ministry of Education (2003) claims that the disclosure of evaluation of individual faculty members reached 100% compliance at national universities from 2001, and while the Ministry of Education does not dictate the timing of evaluation, the university in this study requires SETs to be administered before summative testing in week fifteen, or the day when most students are likely to attend. This SET utilizes a Likert type 1-5 scale and asks the students nine questions which can be found in Appendix One.

Yet, Ministry of Education policy decisions to promote this form of student evaluation are made without clarification (Miyoshi, 2000), and are seemingly based on a "power over" (Stronge & Tucker, 1999, p. 340) prerogative whereby school administrators and teachers simply "implement the decisions being handed down to them" (Markee, 1997, p. 63). Thus, reform in Japanese education has been described as top-down (Gorsuch, 2000; Wada 2002), but made opaque through the "extraordinary reluctance to clarify, define, and articulate policy" by the Ministry of Education (Miyoshi, 2000, p. 681). While evaluation should be seen as "an agent of supportive program enlightenment and change" (Norris, 2006, p. 578), the rhetoric of evaluation with its numerous English terms such as "Faculty Development" and acronyms such as "FD" are little understood by school administrators (Tsurata, 2003), leading to confusion as to the evaluation aims or its purpose. For example, the timing of evaluation often in the final class does not suggest a formative, feedback loop. As Alderson (1992) notes, if evaluation is left to the end of a course it loses any opportunity to inform and influence teaching, therefore "externally imposed ideas and constraints are harnessed to managerial interests rather than the concerns of theories of professional development" (Johnson, 2000, p. 433).

We need, as Auerbach (1995) reminds us, "to look at evaluation through a new lens" (p.11) to investigate the extent student ratings have actually been accepted and used and university teachers' understandings of the purposes of evaluation. While evaluation has been seemingly accepted by researchers in the field, in this time of educational reform in Japan, the degree of receptivity to, and the consequential validity of, SETs through non-empirical studies to suggest how evaluation can be improved has not been undertaken. The aim of this study to gain insight from teachers in a context where implementation of SETs as an evaluation tool has been much slower than the West. Most previous studies so far have been concerned with collecting "empirical evidence" away from a Japanese context, representing a positivist methodology of predicting teacher response, while this study, being interpretive, seeks to understand. Through a reflexive stance, learning about teacher views of evaluation, *why* teachers hold their views, and the sharing of views to expand knowledge of evaluation is the rationale underpinning this study.

What are the purposes of evaluation?

We need to consider what purposes SETs hold as the issue of credibility is crucial for receptivity of teachers to evaluation and its potential for growth. Purposes of evaluation tend to focus on the formative purpose as diagnostic feedback or the summative purpose for personnel management decisions such as for tenure, promotion, or retention. Centra (1993) contends that in America, SETs were devised initially for only formative purposes, but when such informative feedback was seen as non-threatening, administrators endorsed the use for summative purposes. This, however, alters the effects on the teacher and changes the role of the administrator. Ryan, Anderson and Birchler (1980) showed how there was considerable consensus about the use of information for formative purposes as feedback information was available only to teachers. Once a summative purpose was introduced, the incentive for high ratings led to negligible faculty improvement, a decline in faculty morale, distance between faculty and administration as well as a "decrease in faculty compliance with institutional regulations" (p. 329) to offset faculty unease over the summative use of evaluation. As evaluation forms are typically administered in the last weeks of the semester, the failure to close the feedback loop by handing evaluation results back to teachers so that they can institute improvement during the lifetime of the class means that this form of evaluation fails to provide improvement

(Harvey, 1997), and would seem to suggest evaluation is for summative purposes.

Previous studies of teacher perceptions

While most previous studies suggest that faculty do find student evaluation generally worthwhile from a formative perspective (Ryan et al., 1980; Ory & Braskamp, 1981; Schmelkin et al., 1997; Simpson & Siguaw, 2000; Nasser & Fresco, 2002; Yao & Grady, 2005; Moore & Kuol, 2005), one study by Howell and Symbaluk (2001) cited numerous faculty doubts over whether accountability or effectiveness are promoted. In Ory and Braskamp (1981), faculty indicated that students' written comments were potentially more accurate, trustworthy, useful, comprehensive, believable and valuable when used for self-improvement rather than promotion purposes, while Yao and Grady (2005) found significant differences in feedback depending on rank, field, class size and class level. The highest percentage of respondents reporting regular use of feedback came from instructors or lecturers, but overall there was resistance to changing aspects of teaching that instructors had valued over time. Ryan et al. (1980) found that three quarters of faculty collected information in a systematic manner before being required to do, yet less than half indicated they looked at results casually, infrequently, or not at all after compulsory administration. Moore and Kuol's (2005) small study of 18 faculty in Ireland similarly found that instructors were relatively positive particularly with respect to open comments, but teachers who received largely positive feedback were less likely to use findings as a rationale for change. Schmelkin et al. (1997) investigated responses from 420 full time and adjunct faculty who showed no pattern of consensus for usefulness of ratings for either formative or summative decisions. Generally, teachers were not receptive to making changes in their classes from semester to semester, gave low responses the utility of mid-term evaluation, while the majority did not talk about evaluations before administering the questionnaires.

Most studies routinely suggest that SETs have *both* summative and formative purposes, but faculty are concerned about the former use. Simpson and Siguaw (2000) found that "objective" data results were used by chairpersons or other administrators in reappointment, promotion or tenure recommendations and due to validity and reliability concerns, close to 40% of faculty "selected" which student feedback to submit. In the same study, faculty were concerned over norm-referencing of data so that half of the faculty would be below average, which is consistent with Theall and

Franklin's (2001) conclusions that even *if* data from SETs are technically rigorous, student ratings are often "misinterpreted, misused and not accompanied by other information that allows users to make sound decisions" (p. 46).

Anxiety and resistance increases through poor use of SETs which contradicts the validity and reliability of evaluation claimed by the literature in America. Resistance led faculty to decrease class workloads (Ryan et al. 1980; Nasser & Fresco, 2002), while Simpson and Siguaw (2000) found faculty lowered grades and course standards and offered inducements. Yao and Grady (2005) noted that junior faculty members had strong motivation for using feedback in order to get positive evaluation in annual review and promotion decisions, so the major change was towards easier assignments and easier course content.

The literature in Japan

While the focus in the above studies was centered on issues of validity arising from evaluation being used in personnel decisions such as the granting of tenure, the non-renewal of contracts for adjunct (part time) staff, and for salary adjustments, there have been very few studies discussing teachers' viewpoint and their status in Japan. This is despite the precarious position many English teachers find themselves in. While teachers may optimistically see evaluation as a teacher development tool at best, or at worst a ritual universities go through in response to Ministry of Education dictates, there have been extremely few academic articles written, only occasional comments buried away in teacher's own homepages, and brief sensational articles in the lay press.

Worth noting however, is the comments of the Part Time Lecturers' Union (*Kansaien Daigaku Hijokin Kumiai*, 2005) which deplored the perceived lack of student responsibility for their own learning, calling for an end to anonymity, and suggested that a greater emphasis is needed to ascertain students' degree of attendance, their willingness to preview and review class material, and the degree of active participation. Implicit is a view that SETs encourage a passive student role conveying a sense that all the responsibility for teaching and course management fall squarely and solely on the teacher. The Union later cites the double standard in summative uses whereby part time teachers are dismissed while for tenured (Japanese) faculty, it is used for "little more than external publicity" where perfunctory evaluation is "just following guidelines." The Union calls for more

systematized procedures including a more accurate compilation of data, for the data to be made externally public, and prior to teachers being dismissed due to poor evaluations, calls for warnings and remedial feedback.

The credibility of data was touched on in the homepage of Kogakuin University (2002) which reported teachers' strong views about students' ability to fairly fill in open-ended questions. Echoing Attribution Theory (Weiner, 1992), evaluation encourages acceptance of credit for feelings of success while denying responsibility for undesired outcomes. As evaluation is often administered extremely close to the final test, expected high grades are attributed to intelligence, while potential low grades are blamed on poor instruction overlooking students' own poor learning strategies. Similar to comments by the part time teachers' Union above, teachers in the homepage question learners' ability to evaluate fairly when they frequently come to class without textbooks or notebooks, where willingness to learn was low, and where around "fifty percent of students" were so apathetic that it became impossible to teach according to the syllabus. Students who blamed teachers for their own "failings" in class evaluated harshly while deliberately choosing to sit at the back of large classrooms where it was difficult to hear and see class content.

Kinoshita (2005) writing in the *Asahi Shimbun* also suggests the practice of anonymity should be ended so that students fill in comments honestly, while Kawanari (May 2005) reports on evaluations filled out immediately after exams being often filled with "abusive invective." In journals, Ryan's (1998) article warns of students' culturally determined expectations which may lead Japanese students to "judge their teachers against standards that are literally 'foreign' to their native-speaking teachers" (p. 9). Shimizu (1995) suggests that Japanese students evaluate Japanese and foreign instructors by different standards as Japanese teachers' knowledge of the subject area is seen as important, and that Japanese teachers are valued more for scholarly skills such as intelligence, knowledge and accuracy, while foreign instructors are expected to be "entertaining" (p. 8). However, Shimizu (1995) concluded that "some students may not seriously participate in classes taught by foreigners because they feel classes are trivial" (p. 8), while Ryan (1998) warned that teachers need to be aware of students' beliefs about ideal teachers especially since evaluation has been given impetus by Education Ministry recommendations (since implemented) that tenure be replaced by a contract system.

This small section has outlined some anxieties of teachers in Japan and how they are

slowly voicing their concerns over evaluation. As Pennycook (1990) notes, the increasing importance placed on evaluation represents greater control over teachers leading to standardization of the curricula, accountability and educational responsiveness to market forces, deskilling teachers and leading to pre-specified teaching procedures.

Materials and methods

This study aims to make a specific contribution to the body of knowledge of teachers about their receptivity to SETs and how it can lead to improvement. To investigate faculty perceptions, a case study approach using in-depth interviews was used so that the "stories of those living the case" (Stake, 2000, p. 437) are a "step to action" (Bassey, 2000, p. 23). The focus is not on discovering universal laws but on interpreting and understanding experiences. Through understanding a single case in its natural setting, this study, being interpretive, seeks to understand through enquiry in a real-life context instead of "contrived contexts" of experiment or survey (Bassey, 2000, p.26).Through a reflexive stance, the rationale underpinning this study is that through description (Stake, 2000), learning about teacher views, *why* teachers hold their views, and sharing views among participants are keys to expanding knowledge and to encourage propositions (see Punch, 1998) in other similar situations.

Research questions

This study investigates six university teachers' perceptions of, and reactions to, SETs in Japan, how useful the common questions found on such forms are, and whether the questions are useful for formative improvement. Although an emerging design, the key research questions sought insight into

a) Teachers' attitudes about the purpose of the evaluation process

b) The usefulness of the questions for instructional improvement

c) The usefulness of the feedback for instructional improvement

d) The degree to which participants are affected in their daily teaching by the introduction of SETs

e) Whether the use of SETs represent teachers' conceptions of teaching

The setting

Perspectives where sought from ELT teachers from a number of categories working within one recently "incorporatized" former national university in Western Japan. The categories of teachers can be defined as:

- Full time "tenured" local and expatriate teachers
- "Limited (or "fixed") term" contracted local and expatriate teachers
- "Part time" local and expatriate teachers

In this study, one local and one expatriate tenured faculty participated, one contracted expatriate teacher and three part timers one of whom is Japanese took part. Participant details can be seen below:

Table 1: Brief biographical details of the participants

Name	Gender	Age	Nationality	Status	Total number of times evaluated	Number of classes evaluated most recently
Ayumi	F	Early 40s	Japan	Part time	8 times	2 classes
Ed	M	Early 50s	America	Full time (T)	"Twice a year for 6 years"	6 classes
Eleanor	F	Late 30s	New Zealand	Part time	2 times	2 classes
Jaek	M	Mid 40s	Australia	Part time	"About 50 times"	3 classes
Koji	M	Early 40s	Japan	Full time (T)	"For 5 years"	5 classes
Melvyn	M	Late 30s	America	Full time (C)	14 times	6 classes

Note: All teacher names are pseudonyms   (T) = tenured   (C) = contracted

The Ministry of Education (2003) claims that the disclosure of evaluation of individual faculty members reached 100% compliance at national universities from 2001, and while the Ministry of Education does not dictate the timing of evaluation, the university in this study requires SETs to be administered before summative testing in week fifteen, or the day when most students are likely to attend. This SET survey utilizes a Likert type 1-5 scale and asks the students nine questions which can be

found in Appendix One.

Data collection and analysis

As evaluation is inherently political, anonymity and confidentiality procedures were outlined and that both one-hour interviews would be tape recorded to aid verbatim transcription. After transcribing data from the first interviews in February 2005 which followed the administration of SETs in participants' classes, the transcriptions were sent back to each participant. The second interview took place after the summer from the end of September. The time was chosen to encourage participants to reflect on the first interview, to give time to read, reflect on and comment on the transcriptions, and to hear whether teachers had changed their administrative procedures of the evaluation form at the end of the semester in July.

   Lincoln and Guba's (1985) "constant comparative method" (p.341) was helpful in guiding the analysis. Although each interview progressed down its own path according to the direction of the responses, as the interviews were semi-structured an idea of important themes and concepts was gained from the research questions. Following transcription, data were "unitized" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) in terms of information that is the basis for defining categories. Through constantly comparing at this stage, there is, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) note, a shift from comparing incidents to whether incidents exhibit similar properties. Through constantly comparing categories for overlapping themes, subtle differences meant a new sub-category was needed or that the category needed to be redefined. Through comparing data, the relationships became more apparent and the categories more coherent.

The findings

Case 1: Koji

Koji was the only tenured local English teacher to participate. He is in his early 40s and has been evaluated "continuously" for five years, most recently in five classes: two "Writing" classes which are electives with around fifteen students, an elective "Poetry" class of fifteen students, and two compulsory "General English" classes of 40 students. In the latter classes, he tries to "act like a non-Japanese" using only English, but as students are poorly motivated, he tends to use more Japanese as the semester progresses. Koji said that he finds evaluation important to learn both the extent his teaching makes the students happy and as his ability to convey to the

students his passion for the subject. When he remembers, he explains a formative purpose for evaluation to make his classes better, saying that he will "ponder" on "bad points." Evaluation is a way to be strict with himself, to make lessons enjoyable, and to see that class content is organized and systematic in accordance with the syllabus. At this former national university, SETs reflects teaching as one of four categories of self evaluation and thus represents "institutional pressure" However, he rarely gets little beyond positive answers as students often lack motivation and can be lazy. He has observed students filling in responses "automatically" and he wished for more meaningful evaluation based on inspecting classes which he suggested is too radical for traditional, conventional teachers--too many teachers just "do what they want" in class.

Although mid-term evaluation would encourage conscientious teachers to use feedback later in the term, he says it takes time for students to be accustomed to his teaching style. He sees evaluation as questionable, with the primary function as following the "American style" as American universities are perceived as "advanced" but without substantial consideration of evaluation rationale for how results are used. He also questions socio-cultural differences whereby Japanese "put a mask on" for evaluation as silence is a "virtue and honesty is problematic. Lacking clarity, evaluation is written by "big cheeses" in power concerned with making the university more attractive and thus able to survive severe retrenchment. While he tries to do his best for the students and he cares passionately about both teaching and research, he wonders about the commitment of his colleagues so sees results utilized to "increase mobility" of teachers as "wonderful" in principle. He would accept "awful" evaluation if he is properly evaluated, but feels "theoretical anxiety" with questionnaire items and content. To encourage learner autonomy to understand both the joy of studying and the joy of developing both their interests and discovering latent talent he assigns out of class work, he challenges students involves "dragging" and "persuading" them to change their preconceived high school attitudes to learning. This is not represented in evaluation and, seeing teaching as an art, or self-presentation or drama, he worries that functional, teaching methods implicit in SETs are a "kind of restriction in a positivistic" way. Instead of teaching as a technical act following a formulaic teaching style, he sees his role either as an artist searching for interesting, unfamiliar styles or as a creator molding the sequence for students who are in unique classes.

Case 2: Ed

Ed is in his 50s and comes from America. He was employed as a "*Gaikokujinkyoushi*" or "Foreign teacher" employed on a limited term contract, but became tenured four years ago. He has experienced evaluation twice a year for six years. Most recently, evaluation was carried out in six classes, four compulsory "Conversation" classes of between thirty two and forty four students, and two elective "Advanced" English classes one of which had ten students and the other thirty two. He says he is told to give the evaluation on the day most students will come which is partly due to low student response rate in past years. He feels that as students do not see the results of the evaluation "in any shape or form," so evaluation is "not a big deal" and questionnaires remained "stuffed" in their bags. This ambivalence hastened a change in administration policy from individual student responsibility to one where faculty collect the SETs data at the end of class. On the day of evaluation, he administers two evaluation forms as he assumes that the official form is "part of the course and just something they do" explaining that it is for "people above him" in the "office" and is completed in Japanese. His self-written form is for his own formative feedback, while official data go a "computer statistical center" which "crunches numbers" that are later evaluated by an "unknown" committee. Feeling that the questions were made a long time ago" by someone in "hard sciences," he is apprehensive about how students interpret his class according to the criteria of the questions. The form emphasizes the transmission of knowledge through lecture-based teaching which, while not representing his style of teaching, reflects notions of "GP" or "good practice" a buzz word, he hears at the school. He sees minimum standards being maintained so if teachers are above this minimum then "you're good enough."

As his results are satisfactory, feedback only serves as a check to see if he's in the right "ballpark," but he is wary of the motivational effects of normatively ranking and "measuring" teachers in "league tables." As there is an "illusion" of good practice, he just looks at the results visually, and as he thinks the free comments more accurately reflect what he is doing in class he is not wholly dismissive, but he feels his own formative feedback is more reliable and detailed. Like Koji, he feels mid-term administration is questionable as his class builds up to a climax, the big bang coming at the end with their presentations. While the feedback from SETs can take four months by which time he has forgotten the class, he still feels benefit from seeing the feedback displayed.

Case 3: Ayumi

Ayumi is in her early forties and works part time. She has experienced evaluation eight times and the last time evaluation was carried out in two classes, a TOEIC class which was a "required elective" of forty students, and an elective "Advanced" English class of fifteen students. She says she gives the evaluation after the summative, end of semester exam which she finished quickly. She does not give any explanation beyond asking the students to "spend five or ten minutes" filling out the question, but observed that students do not spend much time thinking over their answers so free comments are often perfunctory. She assumes that open-ended comments are "messages to the teacher," but closed data being used for her evaluation, are "nerve-wracking" as she does not know "the system." If she sought formative information, she would, like Ed, administer her own evaluations, as results from the official evaluation are returned late in the subsequent semester, losing any opportunity to inform teaching. She assumes "they" look at the data to determine contract renewal to reduce labor costs and worries over her future, seeing her career resting on the results.

While it is important to know students needs and wants, she thinks that students need to evaluate their own performance, and feels she is unable to give an "accountable" lesson in classes of over 60 students which she would like to bring to the attention of the administration. Ignoring class size is unfair as her teaching is affected, so classes should be compared across sizes, but she admits to feeling helpless. She recounted how in her previous job at a language school, evaluation purposes were clearly explained and although retention decisions were a factor, formative and summative evaluation utilized self assessment, observation, and peer-evaluation to create a fair and constructive environment where exchange feedback was encouraged.

Case 4: Melvin

Melvin was employed as a "*Gaikokujinkyoushi*" or "Foreign teacher" employed on a "limited term" contract at the time of the second interview. He has experienced evaluation fourteen times, most recently in six classes. Five of the classes were compulsory "Oral Communication" classes of up to seventy students and the sixth was a compulsory "Writing" class. He gives evaluation in the final class in which he does not give a test, and does not suggest any purpose when distributing the forms just pointing to the Japanese and saying "read that." He has heard he is supposed to

leave the classroom when administrating, but rarely bothers and has observed that the students do not expend much effort and feels that at around 20% the response rate is very low; the biggest response is the "lack of response." He compares results to a "well-balanced" breakfast with students choosing scores of 4 or 5, some adding their names to comments in English. He believes that students expect him to know who favorably comments, highlighting grading influences and unclear evaluation purposes for students.

He suggests that mid term evaluation would be beneficial if results came back in a timely fashion so he could gauge student progress and adjust the remaining classes. He worries about discriminate validity which may confound evaluation as "the tradition that the students have had for six years being thrown on its ear is difficult" so that after just 7 weeks students pedagogical perceptions of high school learning may be an influence. While his scores remain high he does not feel threatened, just a little disillusioned at the lack of response, but he consciously makes the final class more "fun and interesting" to "load" the questionnaire, believing that students would judge the whole semester on that one class. He sees the temptation for tenured professors to fall into ruts and once teaching becomes repetitive, it is devalued. Forgetting how to change is hazardous especially if teachers are not compelled to change. Therefore, although an evaluation process is necessary, the lack of immediate formative encourages the belief in an "over-watching," summative stance by the administration. While welcoming this, he adds that rigor is needed in both the administration procedure and in questionnaire design as he is more concerned with what the students think of their learning experience than what other faculty members may think, but remains unsure whether students are capable of accurate evaluation. However, student views need to be expressed in tenure decisions as universities are becoming businesses so need to have satisfied customers in what has become a buyer's market. The meaningful relations he tries to forge with students are not expressed in the questions which reflected a limited view of education emphasizing "little aspects." Implicitly, following the evaluation means teaching to a certain method or a set of competencies which neglects individual personalities and interpersonal ability in favor of recordable standardized teaching. Teaching goes beyond an objective "science" to foster relationships which cannot be represented on a scale. The value of evaluation is concentrated on limited, tangible and non-intellectual aspects of the "job" such as punctuality which, while important, ignore the

greater responsibilities on an interpersonal level. Melvin sees 'starting and finishing time' as an example of overly trivial questions focusing on manifestations of overt teacher behavior. Ratings do not address the quality of learning processes nor outcomes as he sees teaching in terms of a "facilitator" role, guiding students to gain knowledge heuristically, by themselves. SETs encourage an "administrator" viewpoint emphasizing classroom organization and the presentation of learning, instead of encouraging "practical knowledge," observing and interacting with their peers and being receptive to learners. Therefore he encourages reflection through journal writing, noting when activities "worked" and changing his classes while reflecting during his teaching. He observes how students are responding in the class and so has "a pretty good idea" of student responses and so in evaluation "the information is something I was close to guessing" if evaluation is seen as an expression of satisfaction.

Case 5: Jack

Jack is in his mid 40s and comes from Australia. He works part time and has administered SETs "about fifty times," giving out forms most recently in four classes. These were three "English Conversation" classes of between thirty-two and forty-four students which were compulsory, and one elective "Conversation" class of twenty seven students. He gives out evaluation in the final class after the test which finishes 15 minutes before the end of class. When the students are ready to go, he hands out the evaluations without giving any explanation as he assumes the students know the purpose. He says the response from students is very low while he has a "vague suspicion" that results come back halfway through the following semester which is far too late to apply. He considers evaluation to be a chore for the students as they are required to do them in all classes so students do not "go out on a limb" so that only motivated students write comments and others respond by giving "444". Lazy students, he suggests, "throw the average," but he suggests that as overall student responses are similar across the curriculum, meaningful feedback is limited. The school offers little in terms of a developmental path so is "going through the motions" in terms of question content and timing of feedback; therefore, he would prefer to administer his own formative evaluation form. While the open comments, when satisfactory, give him a sense of validation, he feels that students are unused to his communicative teaching which emphasizes a process over final product, and

questions students' competence to distinguish between tasks that are "challenging" tasks and "too difficult."

Having a pragmatic approach to the temporary nature of part time work, he can foresee a time when part time teachers may lose classes due to underperformance but at the present, he imagines the administration probably scan the data, notice that "nothing jumps out," and so "throw it in the bin and that is the end" a practice he himself follows. As an improvement in the process would be give evaluation a purpose, he would like peer observation but suggests only we ("native speakers" (sic)) would be competent to "judge" as Japanese ("they") are unaware of "good" teaching. He thinks that evaluating aspects of each class would be of value to determine "satisfaction" but sees teaching as an art in contrast to a craft implicit in evaluations. A craft can be learned like a set of techniques, but art is "inside" and can be developed. This inner, innate feeling tells him when students are preoccupied or tired so he can change approach to "catch the audience" which more mechanical teachers would be unable to develop.

Case 6: Eleanor

Eleanor is in her late 30s and comes from New Zealand. She works part time and has been evaluated three times in "conversation" classes. The students seem familiar with the purpose and are supplied with instruction sheet in Japanese which she assumes explains the rationale. She is uncomfortable with the questionnaire being reliant on student interpretations of definitions and as content lacks specificity, she gives students her own evaluation for formative feedback. As the students are "besieged" with evaluations and repeatedly fill out the same forms, she questions whether students can cognitively understand either the cumulative effects of their English education or her objectives and priorities so perceives evaluation as a popularity contest based on a "myriad" of notions of liking and disliking. As an ELT teacher, she feels disadvantaged with cross-curricular evaluation in a multitude of classes and teaching styles while being unaware of the "standards" expected by the administration. She questions the discriminant validity as students are speaking in language they are not "comfortable" with in activities which do not represent didactic teaching styles they are used to. She cites teachers' non-assignment of homework and lenient grading as causing tension, while large class size limits her ability to communicate with learners which causes learner frustration. Upon receiving

feedback, she first compared her ranking with others because, being employed on a yearly renewable contract, she is unaware of how data are interpreted and feels she needs to raise student awareness of potential consequence prior to evaluation. Her unease is expressed in her metaphors of "little men in darkened rooms" who compare her results and then "hatchet" those underperforming teachers. As the criteria are unclear, she would like, firstly, more objectives-based evaluation closer to her high school teaching experience in New Zealand, and secondly, an efficient feedback loop. Without this loop, students lack involvement, feedback is overdue so losing diagnostic potential.

While she thinks there are a lot of "bored, disinterested" teachers and wonders whether the lack of ongoing assessment would make peer evaluation viable, her personal growth occurs through dialogue with trusted colleagues and from day to day interaction with classes. She feels marginalized as a part time teacher because the time spent developing an interesting and worthwhile syllabus does not fit the narrow defines of "acceptable" teaching which has a knock-on effect on morale and job satisfaction. She sees the looming "2009 problem" of universal access as the legislative requirement for evaluation, so "they" need a way to "get rid" of teachers who are not a "student draw" or do not generate positive word of mouth that universities need to attract potential students. She suggests that university administrators are concerned with the framework or the publishable visible side of classroom evaluation but her job involves a group of students for whom the syllabus has little relevance. She constantly considers student engagement, monitors responses, and fine tunes her teaching while the evaluation represents the teacher standing at the front telling students what to do.

Discussion

Each participant has their own unique picture of faculty evaluation depending on their status and job security but, because of the lack of clarity of mandatory goals, overall findings suggest that:

a) Student evaluations are administered haphazardly with little information given to students. Many students develop a cynical attitude and through the lack of student involvement in the feedback loop and as the use of results is often unclear to students, evaluation becomes a "perfunctory exercise of little impact" (Smith & Carney, 1990, p. 6), which jeopardizes reliability and consequential validity.

b) Teachers would welcome meaningful improvement focused on improvement. Without feedback and only little information of any worth, and negligible mechanism for remedial help, the potential for teacher growth is limited which encourages complacency.

c) However, although complacent, precarious working conditions faced by many ELT teachers who perceive the lack of diagnostic utility of evaluation as heightening the summative purpose and feelings of threat.

d) Threat encourages doubt about the "legitimacy of data" (Schmelkin et al, 1997) as personnel committees are believed to use ratings to judge teaching effectiveness by comparing individual faculty results with departmental norms. The theoretical utility is dependent on the extent to which ratings agreed with standards of externally imposed notions of "good" teaching.

Teacher overall views on evaluation

Participants questioned the overall validity of evaluations as they are cross-curricular and used in all courses. The inappropriateness of questions for "the nature" of ELT is mentioned by Eleanor who thinks that evaluation is based on a "random set" of teaching processes that supposedly represent good teaching and it "infuriates" her that evaluation comes down to " trivial questions that the teacher has very little control over." This has created a "negative synergistic system" (Theall & Franklin, 1990, p.28) with teachers (us) fulminating against a recaltrant administration (them) and against other faculty (another them) believing that results are used capriciously, or only for punitive purposes. For improvement, evaluation must develop a sense of ownership so that teachers accept the validity of evaluation and have understandings of both the "mechanics" of the evaluation system and the rationale for performance criteria. As the results below show, this understanding is largely absent.

Trustworthiness and believability

Suspicion among participants about ratings used is fed by the long delay in returning results so that ratings are just "piled up in the office" (Jack) for some future time when a teacher becomes a liability to be disposed of (Eleanor). Responses are similar to Ryan et al. (1980) where teachers had interest in student evaluation prior to being required to obtain it, and subsequent receptivity to "official" evaluations noticeably fell. As participants say they are vulnerable as ELT teachers in their workplace due to

evaluation being considered a factor for part time teacher retention, or contract renewal discussions, evaluation heightens this vulnerability. This vulnerability is reiterated at various stages of the interview when discussing purpose, threat, and relationships with colleagues. Unlike earlier studies (for example, Schmelkin et al., 1997), participants say that the link between teacher evaluation and actual course improvement is at best tenuous and, with no explanation from the administration, the purpose is unclear.

Threat

Similar to earlier findings (Ryan et al., 1980; Schmelkin et al.1997), participants found evaluation reduced morale, job satisfaction and personal confidence in the institutional administration which interferes with any potential formative use. Teachers who are on a contract or part time believe that ratings are linked to contract renewals, forms are read by those who are not themselves professional educators and who tend to interpret and assess teaching in terms of values external to the educational process. Participants suggested nameless, often demonized, persons echoing Gibbs' (1996) view that "the people who sit on such panels did not gain that right by being excellent teachers or even by paying attention to teaching. They are seldom the right people to judge excellent teaching" (p. 47). The participants have little confidence in the ability of the administrators whose views are not consonant with teachers' educational goals and conceptions of teaching.

The culture of ranking

Ed is "especially wary" of ranking teachers in league tables which emphasize "winning and losing" although there is little difference in scores. The "unintended social consequences of evaluation" (Braskamp & Ory, 1994, p. 5) where hostility and suspicion of the administration and other faculty becomes apparent has been caused by a culture of ranking instead of fostering development. This leads teachers to focus on short term and measurable results and to teach to the standards which they think they can exceed. Koji heard many rumors while Ayumi called the whole process "nerve-wracking" and she suggests the present system "condemns" teachers instead of encouraging teachers to learn from each other to improve teaching. Evaluation fails to must consider the commitment of teachers to the institution and fails to create a climate that is conducive to a high degree of teacher efficacy.

Limited improvement

While participants wished to get useful feedback from students as a dimension of good practice, many felt the potential threat of evaluation meant they were relieved to get good scores: While they continue to get high ratings, they see little need to change their practice. Bandura (1997) shows that teachers with low efficacy are pessimistic about improvement and often take a custodial view of their job.

Teacher learning

Participants make a distinction between technical top-down evaluation and the practical teaching which teachers display in their knowledge of what is educationally required in a particular situation. For many participants, evaluation questions are redundant or irrelevant to every day practice, as they can learn more from the personal day-to-day interactions with students which they use to adjust aspects of the class. Participants are not convinced of the link between evaluation and instructional improvement and instead, through SETs, good teaching is reduced to a "generic set of skills and actions" (Pratt, 1997, p.25).

New knowledge

Participants also state that the repetitive nature of evaluation diminishes the potential for new insights gain while some number suggest mid-semester evaluation should be introduced, which assumes a formative purpose of evaluation for teaching improvement during the lifetime of the course. The use of evaluation should not only lead to the improvement of teaching, but should improve the quality of teaching through preparing teachers to teach, to provide an environment where they can teach and most importantly, to motivate them to teach.

Conclusion

All of the ELT teachers who participated suggest that using student ratings as the sole criterion for evaluating teachers is flawed. Teachers, and often administrators, are unaware of the purpose of the evaluation which is not explained and often are just expected to administer without any consultation or input into the questions. In agreement with Stronge and Tucker (1999), there needs to be a dynamic relationship which enhances teachers' ability to grow under the belief that through teacher

improvement the institution is likely to be a better pace for learning. A system that aims to pinpoint poor teaching for remediation means that many teachers do not gain any new knowledge as they question the value of the information, and the lack of dialogue or feedback may be causing relationships to fracture. Participants believe evaluation is imposed so that individual teachers lose any sense of either responsibility for the effects of their work, or for autonomy in its performance. Evaluation often does not match participants' conceptions of teaching. There is an assumption that in teaching, knowledge is transmitted which is reflected in the evaluation process. Evaluation did not address the metaphors that teachers use to describe their assertions about the nature of teaching and teachers reject a top-down model of university evaluation which tries to get teachers to comply with a set of externally generated criteria. Instead of being conduits of administrators, teachers see the importance of articulation of ideas for improvement, putting forward a dialogical approach to evaluation which involves their peers. Coming almost full circle, change only occurs when teachers receive new knowledge, value that knowledge, know how or receive practical help to change, and have the motivation to change. If teachers disagree or are threatened with the aims of the evaluation as imposed by administrators, they are likely to ignore any recommendations resulting from the evaluation.

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Appendix 1: The SETs form administered at a former National University in western Japan
1. What is your overall evaluation of the class?
2. Did you feel the teacher's enthusiasm towards the lesson?
3. Was the textbook, suggested use of reference books, and the distribution of supplementary sources appropriate?
4. Was the writing on the blackboard and the use of listening or learning devices appropriate?

5. Was the lecture or the explanations easy to hear and understand?
6. Was the schedule and the use of class time suitable?
7. With regard to reviewing, preparation, homework and assignments, were the instructions appropriate?
8. Did you fully involve yourself in reviewing, preparation, homework and assignments?
9. After you have taken the class, are you aware of your understanding of the subject having been deepened?

Foreign Language Speaking Assessment:
Taiwanese College English Teachers' Scoring Performance in the Holistic and Analytic Rating Methods

Ying-Ying Chuang
Cheng Shiu University

Bio Data:

Ying-Ying Chuang is an assistant professor in the Department of Applied Foreign Languages at Cheng Shiu University, Taiwan. She holds Ed.D. in Bilingual Education from Texas A&M University. She is currently teaching the courses of Second Language acquisition, English Reading, and ESL Teaching Methodologies. Her research interests include second/foreign language assessment and language learning strategies.

Abstract
The purpose of this study was to investigate college English teachers' scoring performance of the holistic and analytic rating methods, their views and concerns with the components of oral skills, and whether teachers' background variables influenced their scoring performance. Compared with the individual teacher's rating scores, the results indicated that no statistically significant differences were found between the scores in two rating methods. The majority of the teachers ranked "comprehensibility" as their most concern of oral performance, while "vocabulary/word choice" happened to be the least of their concern. Regarding the relationship between rated scores and *rater effect*, the findings indicated that the statistically significant differences were found in the factors of the teachers' age and academic major; however, no statistically significant differences were found in the factors of teaching experience and rating training. Some pedagogical implications of the study are included for further inquiry.

Keywords: oral proficiency; speaking assessment; rating scale; English as foreign language.

Introduction

Background of the Study
Speaking seems intuitively the most important of all the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) since people who know a language are referred to as a 'speaker' of that language, as if speaking included all other skills of knowing that language (Ur, 1996). In other words, a learner's end product of language

learning is to be capable of speaking the target language fluently. However, speaking skill is a crucial part of the language learning process, and it is also the one skill, which has often been neglected in EFL classroom. In addition, in English proficiency testing, oral performance appears to be one of the most difficult skills to assess since there are many external and internal factors that influence a rater's impression toward how well someone can speak a foreign language. In other words, the reliability of scoring has always been doubted as the oral proficiency test inevitably involves raters' personal/ subjective views instead of their objective points of view.

Based on the fact that many learners who had been taught the English language by nonnative speakers in the countries that consider English as a foreign language, Kim (2005) claimed that using the rating criteria based on native speakers' standards to measure learners' oral proficiency was not appropriate for the actual use of English in an international context. Therefore, it is important for educators, test designers, and researchers to reconsider the purposes of language speaking tests, and the standards of assessing learners' speaking skills, since it cannot be denied that the natural function of speaking is for a meaningful message delivery rather than the use of language form.

Statement of the Problem

Recently, many English educators in Taiwan have promoted curriculum reforms in order to meet the principles of Communicative Language Teaching. In light of this, a great deal of attention has been focused on revising teaching materials and curriculum, which were meant to improve teaching facilities for the attainment of communicative goals. However, the idea that teachers should improve evaluations by promoting the communicative approach has been neglected. Nevertheless, even students can receive good grades in English courses; however, it does not mean that their oral proficiency has achieved a certain level of competency. In addition, most assessments taking place in the Taiwanese English classrooms were conducted by pencil-paper tests without considering the importance of oral production in language learning (Cheng, 2006). The reasons that teachers avoided doing oral tests include the amount of time it took, the large size of student population, and students' negative reactions toward oral testing (Liu, 2006; Teng, 2005).

From the learner's perspective, speaking test is the most complex and difficult task among the language skills since their preparations should include knowledge about

the language and the skills involved in using it (Bygate, 1987). Wang (2003) conducted a survey of Taiwanese college students in freshman English classes and she noticed that within the four language skills, speaking ability was the one that the students thought they should improve the most (83.7%). This meant that many students thought their oral skill was deficient. Also, some studies indicated that Asian students indeed had comparatively high anxiety in English learning (Na, 2007; Tsai, 2003) since most of them lacked speaking practice in the target language both inside and outside of the classroom. This limited real-life practice and experience appears to have eroded their confidence and weakened their willingness to speak. Moreover, they experienced a sense of panic when pressured into doing an English oral test.

Purposes of the Study

Speaking assessments have become one of the most central issues in language testing. Unfortunately, few studies had been completed with the focus on foreign language speaking skills in Taiwan (Chen, 2001; Li, 2003; Lin, 1996; Pan, 2002; Wang, 2003), and the available research in the field of EFL speaking assessment is inadequate. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate: how the rated scores differed between the holistic and analytic rating methods when the English teachers assessed the Taiwanese college student speech samples, if the teachers' characteristics affected their rating performance, and their understanding along with major concerns with the components of oral production. The researcher believes that it is necessary for English educators in Taiwan to rethink the questions of how and what to *assess* in speaking in order to help learners improve their oral skills, and particularly to be aware of the impact from *washback* (Bailey, 2005), to see the effects of testing on teaching and learning.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

　　1. How did the rated scores differ between the holistic and analytic rating scales when English teachers assessed the same five Taiwanese college students' speech samples?

　　2. Was there any difference between English teachers' rankings of the five

components—grammatical accuracy, vocabulary/word choice, pronunciation/accent, flow of speech/fluency, and comprehensibility—in the analytic rating scale when they assessed EFL student oral language proficiency?

3. How did the teachers' background characteristics—age, academic major, and teaching experience—influence their rating scores of the speech samples?

Review of literature

New Direction of Language Testing

Traditionally, language testing has taken the form of testing knowledge about the language: grammar and vocabulary. However, there is much more to using a language than just knowledge about it. Hymes (1974) argued that a language learner should not only have the ability to form correct sentences, but also to use them at appropriate times. The main purpose of communicative language tests is to assess the test taker's ability to use the language in real-life situations. In testing speaking skills, the focus should center on producing the appropriate and meaningful messages rather than grammatical accuracy (Kitao & Kitao, 1996). For instance, for those EFL learners who learn the target language for specific purpose situations, the tests should reflect what they actually need and what is useful to apply in those specific communication situations, such as occupational or professional areas. While some learners do not have a specific purpose—such as those students who learn English as a required academic subject—the language tests for them can be directly focused on general social situations where they might have the chance to use English (Kitao & Kitao, 1996).

With the ever-increasing popularity of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), language testing has come to view communicative purpose as its central concern. For example, the TOEFL test (Test of English as a Foreign Language) has now undergone a major makeover—the biggest change was to add a new speaking component, beginning in year 2006—aimed at better evaluating how well applicants can orally communicate in the target language (English). The English Testing Service (ETS) explained that the old test version failed to identify those students who mastered only 'textbook' English, and the educators of ETS hope that the change will improve English language teaching and learning worldwide, particularly of those students from Asia, where schools generally emphasize vocabulary, grammar, and reading skills over speaking skills in second/foreign language teaching and learning (Cheng, 2006;

Liu, 2006).

Communicative language tests are those which make an effort to test language in a way that reflects the way that language is used in real communication; they focus on language meaning and function rather than language form. If students are encouraged to learn the target language through more communicative ways, it would make a positive effect on their language learning.

Variability in the Assessment Process: The Role of Rater

The issue of test features may influence a certain and significant degree of impact towards test results, particularly the rater effects, such as the influencing factors such as age, native language, gender, attitudes, professional background and experience, and so forth. Rater effects must be considered if the rating score is to be accurate of a learner's language performance, and to reflect a learner's real language ability in a test. According to Brown (2004), oral proficiency tests usually employ human raters to judge and score a test-taker's performance. The role of the raters is extremely important in the process of oral language assessments. Not only does their professional judgment impact decision-making in scoring, but their reliability also influences the meaning and quality of the scores.

Some previous studies have examined the relationship between raters and test scores in ESL oral proficiency assessments (Bachman et al., 1995; Brown, 1995; Lumley & McNamara, 1995; Caban, 2003; Kim, 2005). Most of their findings have proven that a test rater's background did affect their rating behaviors in certain aspects and those differences in background brought different scores from the raters.

Variability in the Assessment Process: The Role of Rating Scales

The test scores of oral language proficiency reflect how well the learner can speak the language being tested on a rating scale. Davies et al. (1999) defined the rating scales:

> A scale for the description of language proficiency consisting of a series of constructed level against which a language learners' performance is judged….the levels or bands are commonly characterized in terms of what subjects can do with the language (tasks and functions which can be performed) and their mastery of linguistic features (such as vocabulary, syntax, fluency and cohesion) ….raters or judges are normally trained in the use of proficiency scales so as to ensure the measure's reliability. (pp. 153-154)

The rating scale for speaking was made up of an ascending series of levels, and each level should provide a statement as a scale descriptor to describe what each level or score meant. North (2000) described the challenge of developing a rating scale as trying to describe the complexity of a language ability in a small number of words. There were different types of rating scales that could be employed to score learners' speech samples; one of the traditional distinctions was between the holistic and analytic rating scales (Fulcher, 2003). A holistic rating captured an overall impression of the speaker's performance: a primary trait score assessed the speaker's abilities to achieve a specific communication purpose. In a holistic scoring, the rater reacted to the speaker's oral production as a whole: one score was awarded for his or her speech performance. Normally, this marked score was on a scale of 1 to 5, or even 1 to 10. Often each level on the scale was accompanied by a verbal description of the performance required to achieve that score (score criteria).

On the other hand, an analytic rating assessed and captured the speaker's performance on a variety of categories, such as delivery, organization, content, and language. The analytic categories, which the test developer included in his or her rating system amounted to his or her theory or hypothesis of what speaking was about. Some people agreed that the holistic rating was desirable for the evaluation of the general communicative effectiveness of the test-taker, however, "raters can be confused when evaluating many things simultaneously" (Kim, 2005, p. 52). The analytic rating tended to identify sub-skills such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. Generally speaking, the holistic scales were more practical for decision-making since the raters only marked one score: the flexibly allowed many different combinations of strengths and weakness within a level. From a rater's perspective, "holistic rating scales make [scoring easier and quicker] because there is less to read and remember than in a complex grid with many criteria" (Luoma, 2004). However, the advantages of the analytic rating were due to the detailed guidance that was offered to the raters, and the rich information as criteria was provided on specific strengths and weaknesses of the test-taker's performance. Therefore, Fulcher (2003) pointed out that to select the most appropriate type of rating scale for a particular speaking test, either holistic or analytic, the purposes of the test should be an element of the decision. Bachman and Savignon (1986) also suggested that a holistic rating, along with an analytic rating, should be assigned to

provide a precise profile of the examinee's speaking ability.

In conclusion, identifying an appropriate rating scale depends upon the purposes of the assessment, and the availability of existing instruments. Rating systems may describe varying degrees of competence along a scale or may indicate the presence or absence of a characteristic. As Weigle (2002) mentioned, the choice of testing procedures should involve finding the best possible combination of the qualities (reliability, validity, and so forth) and deciding which qualities were most relevant in a given situation. Therefore, a major aspect of any rating system is rater objectivity. The reliability of raters should be established during their training and checked during administration or scoring of the assessment.

Methodology and Procedure

Instrumentation

This study aimed to compare the two types of rating methods employed by teachers to evaluate EFL students' oral performance, and to investigate the analytic components of oral production. To gather the information from the raters, this study employed a rater survey and two types of rating instruments (holistic and analytic) for quantitative method analysis, and a rater interview as a qualitative method to support quantitative data.

The Rater Survey included the items which related to teachers' personal background information, such as age, native language, academic major, teaching experience, experience of rating oral proficiency and using rating scales, and whether they had been trained for rating oral proficiency. These demographic items provided the raters' similarities and differences in order to determine if these characteristics influenced their rating behaviors.

All selected raters needed to assess the five Taiwanese college student speech samples using the holistic and analytic rating scales which were originally designed by Kim (2005) but revised by the researcher. The holistic rating method, according to Kim, was designed to "ask raters to provide a score for the overall impression of the speaker's English language oral proficiency without any specified rating criteria" (p. 60). Another rating method, the analytic rating scale, asked all raters to score five rating competences: grammatical accuracy, vocabulary/word choice, pronunciation/accent, rate of speech/fluency, and comprehensibility. The raters scored

the speech samples from a level of 1 to 7 to present their opinions from 'low proficiency' to 'high proficiency' in each component.

In this study, individual interviews were also conducted. The researcher further contacted the raters who were willing to answer the specific questions from the survey by using the telephone and face-to face interview in order to clarify their responses, expose their beliefs, and provide detailed opinions.

The Subjects of the Study

The researcher chose the teachers who have taught English courses at the universities in southern region of Taiwan, to serve as raters in this study. They were asked to mark scores to the speech samples by using the two rating scales, and then completed a teacher survey.

Data Collection

The researcher sent each selected rater an e-mail with the files, including 1) the letter to the subject with the instruction for rating speech samples, 2) five student speech samples, 3) a rating booklet which included the analytic rating scale descriptor, the holistic and analytic rating scoring forms, and 4) the Rater Survey. The university-level English teachers in southern Taiwan were selected and submitted materials. Further, in order to obtain insights from the raters, individual interviews with the raters were also arranged.

Findings

Demographic Data

A total of 80 copies of the survey and rating instruments were sent, of which 62 copies were returned. Therefore, the overall response rate was 77.5%. Regarding respondents' gender, fourteen raters (22.6%) were male, and forty-eight (77.4%) were female. Nearly one-fifth of raters were at the age range of 21-30 (19.4%); over half of the raters were at the age range of 31-40 (56.5%); 14.5% of the raters were at the age range of 41-50; and 9.6% of the raters identified their age range as over 50. The raters' academic majors were varied. The researcher categorized them into three fields: linguistics/English literature, TESOL/ESL education, and "others." There were nine raters who had an education background in linguistics/English literature (14.5%),

nearly two-thirds of raters with TESOL/ESL education background (61.3%), and nearly one-fifth of raters belonged to the group of "others" (24.2%).

Findings and Discussion of Research Question One

Research Question One: *How did the rated scores differ between the holistic and analytic rating scales when English teachers assessed the same five Taiwanese college student speech samples?*

During the data collection process, each rater was required to rate the same five speech samples twice: first time to assess the speech samples by using holistic rating scales, and second time by using analytic scales. Descriptive statistics of the five speech samples describes the characteristics of a score distribution rated by the raters. The findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Overall Holistic Ratings from Student Speech Samples (N=62)

Speech Sample	N	M	Min	Max	Range	SD
1	62	4.34	2	7	5	.96
2	62	4.77	3	7	4	.93
3	62	5.24	2	7	5	1.13
4	62	4.37	2	7	5	1.09
5	62	3.37	1	6	5	1.06

The mean range of the holistic rating scores rated by the raters was from 3.34 to 5.24. Speech sample 3 received the highest mean ratings among the five speech samples, and speech sample 5 received the lowest mean ratings. In addition, the mean scores of speech sample 1 and 4 were very close, the difference was only 0.03.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of Overall Analytic Ratings from Student Speech Samples

Speech Sample	N	*M*	Min	Max	Range	*SD*
1	62	4.55	2.40	6.80	4.40	.92
2	62	4.55	3.00	6.20	3.20	.79
3	62	5.26	3.00	7.00	4.00	.93
4	62	4.47	2.40	7.00	4.60	.95
5	62	3.46	1.00	5.80	4.80	1.02

Table 2 describes descriptive statistics of the raters' scores for analytic ratings of

each speech sample. The lowest range obtained is 1 and the highest is 7, indicating that raters used the whole ranges of the rating scales. The total raters' mean range of analytic ratings is from 3.46 to 5.26. These were slightly higher than their holistic ratings. The same results were found as in holistic ratings. Speech sample 3 received the highest mean score among the raters' analytic ratings, and speech sample 5 received the lowest mean score of the ratings.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of Overall Holistic and Analytic Scores (N = 62)

Rating Scale	*M*	*N*	*SD*	Std. Error Mean
Holistic Scores	4.44	62	.71	.09
Analytic Scores	4.47	62	.70	.09

The overall mean scores of holistic and analytic ratings were compared to examine the score differences between the two ratings results. The data in Table 3 indicated that the mean score of the holistic ratings ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 0.71$) from the sixty-two raters was slightly lower than their mean score of the analytic ratings ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 0.70$).

In order to evaluate whether there were statistically significant differences between the two rating methods, a paired-samples *t*-test was conducted.

Table 4
Paired-Samples t-Test of Overall Holistic and Analytic Scores (N = 62)

Holistic Scores -	Paired Differences				
	M	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
Analytic Scores	.03	.41	.54	61	.59

The findings in Table 4 indicate that the mean of the holistic scores ($M = 4.44$) was close to the mean of the analytic scores ($M = 4.47$), $t(61) = 0.54$, $p = 0.59 > 0.05$. Therefore, the findings revealed that there was no statistically significant difference found between the rated scores of the two rating scales.

Findings and Discussion of Research Question Two

Research Question Two: *Was there any difference between the English teachers' rankings of the five components—grammatical accuracy, vocabulary/word choice, pronunciation/accent, flow of speech/fluency, and comprehensibility—in the analytic rating scale when they assessed EFL students' oral language proficiency*?

Item 14 of the Rater Survey focused on the rater's opinions of the components of the learners' oral proficiency competence based on their opinions. The raters were asked to rank each of the five components—grammatical accuracy, vocabulary/word choice, pronunciation/accent, flow of speech/fluency, and comprehensibility—followed by the number from 5 (the most important) to 1 (the least important). The raters' rankings were compared by frequency.

Table 5

Frequency of the Raters' Response for Ranking the Most Important of the Five Components

Analytic Component	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Grammatical Accuracy	9	14.5
Vocabulary/Word Choice	5	8.1
Pronunciation/Accent	11	17.7
Flow of the Speech/Fluency	5	8.1
Comprehensibility	32	51.6
Total (N)	62	100.0

Table 5 depicts the frequency of the raters' responses for their ranking the most important of the five components in the analytic rating scales. The majority of the raters ranked "comprehensibility" as their first concern when they assessed student oral language proficiency (51.6%), followed by the "pronunciation/accent" (17.7%). However, there were only five raters who answered that they considered "flow of the speech/fluency" or "vocabulary/word choice" as the most important component of the speaking abilities (8.1%).

Table 6

Frequency of the Raters' Response for Ranking the Least Important of the Five Components

Analytic Component	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Grammatical Accuracy	11	17.7
Vocabulary/Word Choice	23	37.1
Pronunciation/Accent	12	19.4
Flow of the Speech/Fluency	4	6.5
Comprehensibility	12	19.4
Total (N)	62	100.0

On the other hand, the raters' responses, which showed their opinions on ranking the least important of the five components, are described in Table 6. More than one-third of the raters (37.1%) considered that "vocabulary/word choice" was the least

important of the five components. This meant that when those teachers rated students' oral proficiency, their scores might not reflect the students' competence in vocabulary used. In other words, teachers might pay more attention to students' oral performance in other components, such as if they are able to express their meanings clearly, to apply correct grammatical rules, and to pronounce accurate sounds. Table 6 also indicated that only 6.5% of the raters ranked the "flow of the speech/fluency" as their last choice when they assessed students' oral performance.

Table 7
Frequency of Response for Ranking the Most Concern of the Five Components Based on Rater Variables

Rater Variable	G	V	P	F	C	Total
Native Language						
English	2	1	2	-	4	9 (14.5%)
Mandarin Chinese	7	6	10	5	25	53 (85.5%)
Academic Major						
Ling. /Literature	1	2	2	1	3	9 (14.5%)
TESOL	6	3	7	4	18	38 (61.3%)
Others	2	2	3	-	8	15 (24.2%)
Years of Teaching Experience						
Less than 2 years	2	-	1	1	7	11 (17.7%)
3 to 6 years	5	4	6	4	16	35 (56.5%)
Over 7 years	-	3	5	-	6	16 (25.8%)
Rating Experience						
Less than 2 years	7	3	7	3	23	43 (69.3%)
3 to 6 years	-	2	3	1	6	12 (19.4%)
Over7 years	2	-	1	1	3	7 (11.3%)
Teaching Certificate						
Yes	6	5	7	4	17	39 (62.9%)
No	3	2	5	1	12	23 (37.1%)
Rating Training						
Yes	2	5	-	2	9	21 (33.9%)
No	7	2	9	3	20	41 (66.1%)

Note. G = Grammatical Accuracy; V = Vocabulary/Word Choice; P = Pronunciation; F = Flow of the Speech/Fluency; C = Comprehensibility.

In order to find out if raters' background variables influenced their rankings, the researcher divided the raters into groups according to their native language, academic major, teaching and rating experience, and having or not having English teaching certificates and rating training. Table 7 revealed that in all groups with different variables, "comprehensibility" received the highest ranking. Regarding the raters' native language, the majority of the teachers believed that "comprehensibility" was their first concern when they checked students' oral performance.

However, the raters who were with different academic backgrounds, with or without rating experience, having or not having English teaching certificates or rating training, showed no difference with their selections in general, including the less- and well-experienced teachers. This meant that when teachers test students' oral proficiency, they would focus more on checking whether their speeches can be understandable and intelligible. Moreover, "pronunciation/accent" received the second highest ranking. However, none of the raters who had been trained in rating speaking assessment selected "pronunciation/accent" as their priority.

Compared with the different background variables of the subjects, the raters' responses, which showed their opinions on ranking the least important of the five analytic components, are described in Table 8.

Table 8
Frequency of Response for Ranking the Least Concern of the Five Components Based on Rater Variables

Rater Variable	G	V	P	F	C	Total
Native Language						
English	2	4	1	1	1	9 (14.5%)
Mandarin Chinese	9	17	11	3	13	53 (85.5%)
Academic Major						
Ling. /Literature	3	3	2	-	1	9 (14.5%)
TESOL	6	13	8	2	9	38 (61.3%)
Others	2	5	2	2	4	15 (24.2%)
Years of Teaching Experience						
Less than 2 years	1	4	3	2	1	11 (17.7%)
3 to 6 years	5	11	8	2	9	35 (56.5%)
Over 7 years	5	6	1	-	4	16 (25.8%)
Rating Experience						
Less than 2 years	6	16	10	4	7	43 (69.3%)
3 to 6 years	3	3	2	-	4	12 (19.4%)
Over7 years	2	4	-	-	1	7 (11.3%)
Teaching Certificate						
Yes	7	17	5	3	7	39 (62.9%)
No	4	6	7	1	5	23 (37.1%)
Rating Training						
Yes	4	7	3	1	6	21 (33.9%)
No	7	14	9	3	8	41 (66.1%)

Note. G = Grammatical Accuracy; V = Vocabulary/Word Choice; P = Pronunciation; F = Flow of the Speech/Fluency; C = Comprehensibility.

The data showed that the majority of the raters in each variable group preferred "vocabulary/word choice" to the other four analytic components, except for the group of raters with 3 to 6 years rating experience of speaking assessment. Particularly, half

of the raters in that group who had taught English for more than 7 years did not focus on "vocabulary/word choice" during the process of rating their students' oral production. Table 8 also indicated that only few raters selected "flow of speech/fluency" as the least important among the five components. It appeared that even if most raters did not prioritize "flow of speech/fluency," it did not mean that the student's performance in fluency would be totally neglected by those raters in speaking assessment.

Regarding how the teachers ranked their components in sequence as well as why they made such decisions, the information gathered from interviews can provide more insights and details.

Findings and Discussion of Research Question Three

Research Question Three: *How did the teachers' background characteristics—age, academic major, and teaching experience—influence their rating scores of speech samples?*

From Research Question One, the findings indicated that the raters' rating scores had no statistically significant difference between the two rating methods. It meant that the means of the rated scores in those two rating scales were very similar. Therefore, only the holistic rating scores were used to evaluate whether the rated scores were impacted by the raters' age, academic major, and English teaching experience to Taiwanese college students. The responders were divided into four age groups: 21 to 30, 31 to 40, 41 to 50, and over 50. The descriptive statistics are illustrated in Table 9.

Table 9
Descriptive Statistics of Holistic Scores Based on Raters' Age (N = 62)

Age	N	M	SD
21-30	12	3.85	.50
31-40	35	4.59	.66
41-50	9	4.53	.64
Over 50	6	4.60	.83
Total	62	4.44	.70

The raters' lowest mean score was at the age group of 21 to 30 ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.50$), while the highest was at the age group of over 50 ($M = 4.60$, $SD = 0.83$). The raters in the age group of 21 to 30 were the strictest since they were the only group

whose mean score was lower than the overall mean score of the raters ($M = 4.44$, SD = 0.70) in the holistic ratings. The raters of the age group over 50 were the most lenient out of the four groups.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the relationship between rated scores and the raters' age levels. The independent variable, the rater factor, which included four age groups. The dependent variable was the rated holistic rating scores.

Table 10
ANOVA Results for the Effect of Raters' Age on Holistic Scores (N = 62)

Source	df	SS	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3	5.24	1.75	4.19	.009*
Within Groups	58	24.21	.42		
Total	62	29.45			

Note. * $p < 0.05$

As the findings showed in Table 10, there was a strong relationship between the age factor and the overall holistic scores rated by the raters since there were statistically significant differences found between the age groups in holistic scores at $p < 0.05$ level (p = 0.009).

However, using ANOVA alone could not determine which age levels of the raters differ from each other in the holistic rating scores they rated. A post hoc comparison test would be employed to decide precisely which age group means were significantly different from other group means.

Table 11
Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons for Rated Holistic Score Based on Raters' Age (N = 62)

(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
21-30	31-40	-.74	.22	.00*
	41-50	-.68	.29	.02*
	Over 50	-.75	.32	.02*
31-40	21-30	.74	.22	.00*
	41-50	.06	.24	.80
	Over 50	-.01	.29	.98
41-50	21-30	.68	.29	.02*
	31-40	-.06	.24	.80
	Over 50	-.07	.34	.85
Over 50	21-30	.75	.32	.02*
	31-40	.01	.29	.98
	41-50	.07	.34	.85

Note. *$p < 0.05$

Tested by post hoc multiple comparisons of group means using the LSD method, the findings in Table 11 reveal that there are statistically significant differences between the raters of the age group 21 to 30 and the age group of 31 to 40 ($p = 0.00 < 0.05$), 41 to 50 ($p = 0.02 < 0.05$), and the raters in the age group of over 50 ($p = 0.02 < 0.05$). It meant that the overall holistic scores rated by the raters at the age group of 21 to 30 were significantly stricter than the other age groups.

The rater's academic major factor also was tested to see if any relationship existed with the rated holistic rating scores. The responders were divided into three groups: major related to linguistics or English literature, major related to TESOL or ESL education, and others.

Table 12 indicates that the scores rated by the raters with linguistics or English literature backgrounds were the lowest of the three groups ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.75$) while the score rated by the raters with TESOL or ESL education backgrounds were the highest ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 0.70$).

Table 12
Descriptive Statistics of Holistic Scores Based on Raters' Academic Major (N = 62)

Academic Major	N	M	SD
Ling./Literature	9	4.02	.75
TESOL/ESL	38	4.55	.70
Others	15	4.41	.59
Total	62	4.44	.70

To evaluate the relationship between rated holistic scores and the rater's academic major, post hoc multiple comparisons were conducted by using the LSD method to determine if any of the pair-level differences were significant. The independent variable, the rater factor, included three academic major groups. The dependent variable was the holistic rating scores rated by the raters.

Table 13
Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons for Holistic Rating Scores Based on Raters' Academic Major

(I) Major	(J) Major	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	*Sig.*
Ling./Literature	TESOL/ESL	-.53	.25	.04*
	Other	-.39	.29	.18
TESOL/ESL	Ling./Literature	.53	.25	.04*
	Other	.14	.21	.51
Other	Ling./Literature	.39	.29	.18
	TESOL/ESL	-.14	.21	.51

Note. *$p < 0.05$

Table 13 reveals that there are statistically significant differences between the group of linguistic/English literature raters and the group with TESOL/ESL education ($p = 0.04 < 0.05$). However, compared with the two English-related major groups, the mean scores rated by the group with the non-related English major did not reach the level of statistically significant differences.

In order to evaluate if the raters' teaching experience affected their holistic rating scores, the responders were divided into three groups based on their years of teaching experience: less-experienced (less than 2 years), experienced (3 to 6 years), and well-experienced (more than 7 years).

Table 14

Descriptive Statistics of Rated Holistic Scores Based on Raters' Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience	N	M	SD
Less-experienced	15	4.25	.72
Experienced	22	4.35	.57
Well-experienced	25	4.64	.76
Total	62	4.44	.70

The descriptive statistics are shown on Table 14. Compared with their means of the three groups, the lowest mean scores of the three groups were rated by the less-experienced teachers ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.72$), while the highest mean scores were rated by the well-experienced teachers ($M = 4.64$, $SD = 0.76$). In addition, the mean scores of both the less-experienced group and experienced group were lower than the mean scores of the overall holistic rating scores (M = 4.44, $SD = 0.70$).

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the rated scores and the raters' English teaching experience to Taiwanese students. To see if the ANOVA was significant, the Tests of Between-Subject Effects were examined (See Table 15).

Table 15

ANOVA Results for Rated Holistic Scores Based on the Effect of Raters' Teaching Experience

Source	Df	SS	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2	1.72	.86	1.83	.17
Within Groups	59	27.73	.47		
Total	61	29.45			

As results showed in Table 15, there were no statistically significant differences found between the rater groups of English teaching experience to Taiwanese students in holistic rating scores ($p = 0.17 > 0.05$). Although the data shown in Table 14 seemed to say that the more English teaching experience the raters had, the higher their scores were rated, the result did not reach a statistically significant difference.

Findings from the Interview

The main purpose of the individual interview with the raters is to better understand various raters' scoring results and to uncover the variables that have potentially impacted the scores. The researcher arranged face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, or on-line interviews with the raters who agreed to participate in an interview. During the interview, the researcher asked the same two questions about the way the raters approached and performed the evaluation of the speech samples, and their opinions regarding the analytic components. For interview question two, since the speech sample three received the largest of standardized deviation ($SD = 1.13$, see Table 6) among the five speech samples from the raters, the researcher chose speech sample three to justify why the raters chose the answer they did. The following section presents the abstracts from the raters' interview data.

Interview Question One: When you assess the oral proficiency of the nonnative speakers, especially the Taiwanese college students, what analytic components are you concerned with the most and the least with? Why?

"I concern the most with the speaker's *comprehensibility* to see if he could express his idea clearly and organize words neatly. If he had a hard time to put his thinking meaningfully, I am afraid that he cannot get the high score."

"The part of *grammatical accuracy* affected my rating the most, since those students have learned English for many years. Fluency and pronunciation are difficult to reach at a high level since EFL students do not have enough opportunities to practice these skills with the native speakers. However, grammatical rules are the part they can self-discipline."

"A student's *vocabulary* size can tell me what language proficiency level he is. If he can only use a limited vocabulary, I feel that he is hardly expressing himself."

"*Grammatical accuracy* makes it easy to predict a student's language proficiency level. Without using correct grammatical rules, his speech will confuse his listener or cause misunderstanding. Grammar is very fundamental for the new

language learning."

"As a native speaker, I pay attention to *comprehensibility* to see if his speech makes sense to me. If I could understand what he says without a misunderstanding, he definitely did a good job."

Interview Question Two: This is your holistic and analytic ratings for speech sample three. Can you talk about how you approached the holistic and analytic ratings?

"I noticed that his English was fluent and clear in pronunciation, and I have no trouble with his comprehensibility. However, his speech was too short to use more vocabulary."

"His speech was very clear, and he used correct past-tense verbs all the way. I like the way he spoke since his overall organization was also neat, that's why I gave him a high score."

"He was good at using transition words, and his flow of speech was quite well. However, for the task of picture description, I expected him to describe more detail from the pictures." "Holistically his performance was above average. He had strong grammar and a smooth tone plus he was understandable. However, he should not rush to make a conclusion about his speech."

Discussion and Conclusion

Pedagogical Implications of the Study

This study tried to explore some issues with regard to using the rating scales in foreign language speaking assessment. From the perspective of practical issues, Weigle (2002) stated that a holistic scale rating was a relatively easier and quicker way to assess students' oral skills, while an analytic scale rating was more time-consuming and complicated. However, from the perspective of *washback* issues, a multiple analytic scoring format is more informative than a single holistic scoring format (Nakamura, 2004).

The findings of the present study can enhance the knowledge of different types of rating scales for assessing EFL oral language proficiency, and the relationship between test scores and score meanings: *what* and *how* teachers are concerned with learners' oral performances in L2. Based on the research findings, some pedagogical implications of the study are discussed.

To assess Taiwanese EFL learners' oral proficiency, the rating scales are recommended to use for both native English teachers and nonnative English teachers. The reasons include:

- The functions of the rating scales for testing: it guides the language teacher to select the appropriate tasks for the students, guides the teacher to score the samples, reminds the teacher of the scales/criteria/standards to follow, and maintains the intra-rater reliability and validity of the test.

- Different types of rating scales have their own purposes and characteristics. To choose an appropriate type of rating scale depends on the teacher's particular needs. For instance, a holistic rating scale may be appropriate for placement tests since it can tell the students' overall language proficiency, while an analytic rating scale can be used for assessing the advanced level students' oral performance since it can tell the students' oral skills in each individual component.

- As mentioned in the review of literature, speaking tests are a valuable teaching device for language teachers in the EFL classroom: teachers can receive feedback immediately through their students' performances, and they can give feedback to students based on the descriptor of the rating scales.

According to the findings of the present study, there were two-thirds of the English teachers who had never been trained in rating EFL oral proficiency. Review of related literature indicated that rater training was unable to remove the judges' individual variations or eliminate individual bias; however, the rating training for speaking assessment do benefit the teachers in certain aspects. The training sessions not only can enhance teachers' knowledge of testing speaking abilities and understanding the rating process, but also maintain the teacher's (rater's) judgments to be reliable and consistent.

In the EFL classroom, especially the environment where learners share the same L1 and have limited opportunity for real L2 interactions, Mangubhai (2005) stated that teachers should maximize the target language input to their students, as well as make their classes rich with *comprehensible input* in order to achieve a better language outcome. In addition, with regard to the development of the learners' oral skills, Luchini (2004) suggested that EFL classrooms should create opportunities for learners to participate in an integrating way—both form- and accuracy-focused activities of instruction, since both are believed to contribute to foreign language

acquisition.

In conclusion, one of the toughest challenges of oral proficiency testing has been the construction of practical, reliable, and valid tests of oral production ability. Based on the research findings, teachers need to have assistance and encouragement in trying communicative speaking assessment. The ideal test of oral proficiency will be suggested here that it should involve: 1) *live* performance, 2) a careful specification of tasks to be accomplished during the test, and 3) a clear scoring rubric that is truly descriptive of ability.

Finally, teachers should always consider *positive washback*—the benefit that tests offer to learning—tests therefore will be learning devices through which students can receive a diagnosis of areas of strength and weakness, as well as have clear study goals. For instance, one way to enhance *washback* is to provide "descriptive evaluations" of test performance. Tests therefore will be effective learning devices through which learners can receive a diagnosis of areas of strength and weakness, thus having clear study goals.

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Introducing Critical Literacy to EFL Teaching: Three Taiwanese College Teachers' Conceptualization

Mei-yun Ko
National Formosa University, Taiwan

Tzu-fu Wang
National Yunlin University of Science and Technology, Taiwan

Bio Data:
Mei-yun Ko is an associate professor in Department of Applied Foreign Languages at National Formosa University, Taiwan. She holds an M.A. in linguistics and is currently a Ph.D. candidate in language education at Indiana University. Her research interests include second language acquisition, critical literacy, reading instruction, and discourse analysis.

Tzu-fu Wang is an associate professor in Department of Applied Foreign Languages at National Yunlin University of Science and Technology, Taiwan. He holds a Ph.D. in English literature from National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan. His research interests include cultural studies, writing instruction, and translation studies.

Abstract
This study mainly explored Taiwanese EFL teachers' perception of the importance of critical literacy in EFL teaching, the feasibility of critical literacy in an EFL class at Taiwan colleges, and an ideal critical EFL class in Taiwan. Participants were three former EFL Taiwanese teachers who have newly learned critical literacy at American universities. The methods employed in this study were in-depth interview techniques and elicitation interviews by means of a lesson plan task. All the interview data was tape-recorded, transcribed, and then categorized into several themes for analysis. The results showed that the participants considered it feasible and even important to have critical literacy in EFL teaching although each perceived a different dimension to critical literacy. In the lesson plans, all three raised gender issues, attempting to disrupt the common place in the text or interrogating multiple viewpoints. However, students' English proficiency, students' autonomy, teaching resources, cultural difference, and political labeling should be taken into consideration when the teacher brings the idea of critical literacy into EFL teaching. This study not only throws lights on how to incorporate critical literacy in the EFL context but also evidences the importance and effectiveness of member check in conducting a qualitative study. In short, this study offered a new perspective for students, teachers and researchers from which to re-think how critical literacy can be implemented in an English-as-a-second-language reading class.

Key words: critical literacy, reading instruction, fairy tales, higher education

Introduction

This study attempts to explore how EFL teachers perceive the idea of introducing critical literacy into EFL teaching in Taiwan colleges. It investigated how Taiwanese EFL teachers who have newly learned critical literacy at American universities perceive the importance of critical literacy in EFL teaching, the feasibility of critical literacy in an EFL class, and an ideal critical EFL class they envision.

Critical literacy has gained much importance at the Anglo-American educational institutions in recent years, with much discussion of its theoretical underpinnings (Fairclough, 1989; Freire, 1970; Gee, 1990) and abundant studies of its classroom practices such as those by Damico (2003), Edesky (1999), Lander (2005), and Lewison, et al. (2002), just to mention a few. However, it remains little explored in Taiwan, especially in EFL classrooms. The 2001-2004 proceedings of ETA (English Teachers' Association), a primary conference of English-teaching in Taiwan, contain no research papers on critical literacy (Kuo, 2006). With a paucity of critical literacy practices in EFL teaching, critical literacy can therefore be viewed as a new perspective in teaching English as a foreign language. Given that critical literacy is a new way of teaching, we wonder how Taiwanese EFL teachers think of the idea of introducing critical literacy into EFL teaching in colleges or universities in Taiwan.

Exploration such as this is important because Taiwan has politically moved from an authoritarian country into a democratic one, and Taiwanese society likewise has changed from a monolithic one into a pluralistic one[1] where different voices are trying to gain a hearing and many different ideologies are competing with one another. Therefore, a pedagogy which trains students to think critically and then transforms their thinking into some practical action to make a better society seems to be important. With a view to making pedagogy synchronize with the changed society, the present topic which aims at exploring a new perspective, i.e., critical literacy in EFL teaching, is therefore highly significant.

Literature review

In this section, we review the related literature of what critical literacy is, what it means in reading, and one key study that examined a critical literacy classroom in Taiwan.

Notions of critical literacy

Notions of critical literacy have emerged in recent years, particularly in the late 1980s and early 1990s. However, what constitutes critical literacy differs within the literature (Green, 2001). There are several versions of critical literacy each of which is underpinned by a different theoretical perspective. Lewison, et al. (2002) reviewed 30 years of professional literature on the definitions of critical literacy and synthesized them into four dimensions:

(1) Disrupting the commonplace, for example, interrogating texts by asking questions such as "how is text trying to position me?"

(2) Interrogating multiple viewpoints such as trying to understand experience and texts from our own perspectives and the viewpoints of others.

(3) Focusing on sociopolitical issues, for example, challenging the unquestioned legitimacy of unequal power relationship by studying the relationship between language and power.

(4) Taking action and promoting social justice, like engaging in reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it.

McLaughlin & DeVoogd (2004) used four principles to elaborate what critical literacy means. These four principles are: (1) critical literacy focuses on issues of power and promotes reflection, transformation, and action; (2) critical literacy focuses on the problem and its complexity; (3) techniques that promote critical literacy are dynamic and adapt to the contexts in which they are used; and (4) examining multiple perspectives is an important aspect of critical literacy. Despite various approaches to critical literacy, the notions of "text and literacy as social practices" are usually highlighted within critical literacy (Green, 2001).

Critical literacy in reading

In critical literacy, readers are viewed as active participants in the reading process to question, to dispute, to examine power relations (Freire, 1970). Reading is defined as understanding the words on the page and examining political and cultural assumptions underlying texts (McLaren, 1999, cited in Lander, 2005). A reader is not viewed as someone who can decode and make sense of printed words, but as someone who is aware of underlying assumptions in the text, ways in which texts are constructed, and how such constructions position readers (Lankshear, 1977, cited in Lander, 2005).

Therefore, taking a critical literacy approach to reading, we read underneath, behind, and beyond texts; we do not consider texts to be unbiased; we explore alternative readings; we focus on the beliefs and values of the authors; and we work for social justice and change (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004).

Study of critical practice in Taiwan

Though studies or accounts of teachers' critical practice abound in the West (Cervetti, 2004; Damico, 2003; Edesky; 1999; Lander, 2005; Lewison, et al., 2002), only two studies explore critical literacy in EFL contexts: Falkenstein's (2003) critical writing class in Taiwan and Kuo's (2006) critical conversation class.

Falkenstein's study examined critical literacy practices in a university EFL composition course in Taiwan. In this study, Falkenstein employed an action research approach, collaborating with the course professor, a native speaker of English[2], and using pre-writing strategies as small-scale interventions to promote critical literacy among 37 university English-major students. Through analysis of students' writings, observation field notes and interviews with the course instructor, this study evidenced that many EFL students were able to be critically literate in conveying matters of personal, local and global concern through the use of various sign systems. This study also revealed some obstacles to using a critical literacy approach in Taiwan colleges such as lack of time on the teacher's part, insufficient classroom time, large class size, and cultural expectations of education.

Instead of a composition class, Kuo's study examined an English Conversation class taught to 26 non-English majors. Like Falkenstein's study, he employed a collaborative action research. Kuo and the course instructor, i.e., his collaborator, designed the conversation class from a critical perspective, using six different activities based on social-issue picture books, local news, hop-hop songs, pantomime, prose and an episode of an American situation comedy. Through analysis of the instructor's journal entries, students' comments on the class weblog, students' midterm and final reflection papers, interviews with the instructor and selected students, classroom observation, field notes, this study shows that EFL students were able to reflect on classroom texts by incorporating their lived experiences into their team dialogues. Therefore, Kuo argues that English learning is not only a matter of the four skills but also of students' lives and identities. In short, both studies support that EFL students are capable of taking a critical stance towards language learning.

Conceptual Framework/Research Questions

The conceptual framework for this study is Luke and Freebody's Four Resources Model of reading (1990). In this model, they posit four necessary but not sufficient roles for the reader: code breaker (coding competence), meaning maker (semantic competence), text user (pragmatic competence) and text critic (critical competence). In their later account (1999), the notion of "roles' has been subsumed in that of "resources" in that literacy learning is more appropriately understood as "a family of practices." The four practices are:

(1) code-breaking practices: key questions like "How do the sound and marks relate?"

(2) text-meaning practices: "What are possible readings that can be constructed?"

(3) pragmatic practices: "What do I do with the text here and now?" and

(4) critical practices: "What is the text trying to do to me?"

Each family of practices is necessary for literacy learning and none in isolation is sufficient. Luke and Freebody (1999) argue that readers need to be able to interrogate the underlying assumptions and embedded ideologies in the text.

Now that it is not only needed to have coding practices, text-meaning practices, pragmatic practices but it is also essential to have critical practices, I wonder whether the EFL college teachers would like to bring critical practices into their classroom. Thus, the research questions addressed in this study are:

1. What do Taiwanese EFL college teachers, who have newly learned critical literacy at Western universities think of introducing critical literacy into EFL teaching at colleges or universities in Taiwan?

2. What do they think of the feasibility of critical literacy in an EFL reading class? More specifically, what difficulties do they think they might encounter while implementing critical literacy at the college level?

3. Will they adopt a critical literacy approach in teaching a college-level reading class? If yes, what will a critical EFL reading class be like or what strategies will they employ when teaching such class?

Methodology

Participants

The participants in the study were three former EFL Taiwanese teachers, who are

currently working for a Ph.D. degree in the language education department at a mid-western university in America. They all taught English at the college in Taiwan after they had obtained a master's degree in TESOL in the US. Their teaching experience ranged from one and half to five years. They came to the university in the fall of 2005 and all have just acquired some knowledge of critical literacy at the time of the study[3]. For the purpose of this study, I used pseudonyms, Cathy and Shelly for the two female participants and Frank for the male participant.

Data Collection

In order to gather information that addresses the research questions, we conducted an in-depth individual interview in Chinese. We sent a few questions to them before the interview so that they could think about them beforehand and would be able to fully express their ideas during the interview. These questions are about their concepts or feasibility of critical literacy in EFL teaching and their ways of teaching a reading class in the past and future. This interview took around one hour.

Right after this interview, we gave them the traditional version of the text "Cinderella," and requested them to produce a brief lesson plan to show how they might go about teaching this fairy tale to college students. After the task, we went over the lesson plan with them to document details. The whole process also lasted for around one hour. All the interviews, totally 6 hours, were tape-recorded, transcribed, and translated into English. Besides the interviews, we had several follow-up phone calls and e-mail correspondences with the interviewees for clarification or for elaboration.

Trustworthiness

In respect to the methodological trustworthiness of this study, we used different sources of data, including interviews, lesson plans, and e-mails, for triangulation. Besides, we member checked by e-mailing to each participant the selected translations and my interpretation. We asked them to underline the part that misrepresented what they had said. Two participants showed no problem with the selected data, but one participant clarified a few misunderstood points. He also refined and changed some quotes that we had selected and translated from the tape-recorded interview.[4]

Data analysis

In this section, we presented, analyzed and interpreted the collected data under the following themes basing on my research questions: (1) concepts of critical literacy, (2) concerns of critical literacy in EFL teaching, (3) past teaching vs. future teaching, and finally (4) reasons for critical literacy.

1. Concepts of Critical Literacy and Feasibility in EFL Teaching

Although the three participants have been acquainted with critical literacy as mentioned above, it is reasonable to know their understanding of critical literacy before examining their ideas of introducing critical literacy to EFL teaching. Surprisingly, all the three participants show willingness or even enthusiasm to incorporate critical literacy in EFL teaching despite that each has somewhat different concepts or definitions of critical literacy:

Cathy: "Critical literacy is to develop students' ability to have their own ideas when reading. They can give their comments or opinions after reading an article. In this way they can be creative and critical. To be creative and critical is the most important thing for a reader."

Shelly: "We can not just read the surface meaning. When reading an article, we need to read the intended meaning behind because language is never neutral. I think we need to infuse critical literacy in our teaching because in this way we can stimulate student thinking."

Frank: "Critical literacy is about revealing social inequalities and bringing about social justice. A major part of critical literacy deals with the problem of capitalism for capitalism creates tons of social inequalities. . . . We need to find out the oppressed and the oppressing represented in an article or an issue. After we detect an inequality, we need to take action to redress it. Actually, oppression is quite obvious in some articles."

   After analyzing their concepts of critical literacy, we find critical literacy, for Cathy, means to develop students' ability to have their personal views on reading. She places importance on reading comprehension with "reader's response" in that a reader not only has a factual perspective, i.e. an "efferent" stance, but also has a more emotional perspective, i.e. an "aesthetic" stance (Rosenblatt, 1978). Cathy's idea of critical

literacy seems close to Luke and Freebody's "semantic competence" in which readers play the role as "meaning makers" (1990). For Shelly, her idea of critical literacy is that readers play the role of "text critics" (Luke & Freebody, 1990) in that readers comprehend beyond literal level and have the power to envision alternative ways of viewing the author's topics or intentions. She reaches the dimension of disrupting the common place and interrogating multiple viewpoints (Lewison, et al., 2002). Holding a stronger view of critical literacy than Shelly, Frank regards it as a tool for social justice. It is insufficient just to uncover the taken-for-granted. For Frank, critical literacy should be able to engage students in action aimed at challenging existing structures of inequality and oppression, which is in the fourth dimension according to the four-dimension framework of Lewison, et al. (2002).

Each according to his or her idea of critical literacy holds a positive view toward critical literacy in EFL teaching. They all think critical literacy is important and can work out in the EFL context to some extent. However, they also have a few concerns while implementing critical literacy in their teaching.

2. Concerns about Implementing Critical Literacy in EFL Teaching

Cultural difference is Cathy's major concern about implementing critical literacy in Taiwan. "Unlike American students, students in Taiwan are used to accepting what teachers said to them. They usually do not have their own opinions," she confessed. She then took herself as an example. "As a student, I was not critical myself. It was not until I became a teacher that I would read critically because I had to prepare some questions for my teaching." Another concern Cathy has about implementing critical literacy is students' English proficiency. Nevertheless, she does not consider it an insurmountable problem:

> "It can be solved if the teacher carefully designs his/her teaching or chooses reading materials. For example, the teacher can first list some key words or sentences before discussion. The teacher can also pay more attention to and help those students at low English proficiency level to express ideas in English. The teacher should choose discussion issues that are related to students' life experience, but never to choose issues that could be embarrassing or unfamiliar to the students or the teacher himself/herself."

Shelly also shares the similar concern with students' English proficiency. And like Cathy, she thinks this difficulty can be overcome: "We can adopt alternative literacy

for students at the low English proficiency level. Take writing class for example. If students are unable to write a complete paragraph, they can draw pictures with some known English words to illustrate their ideas." Shelly then gives her concepts of literacy corresponding to students' language proficiency.

> "Literacy is not linear, a stage followed by another stage. It is not an act of linguistic decoding. Rather, literacy is viewed as a continuum. For the familiar context, we can have students do a little more thinking. For the unfamiliar context, we can focus more on decoding. Similarly, for students at the low English proficiency level, it doesn't mean they can only do decoding. We still can add a little critical literacy flavor in our teaching. It is just a problem of more critical literacy or more decoding skill."

In fact, what seems to trouble Shelly the most is how we can be sure that students are thinking in English when reading. "If students think in Chinese when reading, then we do not completely reach the goal of critical literacy. Although thinking in Chinese is related to critical literacy, then literacy in this case means mostly Chinese literacy, not English literacy." Therefore, according to Shelly's opinions, critical literacy in EFL teaching means that students can not only discuss in English but also think in English.

Frank was concerned with students' autonomy. He elaborated this point in his e-mail correspondence. He illustrated his own experience in Freshman English class when he was an undergraduate student:

> "In Freshmen English class, my professor did not talk about vocabulary, grammar, or other language elements unless we asked him. The professor spent most of the time discussing the readings in English with us. I had never heard my classmates complain of him because we were autonomous learners. We knew how to learn English by ourselves. . . . For autonomous learners, we [teachers] don't have to pay much attention to teaching the language. For other students, they may need more instruction on language. They may need some time to adjust to critical literacy in the beginning, but I think given enough time, students will learn that critical literacy and language learning can complement each other"

In addition to students' autonomy, another concern that he has is about politics and teaching resources. "I had no problem with teaching critical literacy when talking about the social issues that happened abroad. However, when talking about domestic issues, I had to address them with caution, maintaining multiple perspectives." Besides, he did not talk of social issues in Taiwan as much as those in the U.S. because he found few reading materials about domestic issues that were written in

English.

To conclude, the three participants raised several concerns or problems of English language proficiency, cultural difference, students' autonomy, and teaching resources. Among these problems, student English proficiency can be overcome as long as the teacher will make efforts in their teaching design and pay more attention to students' level through scaffolding or by using various sign systems. As for a culture that values submission over confrontation, thus hindering students from doing critical literacy, Frank suggested we may start with simple critical literacy techniques, making use of culturally familiar texts or various sign systems to foster student discussion. Since one of tenets of critical literacy is to redress social inequality through action, controversial political or social issues will make perfect materials for teaching critical literacy. However, the teacher should be optimally open-minded, thus allowing different voices and tolerating different opinions.

3. Teaching EFL Reading: Past vs. Future

In this section, we summarize how each of the participants taught reading in the past and will teach it in the future, and then compare their past and future teaching. Then, we also display each participant's lesson plan for teaching the text "Cinderella." The lesson plans serve not only as triangulation to see how consistent their lesson plan is with the future teaching that they described, but also as a way to investigate how they will infuse critical literacy in EFL teaching.

3.1. An Overview of the Three Participants' Past and Future Teaching

In the past, Cathy usually divided students into small groups. Each group prepared a handout for group presentation. Students' handouts generally featured the meanings of the unknown words and listing of sentence patterns. After group presentation, she reviewed vocabulary and sentence patterns, explaining or translating the sentences that might be difficult to students.

In her future teaching, Cathy says, "I will focus on the content, on the comprehension, on the main ideas of the reading." Like what she did in the past, she will still divide students into small groups. But instead of a handout with a list of new words or sentence patterns, each group will present a poster that will present any ideas, topics or important information they make out from the reading. "In this way, students will become creative. But it's not enough just to be creative. I will still have

some focus on language learning. Students have to present posters in English so that the language learning part will not be ignored." In short, her past teaching focused on explanation of vocabulary and sentences, but in her future teaching, she will focus more on comprehension of meaning than on linguistic knowledge.

Shelly usually explained reading strategies and then engaged students in practicing the taught strategies in her "Reading Skills" class. However, she felt that students were suffering from the boredom of strategy-based teaching. If she will teach the same course in the future, she will still highlight strategies, but instead of strategy-focused teaching in the follow-up discussion, she will give some thought-provoking questions for discussion. Instead of choosing reading materials for strategy-teaching purpose, she will choose the articles that can inspire students to think and to discuss.

In "Freshman English" class, she used to ask students to skim the article and circle the unknown words, and then had them discuss the highlighted unknown words in small groups. She then had whole-class discussion to help students comprehend the reading. "My purpose of highlighting new words is for comprehension, not for teaching vocabulary." Though she sometimes posed one or two open questions on the website for students to discuss, she found "students could answer and elaborate on these questions without having actually read the article." So in the future, she will be careful in giving her discussion questions which will require students not only to think but also to read. "In this way, I will be able to balance English teaching with critical literacy." In sum, Shelly focused on comprehension and reading strategies in the past, but in the future she will help expand students' thinking and enlighten their perceptions.

Frank often talked about issues on inequality in "Writing" class where he also taught reading. However, he paid attention to the structure of the text such as the thesis statement or topic sentence with supporting detail to help students generate writing topics and help them to write a certain type of genre. However, the materials he often chose were related to social issues like homosexuality. Although he taught critical literacy in the past, in the future he will discuss more social issues that happened or are happening in Taiwan and move a step forward to the level of taking social action:

> "I would encourage students to e-mail to Vice-president Lu expressing their opinions about her statement that AIDS is God's punishment. . . I will discuss why our government supported Iraq's war. What is the power behind the support and for whose benefit?"

Apparently, all the three participants expect to change their ways of teaching, moving toward critical literacy. Cathy will move from teaching decoding skills to comprehension; Shelly from comprehension to critical thinking, and Frank from just uncovering inequality to taking social action. If we view literacy as a vertical line with decoding skills at the bottom and social action at the top, then each of them will have moved one step upward. Therefore, their newly acquired knowledge of critical literacy obviously had certain impact on each of them.

Besides the expected change, another characteristic commonly shared in their future teaching is that they all attempt to strike a balance between critical literacy and English language learning. Cathy emphasized having students present their poster in English and Shelly, carefully giving the discussion questions that require students actually to read the materials, and Frank also mentioned of his balanced teaching in his e-mail correspondence.

3.2. A Lesson Plan for Teaching the Text "Cinderella"[5]

To teach "Cinderella," Cathy will first have students preview the story through brainstorming some key words or discussing the content of the story. Then she will have students prepare a group poster presentation. After presentation, she will spend some time reviewing new words and sentence patterns, and then have students rewrite the story such as giving a different ending or setting. She said, "In this way, students will realize that a story can be read from a different perspective." Finally, she will have discussion on questions concerning gender roles; for example, why it is females that have to do the housework, or what roles that males expect from females and females from males.

Shelly will first have students skim the story individually to highlight the difficult words, and then have them discuss the content of the story, the highlighted or difficult words in small groups. After that, each group will summarize the story for the class and explain the possible meanings of their listed vocabulary. Then she will have students discuss comprehension questions and extension questions such as "what if Cinderella is a man, how would the story possibly develop?" Finally they will have group work such as rewriting the story supposing Cinderella is a man, and share their versions of the story to the class, and have a whole-class discussion on gender bias and stereotypes.

In teaching "Cinderella," Frank will use student-facilitated literature circles--each member in the group responsible for one of the four roles, vocabulary introducing, grammar explaining, quotation sharing, and question raising. After literature-circle discussion, he will have whole-class discussion and also review the key words. The reason for reviewing the key words is that "Otherwise for students who haven't achieved autonomy yet, they might feel that they did not learn anything about the language." After he is sure that his students have no problem with the new words and comprehension, he will raise issues on feminism. For example, he will ask:

> "Why Cinderella needs a prince to make her life perfect? Why is it not a man who needs a princess to make his life perfect? Why in most fairy tales, it is always that a woman needs a man to fulfill her life? What message does this kind of text send to us? What does society expect the roles that women can play?

After discussion, he will ask students to find other fairy tales that involve gender bias.

Clearly, their lesson plans are consistent with their description for future teaching in that all of them will infuse critical literacy in EFL teaching by raising students' awareness of gender bias in the text "Cinderella." Through the use of such strategies as discussion, problem posing, role playing, and poster creating, they help students examine the text from multiple perspectives, challenges students to expand their thinking and discover diverse beliefs, positions and understandings. More interestingly, they all try to instruct in a way to strike a balance between critical literacy and English language learning, for example, spending some time on vocabulary. From their description of future teaching and lesson plans, it is obvious that they all are willing to introduce critical literacy in EFL teaching. But why do all of them want to bring critical literacy in their EFL class? This is a question worth exploring and I will discuss their reasons below.

4. Reasons for Teaching Critical Literacy in Their Future Teaching

One reason that all three participants will incorporate critical literacy in EFL teaching is that it can motivate student learning, thus creating a meaningful learning situation. Shelly says, "Students will feel their learning is meaningful." Frank also holds the same view, emphasizing the importance of thinking in learning:

> "Language skills are important for students to get a better job and lead a better life in the current socio-economical system. However, I think education is more than teaching job-related skills. We should also help students think about

what kind of life and socio-economical system they want."

In addition to the reason for boosting learning motivation, they also believe in the importance of critical literacy and regard it more as teaching philosophy than as teaching method. Shelly believes,

> "It is useless just to train a group of students that are merely good at grammar, usage, and vocabulary but are unable to express their thoughts to our foreign friends in an international setting simply because their thinking has never been stimulated. . . I do not mean it's wrong to take communicative language teaching (CLT). It is just not enough. Communication should be combined with literacy. Literacy is the foundation on which communication skills can be built. . . . I've been recently influenced by social culture theory. Language itself is not the learning goal; it's just a tool. So we don't have to deliberately teach English. We just need to help them solve their problem with language. However, the ultimate goal of teaching is not language itself. The goal is thinking. . . . For me, critical literacy is a kind of philosophy, not a method. So it's not to bring the method but to bring the idea to Taiwan"

Similar to Shelly's idea of CLT and critical literacy, Cathy also thinks that CLT mainly focuses on speaking, but "a person who can communicate fluently does not mean he/she has his/her own ideas. Literacy should be seen as a kind of communication tool and English as a learning tool."

For Frank, it is definitely necessary to teach students critical literacy:

> "I want to teach my students that capitalism is not the only option and that they can do something about the inequalities in the world. It is OK to imagine a better world and critical literacy is a good tool for moving us toward that imagined world. Taiwan is moving farther and farther away from the ideal world mostly because of our corrupt government. We need critical literacy to help our students see what is going on in Taiwan."

In sum, all three participants regard critical literacy more as an educational philosophy than as merely a pedagogical method. They think critical literacy is an educational philosophy because it is more instrumental in achieving the ideal aim in education; namely, cultivating responsible citizens of the world who can think critically and independently and thus will not fall an easy prey to propaganda in the system of capitalism. Also, they all emphasize the importance of thinking, or having one's own ideas, in foreign language learning. In this way they are moving beyond the traditional objectives in EFL that emphasize basic language skills but to some extent ignore a higher skill, thinking. By infusing critical literacy in EFL class, they can re-emphasize the importance of critical thinking in foreign language learning and

make students understand that in learning a foreign language they are not just learning the words but also the world through critical literacy.

Conclusions, Discussion and Interpretation

This study explored three former college teachers' perception of critical literacy in EFL teaching, delineating what critical literacy means to them, the feasibility of critical literacy in EFL teaching at Taiwan colleges, and finally what critical literacy in EFL class might be like. The findings show that the three teachers, each representing a different dimension of critical literacy, all consider it feasible and even important to bring critical literacy in EFL teaching. By taking students' English proficiency into consideration and having a well-paced and carefully designed teaching, the teacher can achieve certain success in bringing critical literacy in their teaching.

   In addition, they all have balanced instruction between critical literacy and language learning by first solving their vocabulary and comprehension problems and then going to critical discussion later, employing certain kind of critical literacy strategies. These strategies include what McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004) called problem posing such as switching gender or setting, and alternative perspectives such as character perspectives or juxtaposition.

   These findings unexpectedly highlight the impact of their acquired knowledge of critical literacy from Western universities. The education they received in the US has changed the way they think about language teaching. All of them will teach differently from the way they normally taught before. They no longer consider it sufficient just to equip students with the four language skills in EFL teaching. Shelly believes in the importance of enabling students to develop a perceptive mind to see through the assumptions or positions hidden behind the reading. Frank believes in the educational goal of raising students' awareness of social inequalities and of fostering social action.

   Furthermore, this study also points out different challenges in teaching critical literacy in Taiwan from those in the West. In the US, the challenges or barriers mainly arise from standardized testing, administrative hierarchies, district curricular expectations (Lander, 2005, p. 30), or students' resistance, teachers' discomfort, and the disapproval of colleges (Cervetti, 2004, pp. 7-14). However, in Taiwan, the main concerns are students' English proficiency, students' autonomy, teaching resources,

and culture. For students with limited English proficiency or without autonomy, teachers may provide students with more code-breaking practices and fewer critical practices. As Luke and Freebody indicated, each family of practices is necessary but not sufficient (1999). As for cultural concern—in a culture where students are usually perceived as quiet respectful listeners and teachers as a conveyor of knowledge and wisdom, the teacher may need to use some of discussion-fostering techniques and culturally familiar or student-life-experience texts.

However, this finding about the difference of challenges in Taiwan and in the West might be due to the factor that the study examined critical literacy in the university setting, not in the primary or secondary school setting as most studies did in the West. Besides, these challenges are anticipatory. They are not from the actual classroom implementation. Therefore, to get a better understanding of how critical literacy works in EFL teaching and what adaptations or modifications we need, we may investigate a case of actual teaching of critical literacy in EFL contexts or examine the teachers who are trying or have tried critical literacy in EFL teaching.

Finally, one methodological finding is worth mentioning here. This study evidenced the importance or effectiveness of member checking. In this study, through member checking, we corrected some misunderstanding points. For example, we misunderstood that Frank did not discuss any social issue in Taiwan in his past teaching. With member checking, I realized he did talk about domestic issues, although not as much as those abroad. Through member checking, we found that participants' thought may change over time, especially for a topic that involves some abstract concepts. For example, Frank changed the entire quote that we had literally translated from the interview data, for example, from the quote "If we just teach students' four language skills, it is more like vocational school. Students will feel they have nothing to learn. School becomes a boring place. For university students, they should have their own thinking, not just listening, speaking, reading and writing" to "Language skills are important … and socio-economical system they want" (see p. 188 for the whole quote). Therefore, for a research topic that involves conceptual complexities or abstractness, member check is particularly important because it not only provides the participants with the opportunities for clarifying their thinking but it also promotes further re-thinking on the topic.

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Notes:

[1] For example, Taiwan held her first presidential election in 1996. In 2000,
Democratic Progressive Party first took over the ruling power of KMT, a political
party which had ruled Taiwan for more than 50 years.
[2] Both Falkenstein and the course professor are American teachers in Taiwan.
[3] The courses they took were mostly concerned with issues related to critical literacy
like Course L600, which I also took with them in 2005 fall. Among the goals of this
course is to help students to recognize how using the competing theoretical
frameworks of *diversity and difference* versus *conformity and consensus* situates
teaching and student learning. Besides, these three participants also reported that
some other courses they were taking then were much about critical literacy.
[4] In this paper, I presented his changed data for they represent his more careful
thought than those in the interview.
[5] I used the text "Cinderella" because the gender in the text has been often represented
in unequal ways, and thus a good source for critical reading. Some gender
stereotypes are deep-seated in fairy tales, thus a good place for disrupting the
commonplace.

Language Transfer as a Communication Strategy and a Language Learning Strategy in a Malaysian ESL Classroom

Shamala Paramasivam
University Putra Malaysia

Bio Data:
Shamala Paramasivam is a lecturer at the Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, University Putra Malaysia. She has taught English language at the university since 1991. She completed a PhD in Applied Linguistics in 2004. She is interested in ESL and ESP as well as in intercultural discourse and communication. She has written several books on English language and published in international journals such as the *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research* and the *Journal of Universal Language*.

Abstract
This paper reports on the use of language transfer as a type of communication strategy and language learning strategy drawing on a variety of oral interaction activities from a Malaysian classroom for English as a second language. The study provides insights into not only how the learners' first language functions as a strategy for communication but also how it can enhance second language learning by way of helping learners expand their second language repertoire and increase their automatization of second language items.

Keywords: language transfer, communication strategy, language learning strategy, second language learning

Introduction

Some people, despite their lack of vocabulary and grammar in a language, are able to communicate effectively in the language. How do they do it? They use their hands, they mix languages, they create words, they circumlocute or describe something they don't know the word for. In short, they use communication strategies. This paper reports on one type of communication strategy, language transfer. This report is part of a larger study on communication strategies (Paramasivam, 1998) used by a group of Malaysian undergraduates learning English as a second language. The paper reports on how language transfer is used as a communication strategy and what its potential learning effect is amongst second language learners of English when performing oral tasks in a Malaysian ESL classroom.

The following research questions are addressed.

1. How is transfer employed as a communication strategy by a group of Malaysian learners of English in the performance of three types of oral tasks?

2. Are there similarities and differences in the way transfer is employed as a communication strategy in the three oral tasks?

3. What is the potential learning effect of transfer when employed as a communication strategy in these tasks?

Communication strategies

The ability to use communication strategies constitutes strategic competence, which is a component of communicative competence (Canale and Swain, 1980). Strategic competence is defined as "the verbal and non verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence" (Canale and Swain, 1980, p. 30).

A communication strategy is defined as "potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal" (Faerch and Kasper, 1983, p. 36). The main distinguishing criteria in this definition are problem-orientedness and consciousness. Faerch and Kasper contend that L2 learners want to express something through the second language but encounter problems as a result of their limited interlanguage. They therefore resort to communication strategies, which are solutions to the communication problems encountered. For example if a speaker wants to communicate 'hairdresser', but does not have this vocabulary in his interlanguage, he may circumlocute 'one's who who erm could cut people's hair' to get the message across to his interlocutor.

A distinguishing feature in the use of a communication strategy is the existence of a linguistic problem. The speaker perceives that there is a problem that may interrupt the achievement of his communicative goal. Often the problem arises as a result of his limited linguistic system relative to a given communicative goal. He may lack the linguistic resources needed, be uncertain about the correctness of rules belonging to his interlanguage system, or encounter fluency problems with the realization of

specific rules. He therefore uses communication strategies, which are solutions to the problem, in order to achieve his goal.

The speaker's choice of a communication strategy is influenced by his underlying behaviour. Faerch and Kasper (1983, p. 38) explain that there are two kinds of behaviour that the speaker can adopt, avoidance or achievement behaviour. If the speaker opts for avoidance, that is, if he chooses to do away with the problem, then the strategies he employs would entail a change in or a reduction in the communicative goal. He gives up, avoids or revises his original plan. Achievement strategies are attempts to attain the goal by alternative plans and are demonstrative of achievement behaviour. Examples of such strategies are transfer, appeals, paralinguistic means, word coinage, and circumlocution (Faerch and Kasper, 1983, p. 38).

Transfer as a communication strategy

As a communication strategy, transfer refers to "the use of items from a second language, typically the mother tongue, particularly syntactic and lexical, to make good the deficiencies of the interlanguage" (Corder, 1992, p. 26). This is to say the second language learner uses certain aspects of his mother tongue to express his meaning in second language communication because his interlanguage lacks the means to do it. Tarone (1983, p. 62-63) refers to this strategy as "borrowing" where the process involves the learner either translating word for word from the L1 to express his meaning, or using the L1 to convey his meaning without bothering to translate. Faerch and Kasper (1984, p. 49) refer to this similar strategy as "L1/L3 strategies" where the learner uses the features of his native language or second or third language to express his intended meaning in communication. Poulisse (1987) refers to the strategy as "transfer" where the speaker transfers one language to the other. If the learner exploits the similarities between languages and transfers from one language to the other, he is said to have used the transfer strategy. Transfer is manifested either by a "language switch", where the learner uses words from the L1 or any other language to express his intended meaning in the target language, or "literal translation", where the learner literally translates his intended meaning from one language into another.

Although the terms used in the literature vary, they generally mean the same thing -

the use of a linguistic feature from one language in the performance of another. The literature acknowledges that the mother tongue is not the only source of transfer. Any other languages known to the learner may also be used as a source to supplement his interlanguage. In this study, the term transfer as understood by Poulisse (1987) is used to investigate the phenomenon in second language communication in a Malaysian ESL class.

Second language learning

Communication strategies have been classified as a type of language learning strategy (Tarone, 1980; Rubin, 1981; Oxford, 1990). Before discussing the link between the two, however, I would like to first elaborate second language learning so as to help consider the potential usefulness of transfer as a learning strategy.

There are two broad views to language learning – the behaviouristic view and the cognitive view. The underlying premise of the cognitive view to language learning is the creative-construction hypothesis. This approach believes that in learning a second language, the learner actively constructs the rules of the second language from the L2 data he encounters and gradually adapts these rules in the direction of the second language system.

An important aspect to the cognitive theory of language learning is rule formation. The main processes in rule formation are the formation and testing out of hypotheses about rules of the target language. In hypothesis formation, the learner forms a hypothetical rule of the second language based on the L2 data he is exposed to. This hypothetical rule is subsequently checked for its validity by being used in communication or, in formal learning settings, in exercises etc. This constitutes hypothesis testing. Based on the interlocutor's feedback, the hypothesis under test is either confirmed or rejected. In the case of positive feedback, the hypothesis is confirmed and the hypothetical rule becomes a fixed rule of the learner's interlanguage system. Negative feedback leads to hypothesis rejection and induces the learner to either look for new L2 data or to use the feedback to form a revised hypothesis. The procedure of hypothesis formation and testing is repeated until the learner's hypothesis is confirmed and gets stored as a fixed rule. Once a fixed rule is established, the learner is said to have stopped learning in this particular interlanguage

area.

Second language learning, however, constitutes more than the mere construction of L2 rules. It also constitutes the automatization of L2 rules so that they can result in fluent performance in communication (Faerch and Kasper, 1980; Spolsky, 1989). This is to say that the learner not only has to learn L2 rules but also to develop his ability to use these rules, more or less, automatically, in communication.

Faerch and Kasper (1980) see no contradiction in emphasizing the importance of rule automatization and holding a cognitive view of language learning at the same time. They contend that "since there is no direct way from the integration of an interlanguage rule into the learner's cognitive structure to the free availability of that rule in communication, i.e., without the learner having to monitor" (p. 76), it is necessary to assume rule automatization as an intervening variable which can account for the difference between these two stages in L2 learning. They state that in order to achieve a more or less automatic access to the interlanguage system the most obvious plan to follow is to practice L2 in a variety of communicative situations.

In conclusion, second language learning consists of both cognitive aspects as well as behavioural aspects. The cognitive aspects involve rule formation and the behavioural aspects involve rule automatization. With this understanding, learning strategies are discussed in the following section.

Learning strategies

Learning strategies are devices learners make use of to learn a language. Rubin (1975, p. 43) defines them very broadly as "the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge". Faerch and Kasper (1980) propose a psycholinguistic definition in which they define a learning strategy, as they define a communication strategy, in relation to problem-orientedness and consciousness.

The criterion of problem-orientedness implies that the learner is having a problem in reaching a particular learning goal, whereas the criterion of consciousness implies that the learner is consciously aware of his having the problem. Faerch and Kasper (1980, p. 60), therefore, define a learning strategy as "potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular learning goal". The learning goal is in relation to constructing and mastering the rules of the

target language.

Since language learning constitutes of rule formation and rule automatization, Faerch and Kasper hypothesize that problems in L2 learning exist at two levels. The learning problem may be a problem in hypothesis formation or it may be a problem in hypothesis testing and in increasing automatization. They classify learning strategies according to the type of learning problem encountered, as "psycholinguistic" and "behavioural" learning strategies (Faerch and Kasper, 1980, p. 68).

"Psycholinguistic" learning strategies are described as strategies that are adopted when the learning problem is a hypothesis formation problem and "behavioural" learning strategies when the problem is in hypothesis testing or in increasing automatization.

Faerch and Kasper explain that in forming hypotheses about L2 rules, learners basically rely on two sources, the L2 input and on prior knowledge and experience relating to language learning. Psycholinguistic learning strategies are classified on the basis of whether and how the learner makes use of prior knowledge in hypothesis formation. In this way, a distinction is made between the psycholinguistic learning strategies of "induction", "inferencing" and "transfer" (Faerch and Kasper, 1980, p. 69).

"Behavioural learning strategies" include strategies that allow for practice of the L2 rules. An example of such a strategy is "appeal" (Faerch and Kasper, 1980, p. 62), where the learner appeals directly to some authority, for instance, a native speaker, or looks up reference materials like dictionaries or textbooks to test the validity of a hypothetical rule.

Learning strategies and communication strategies

There are variable views in the literature on the link between communication strategies and learning strategies. One school of thought sees communication strategies and learning strategies as separate manifestations of learner behaviour. Brown (1980, p. 87) for instance notes that they are clearly different because "communication is the output modality and learning is the input modality". However he makes an exception for rule transference noting that this strategy may have a dual function: a learner may apply the strategy in learning a language as well as when

communicating in it. Ellis (1986) also views communication strategies and learning strategies as quite different. He in fact argues that successful use of communication strategies may prevent learning since skilful compensation for lack of linguistic knowledge can make the need for learning seem unnecessary.

Tarone (1980) and Rubin (1981) however take an opposing stance to the link between communication strategies and learning strategies. Tarone (1980) suggests that communication strategies can help learners expand language. She holds that although the learner's language output is imperfect grammatically and lexically, in the course of communication, the learner may be exposed to language input that may result in language learning. Rubin (1981) classifies communication strategies as indirect learning strategies: they are categorized as production tricks that can indirectly help contribute to language learning. Using communication strategies is therefore seen as a springboard to language learning.

The distinction between a learning strategy and a communication strategy, in fact, lies in the difference between learning and communication. Learning a second language, as discussed earlier, involves constructing the rules of the language (rule formation) and gradually coming to master them (rule automatization) in order to develop a discrete interlanguage system. Communicating in a language, on the other hand, does not involve the construction and mastery of rules. It involves ways of using the interlanguage system in interaction. Based on this characterization of learning and communication, it can be seen that although they are different in function, they are in actual fact interlinked. Learning cannot be kept distinct from communication. This is because learning takes place through communication. Communication provides exposure to the target language which is a necessary criterion for learning the language. The more communicative situations the learner engages in and the greater the variety, the more possibilities the learner has for practicing his interlanguage (rule automatization) and for constructing hypotheses about L2, and getting them tested (rule formation). If a learner avoids communication, he prevents himself from expanding his interlanguage system in these two ways, causing the learning of the language to come to a halt.

As a result of the close relationship between learning and communication, it is not always easy to distinguish a learning strategy from a communication strategy, especially in actual communicative situations (Tarone, 1981; Ellis, 1994; Brown,

1994). The difference between the two lies in the type of problem the strategy attempts to solve. In the case of a learning strategy, the problem is with regard to learning, that is in relation to hypothesis formation, hypothesis testing and increasing automatization. Strategies such as "transfer", "inferencing", "induction", "word coinage", "appeal" etc are some of the strategies used to tackle the problems above.

A communication strategy, on the other hand, is used to solve problems in the planning and realization of speech production. In the planning of speech production, problems are caused by a lack of linguistic resources, uncertainty about the correctness of rules belonging to the interlanguage system, and expectation of fluency problems in connection with the realization of specific rules. In the realization of speech production, the problems are in retrieving the forms of items which have been selected for speech production. Reduction strategies consisting of "avoidance" and "omission", and achievement strategies like "code-switching", "translation", "restructuring", "circumlocution", "word coinage" etc are examples of communication strategies used to overcome such problems.

A communication strategy, although different from a learning strategy, can function as a learning strategy. This is to say that a communication strategy can at the same time have both learning and communicative functions for the L2 learner. In addition to its communicative function it can simultaneously have a subsidiary learning effect.

Faerch and Kasper (1980) state that a communication strategy enhances learning when it contributes to the two important aspects of language learning - hypothesis formation and automatization. They explain that since the use of a communication strategy presupposes that the learner experiences a problem, this implies that either his interlanguage system does not yet contain the appropriate item (planning problem), or that the appropriate interlanguge item is difficult to retrieve or is considered problematic from a correctness or fluency point of view (realization problem). They, therefore, conclude that communication strategies that aim at solving problems in the planning phase can lead to L2 learning with respect to hypothesis formation, and that communication strategies which attempt to tackle problems in the realization phase can lead to learning with respect to automatization.

Faerch and Kasper (1980) go on to explain that a communication strategy can only lead to learning if it is governed by achievement rather than avoidance behaviour. If a

learner avoids communicating his intention, hypothesis formation and automatization do not occur. His interlanguage system remains unaffected which means learning cannot occur.

On the basis of this rationale, Faerch and Kasper (1980) give examples of communication strategies that have a potential learning effect. They distinguish between psycholinguistic and behavioural strategies. With regard to hypothesis formation the psycholinguistic strategies are "transfer", "word coinage", "generalization" and "inferencing" strategies, whereas, behavioural strategies are "appeals". Strategies that enhance learning with regard to automatization are "restructuring", "paraphrase" and "retrieval strategies". According to them, "code-switching" and "non-linguistic strategies" such as "mimes" do not contribute to language learning (Faerch and Kasper, 1980, p. 62-69).

For the scope of this paper, only one communication strategy, that is transfer, is investigated. The findings show that this strategy can in fact function as a learning strategy in several ways. This is taken up in the section on research findings.

Related studies on language transfer as a communication strategy

There are many studies that have investigated transfer as a communication strategy in relation to learner variables like the learners' level of L2 proficiency (Bialystok, 1983; Paribakht, 1985; Corrales, 1989; Fernandez Dobao, 2003), learners' L1 (Palmberg, 1979), nature of communication task (Corrales, 1989; Poulisse and Schils, 1989; Yarmohammedi and Seif, 1992), and types of formal instruction received (Tarone, 1984; Dornyei, 1995). However, it is seldom investigated as an isolate communication strategy and is instead often examined as part of a gamut of communication strategies.

Bialystok (1983) for instance examined communication strategies used by advanced and regular 17-year-old students learning French as a second language and found that advanced students used proportionately more L2-based strategies than did the regular students, who relied more on L1-based strategies. L2 strategies referred to approximation, circumlocution and word coinage, whereas L1-based strategies referred to borrowing, language switch and literal translation. Fernandez Dobao (2003) who investigated communication strategy use of Galician learners of English

across proficiency level when performing three types of oral tasks (picture story narration, photograph description, and conversation) also found that elementary students used more avoidance and transfer strategies compared to intermediate and advanced students. However between the intermediate and advanced learners, there was a higher use of transfer among the advanced students as she found they resorted to this strategy in their desire to be highly accurate and detailed. Transfer included both language switch and translation.

Corrales (1989) investigated communication strategies in relation to nature of the oral task amongst Spanish students of English and found that the Simulated Conversation Task elicited significantly more transfer strategies than the Structured Question Task. She noted that this was because the Conversation Task prompted the learners to monitor their speech more than they did in the Question Task, causing native language features to surface more frequently.

Poulisse and Schils (1989) conducted an analysis of communication strategies across three oral tasks - picture description, story telling and an interview – amongst Dutch learners of English who were required to perform these three oral tasks with a native speaker of English. Poulisse's taxanomy, which consists of three major communication strategies, namely reduction, interactional and achievement strategies, was used to identify and classify the strategies used by the learners. The researchers found that the subjects predominantly used analytic conceptual strategies most in the picture description task and frequently resorted to holistic conceptual strategies and transfer strategies in the story telling and the oral interview tasks.

Yarmohammedi and Seif investigated (1992) task-type and communication strategy of intermediate Persian learners of English. Three types of tasks were used in their study: writing a composition on a series of pictures, translation and the narration of a completed picture story. The tasks involved both written and oral productions of the subjects. The findings revealed that achievement strategies were employed more frequently than reduction ones in both the written and oral tasks. However, a number of strategies such as cooperative, mime and retrieval strategies, were more specific to the subjects' oral performance. In the written production of the story, there was a greater use of the literal translation strategy than in the oral production, and the reverse was true for code-switching.

Arnfast and Jorgensen (2003) examined code-switching as a communication,

learning and social negotiation strategy among two groups of learners with different L1s and different types of instructional situation for the learning of Danish. One group was American English speaking students learning Danish in a Danish high school (immersion situation) while the other was Polish students learning Danish under formal instruction in Poland (non-immersion situation). They found overt code-switching to L1 by both groups as a communication strategy to compensate for shortcomings when conversing in Danish. In addition they discovered code-switching functioning as a competence or resource strategy for facilitating target language acquisition and for establishing social acceptance into the target language group.

In the Malaysian ESL context, there are several studies that have attempted to investigate the use of communication strategies of Malaysian ESL learners. Lee (1990) researched the communication strategies of 16-year-old learners in relation to their level of L2 proficiency. Khemlani-David (1991) experimented with the effect an instructional phase on communication strategy would have on the employment of communication strategies by a group of teacher trainees. Subramaniam (1994) carried out a comparative analysis of the communication strategies 16-year-old learners employ in their L1 and in their L2. Lee, Goh and Wong (2006) looked at lexical communication strategies used by undergraduates learning English as a second language during oral interactions in group discussions. All studies are insightful for understanding and developing the strategic competence of Malaysian ESL learners.

The present study departs from the existing literature on communication strategies in that it explores further the nature of communication strategies employed by a group of Malaysian learners of English as a second language when performing some types of oral tasks. As noted earlier, this paper is a sequel to a larger study on communication strategies (Paramasivam, 1998) and reports specifically on language transfer as a communication strategy and the potential learning effect of this strategy across oral tasks. To the best of my knowledge there is to date no local study that directly investigates transfer as a communication strategy as well as how it may potentially affect second language learning.

The oral tasks used in the study

Anderson, Brown, Shillcock and Yule (1984) distinguish three types of oral tasks commonly used in a speaking class. They classify tasks into those involving static,

dynamic and abstract relationships. Tasks involving 'static' relationships involve the speaker in describing static relationships among objects. The relationships between the objects of the task are stable. Examples of this task-type are the picture description, giving instructions, following route directions and diagram drawing. In performing a task based on instructions, the main requirement of the speaker is to provide the hearer with enough information to identify the objects of the task and their spatial relationships.

Tasks involving 'dynamic' relationships are tasks that involve dynamic relationships among people or objects. The speaker has to describe events or relationships that change over time and space. This task-type elicits different types of communication problems from the Static Task. It poses a higher degree of communicative demands on the speaker. Examples of this task-type are telling a story and narrating an event like giving an eye-witness account of an accident.

Tasks involving 'abstract' relationships require the speaker to communicate abstract notions. In such tasks the speaker has to express an opinion on a given topic or offer justification for a particular action. The communicative demands of an Abstract Task are higher than that of the Static and Dynamic Tasks. In the Static and Dynamic Tasks the stimulus material presented to the student provides all of the content to be communicated. In contrast, in an Abstract Task, although the stimulus material is designed to elicit the expression of an opinion or justification, the material does not contain the actual content to be communicated. The communicative demand of this task-type is, thus, highest.

Anderson et. al. explain that the different types of oral tasks elicit different types of language and pose different communication problems for the speaker. They note that there is an ascending scale of difficulty among the different task-types. Tasks that involve the speaker in describing static relationships among objects are easier to communicate than tasks that require the speaker to communicate abstract notions, for instance in argument or justifications. Their classification of oral task-types is adopted for the purposes of the present study as it accounts for the different problems in communication. The factor of problematicity in communication is necessary for the present study because the defining criterion of communication strategy is problem-orientedness. The criterion for the use of a communication strategy is the existence of a communication problem. As this study investigates the use of communication

strategy in relation to oral tasks, it is necessary to employ oral tasks that pose different communication problems.

The tasks used in the study are described below: all tasks reflect realities of real-life communicative situations and involve pair-work.

1. Static Task : Instruction-giving task (henceforth referred to as Task A)
   One of the pair, that is the instructee, performs a task e.g. making a flower or repairing a leaking tap, based on instructions given by the other pair, i.e. the instructor. The respondents are allowed to question and ask for clarifications.

2. Dynamic Task : Telling a story (henceforth referred to as Task B)
   One of the pair, that is the narrator of the story, is given a sequence of pictures and asked to tell a story while the other of the pair, that is the listener, listens and is allowed to question and ask for clarifications.

3. Abstract Task : Opinion-giving (henceforth referred to as Task C)
   The pair is given a survival situation and a list of items they have to rank in order of importance. This requires them to exchange opinions and reach consensus on the items ranked.

Research design

The subjects of the study were four Malay (two males and two females) first-year students of the Science and Computer Department, Faculty of Science and Environmental Studies, University Putra Malaysia. They were pursuing a Degree in Computer Science, and were at the intermediate level of English proficiency.

Only Malay respondents were used as it was easier and more reliable to define the status of English as a L2 in Malay homes, for in non-Malay homes English was either the L1, L2, L3 or L4 depending on the relative positions of their home languages and Bahasa Malaysia. Malay students were also used as the identification of communication strategies in the present study involved a comparison of the respondents' L1 and L2 utterances and the researcher is a bilingual in both these languages.

An equal number of males and females were used to minimize the influence of gender on the use of communication strategies. Research has shown that there exist female and male differences in oral interaction with respect to the use of strategies such as fillers, qualifiers, interruptions, repetitions etc (Hirschman, 1994; Green and Oxford, 1995). All four respondents were twenty years of age.

All respondents had learnt English as a second language for eleven years, in six years of primary education and five years of secondary education. The English Language Syllabus for Malaysian Secondary Schools (1987) describes the position of English in Malaysia as that of a second language. The researcher, thus, accepted this categorically as true. The medium of instruction used in school was Bahasa Malaysia, the national language.

Data collection

Three task-types, all involving pair work, were used for data collection. As discussed earlier in this paper, these task-types were selected based on Anderson, Brown, Shillcock and Yule's (1984) classification of oral tasks.

The subjects were paired off into four groups, Pair 1 Male-Male (P1Mi & P1Mii), Pair 2 Female-Female (P2Fi & P2Fii), Pair 3 Male-Female (P3M & P3F) and Pair 4 Female-Male (P4F & P4M) respectively. Each pair performed the three task-types, the Instruction-Giving Task (Task A), the Story-Telling Task (Task B) and the Opinion-Giving Task (Task C).

The respondents were paired off in this manner for two reasons Firstly, to minimize the influence of gender on the use of communication strategies and secondly, to ensure that there would be sufficient talk-time for each task-type in order to establish a reliable profile of strategy use for each task-type. A total of four hours of recorded talk were collected.

All three tasks were first performed in English and then immediately in Malay. Data collection involved three parts. In the first part, all four pairs performed the Instruction-Giving Task (Task A). P1 (Male-Male pair) and P2 (Female-Female pair) performed a task that required the pair to repair a leaking tap. P3 (Male-Female) performed a task that required them to fix a wire into a three-pin plug and P4 (Female- Male) had to make a flower out of ribbon. In the first stage of data collection for this task-type, one person in each pair was instructed by the researcher non-verbally on how to perform the task. The subjects then had to perform the task themselves. This enabled the researcher to assess whether the instructions had been understood. In the second stage, these subjects instructed their interlocutors (i.e. the second person in the pair) who carried out the instructions. The subjects were allowed

to ask as many questions and to request for as much clarifications as they required.

In the second part of the data collection, the four pairs performed the Story-Telling Task (Task B). Two picture stories, referred to as Story 1 and Story 2 (see Appendix), were taken from Heaton's (1976) Beginning Composition through Pictures. In this part, one person in each pair was given a picture story which he/she looked through for two minutes before telling his/her interlocutor a story based on it while the second person in the pair listened. The second of the pair was also instructed to participate as naturally as he/she would in a real life situation. The study showed that the listener did not merely engage in passive listening. His/her attention to the story being told was portrayed through head nods, laughs, questions about the story and responses to appeals for help from the interlocutor.

In the third part, the four pairs performed the Opinion-Giving Task (Task C). They were each given a survival situation for which they had to rank a list of items in order of importance for survival purposes. The two survival situations used, referred to as Survival Situation 1 and Survival Situation 2 (see Appendix), were taken from Ur (1981).

Data analysis

After the recorded data was transcribed, an identification procedure was employed. This procedure enabled the identification of the discourse units in which communication strategies were present. In order to arrive at a reliable identification of the strategy used, a combination of three identification procedures were used. Firstly, the researcher identified the discourse units that contained the communication strategy on the basis of problem indicators which include hesitation phenomena and temporal variables like pauses, repetitions, false starts, laughs, sighs, mimetic gestures, rising intonation and comments like "what you call". However, the use of these problem indicators alone was not sufficient because it was not always clear whether the problems encountered by the students were linguistic in nature. For instance, hesitations, pauses and the like could have been strategies used by the student to hold on to his turn as he organized his thoughts or as he searched for the word he was looking for. In the case of the story-telling task, they could have been strategies he used as he grappled with the story line. This brought the researcher to the second stage of the identification procedure.

The second stage involved a comparison of the respondents' L1 and corresponding L2 utterances of the task. The rationale behind this procedure was that the L1 version of the task revealed exactly what the learner wanted to say in English, i.e. his "intended meaning", while the L2 version of the task reflected the learner's adjusted meaning or message. This method of identification presupposed that all L2 expressions that differed from the L1 version in terms of their intended meaning arose from the employment of communication strategies. The strategy was identified by juxtaposing the corresponding L1 and L2 versions of the task and determining where they did not coincide. The four possibilities put forward by Palmberg (1979) (illustrated in Table 1 below) as regards the presence or not of a particular intended meaning in the L2 version of a task were used to determine the instances of strategy use.

Table 1: Possible Occurrences of Intended Meaning in the two versions of a Task

	Intended meaning in L1 version	Intended meaning in L2 version
Possibility 1	Present	Present
Possibility 2	Present	Absent
Possibility 3	Absent	Absent
Possibility 4	Absent	Present

The third stage of the identification procedure involved the use of the learners' retrospective comments obtained from an interview session with the subjects. This was to verify that the discourse units identified so far were indeed the result of a linguistic handicap. In the case of language transfer, the interview sessions helped determine what problem they encountered, whether the problem was linguistic in nature and what their originally intended meaning was.

After the discourse units containing communication strategies had been identified they were analyzed. The analysis was carried out in relation to the research questions. It involved three stages.

In the first stage of the analysis, the communication problems encountered by the subjects in each task-type, beginning with Task A, subsequently followed by Task B and Task C, were described. This is necessary, because in order to gain an understanding of the communication strategies used in the task-types it is pertinent to first have an understanding of the communication problems that occur in each task-

type, since communication strategies are solutions to communication problems.

In the second stage of the analysis, the communication strategies used by the subjects were classified using Poulisse's (1987) taxonomy of communication strategies (see Appendix). Each type of communication strategy was described as they were used by the four pairs of students with respect to their linguistic configuration, communicative function and communicative intent in each of the task-types, beginning with Task A and followed by Task B and Task C respectively.

After the types of communication strategies used by the subjects in each task-type were described, an analysis of the similarities and differences in strategy use across the task-types was carried out. Each communication strategy as it was used in Task A, Task B and Task C was compared. The similarities and differences with respect to its linguistic configuration, communicative function and communicative intent were then described.

In the final stage of the analysis, each type of communication strategy was analyzed for its potential learning effect. This was done by employing the rationale provided by Faerch and Kasper (1980). They propose that communication strategies that solve problems in the planning phase lead to L2 learning with respect to hypothesis formation and that communication strategies that tackle problems in the realization phase lead to learning with respect to automatization. Language transfer was, thus, investigated in relation to two criteria. They were, firstly, whether the strategy resulted in the subjects learning an L2 item or learning a new context for an interlanguage item, since these are the two possible outcomes of successful hypothesis formation. Secondly, it was whether the strategy resulted in the learner being reminded of an interlanguage item he had problems retrieving, since this leads to automatization of the item. The nature of learning was, in other words, determined by looking into the type of language problem encountered by the subjects. If the problem was a planning problem, that is if the learner lacked the linguistic resources to express his intended meaning, and employed achievement behaviour to overcome the problem, it is assumed that he/she may have learnt either a L2 term or learnt a new context for an interlanguage item. If the problem was a realization problem, that is if the learner had difficulty in retrieving the intended interlanguage item, and adopted achievement behaviour, it is assumed that he may have had the opportunity to automatize the particular item.

Needless to say, the present study employed the ethnographic approach in its qualitative-interpretive mode, using the principles of discourse analysis and relying on triangulation through interviews for greater validity. With this, research findings are addressed in the next section.

Research findings

a. Transfer as a communication strategy

In the data of this study transfer manifested as a communication strategy in two ways. In both cases the respondents' L1 (Malay) was the direct cause of the resulting expression.

    i.   language switch.
          The respondent used a Malay word to express his intended meaning.

    ii.   literal translation.
          The respondent literally translated his intended meaning from Malay into English.

i. *Language switch*

Language switch was used as a communication strategy in all the three task-types to solve language problems at the word level. A Malay word was used to express the target word.

In Task A, language switch was used to refer to objects used in the task and to explain the non-verbal aspects of the task, that is the actions required for performing the task. It was used as an independent strategy, that is as a sole attempt to solve the communication problem.

In Example 1, this strategy was used to refer to the *washer*, an object used in the task, which the instructor did not have the English word for. He referred to it as pelapik (line 3).

Example 1   (Task A – Repairing a leaking tap)

P1Mi : today I would like to tell you how to to (3.0) cover the (.)	1
I mean the pipe because the pipe is leaking you know (.) so	2
how to cover and change the (1.0) the (1.0) pelapik (.) ok so	3
the firstly (.) you must open the (.) open the (.) the large	4
screw (points at the tap) the biggest screw	5

P1Mii : this one (points at the tap)   6

P1Mi : ah yes   7

   The instructor also had a problem with the object tap head in the extract above. He
described it as <u>the large screw the biggest screw</u> (lines 4-5) while pointing at the
intended object. These strategies are known as circumlocution and gestures and they
co-occurred with language switch in the extract above.

   Example 2 below illustrates language switch as a communication strategy to deal
with a problematic action verb.

Example 2   (Task A- Fixing a wire into a three-pin plug)

P3M : let the screw (2.0) tindih the ah tindih the wire ha touch the let   1
          the screw touch the (.) wire only   2

(P3F performs as instructed)

In lines 1-2, not knowing the English word for <u>tindih,</u> the speaker used the Malay
equivalent instead. Subsequently, he used the word <u>touch</u> to express the same.

   In Task B, language switch was used to deal with problems that involved
descriptions of objects and characters in the story as well as descriptions of the
actions of the characters. In this task-type, it was not used as an independent strategy.
Instead, it was used as a supportive strategy to structure the interactional strategy.
Within a direct appeal for help, the problem word was expressed in the L1, as shown
below.

Example 3   (Task B – Story 1)

P2Fii : how come how come they play the the match when when after   1
          they cut the table   2

P2Fi :   but they still play with standing they are not sitting   3
P2Fii :   how come how come they play the match   4
P2Fi :   how come they play the match(1.0) just er just er they   5
          er when they want to (.) throw the ping pong just play   6
          like (.) er usual (.) you now but they they must er (1.0) bongkok 7

| | apa ha | 8 |

P2Fii	:	er bend (.) bend	9
P2Fi	:	ah bend they must bend	10
P2Fii	:	ah	11

The interview revealed that in lines 5-8, Fi 's intended meaning was that, *after cutting the table legs they played ping pong as usual, except that now they have to bend while playing because the table is too low*. As she said in the interview, **saya nak cakap dia orang main ping pong macam biasalah hanya sekarang dia orang terpaksa bongkok sambil main sebab meja tu rendah sangat**. However, she had difficulty with the English equivalent for the word **bongkok**. She appealed for assistance from the interlocutor using the question **bongkok apa ha** (lines 7-8). The target word and the appeal were both expressed in Malay. Fii provided the English equivalent for the word and Fi subsequently used this word to get her meaning across.

In Task C, language switch was also used for problems in relation to expressing opinions about the functions of the items specified for the survival situations and their necessity. The strategy was used in two ways. As in Task A, it was used as an independent strategy (illustrated in Example 4 below). Apart from this, it was also used as a means to appeal for help from the interlocutor, as in Task B. This is shown in Example 5.

Example 4   (Task C – Survival Situation 1)

P2Fii	:	er (1.0) eh(1.0) why we don't use telescope second before	1
		reach the bank we know how far they from the bank	2
P2Fi	:	because the map first because ah we don't know er if in	3
		the sea if there have a jurang or something something like that right	4
P2Fii	:	ah	5
P2Fi	:	with telescope only in the air	6
P2Fii	:	ok so number four is telescope right	7

In the extract above, Fi and Fii were discussing how to rank the 'map' and the 'telescope' as items for survival. Fi intended to say that, *with the map we would know whether there are whirlpools or coral reefs, but with the telescope we can only see above water, we would not know where we are whether we are in a coral reef area or a whirlpool area*. As she put it in the interview, **dengan peta kita dapat tahu dekat situ ada jurang ke ataupun ada batu karang ke kan tapi dengan teleskop kita cuma dapat tengok atas paras air je tapi kita tak tahu kita ni sebenarnya atas**

apa ka mana area batu karang ke area jurang ke. When asked what she meant by jurang (line 4) she made circles with her hand to mean 'whirlpool'. She did not know the equivalents for **jurang** and **batu karang** in English. The use of the word jurang in her L2 utterance is, therefore, classified as a language switch. However, the referent **batu karang** was omitted. She subsequently learnt the English equivalents of these two problematic words as during the interview she explicitly requested to know how they were referred to in English.

In Example 5 language switch was used as a supportive strategy to appeal for help for the referent cangkul (line 4).

Example 5 (Task C - Survival Situation 2)

P4M :	if we compare pick and spade I think the more important is	1
	(1.0) is (1.0) pick (2.0) actually the both of this item is very very	2
	useful but I think the more important (.) is a pick	3
P4F :	ah pick also can (2.0) ehm apa cangkul (digs in the air)	4
P4M :	dig (.) dig out the the ground (.) the land the ground ok	5
P4F :	ok I think pick (.) the eight item	6

In line 4, F's intended meaning was that, *the pick can also be used to dig the ground*. However, she did not know the English equivalent for **cangkul**. She requested for help using the Malay question word apa while expressing the problematic concept in L1 with the word, cangkul, and gesturing the action *dig*.

ii. Literal translation
Literal translation is registered when the problematic word or message is translated from the L1 into the L2. It was used in all the three task-types to deal with problems at the word and message levels as an independent strategy.

In Task A, it was used for problems at the word level involving the non-verbal aspects of the task.

Example 6   (Task A- Fixing a wire into a three-pin plug)

P3M :	put the wire into the hole	1
(P3F did not respond)		
P3M :	at under the screw	2
P3F :	oh (places the wire into the hole)	3
P3M :	you see the hole ok then (.) tighten up back the screw eh no	4
	you over (.) that's over just the wire ah the cuprum wire	5

(P3F pulls out part of the wire from the hole)

The interview revealed that in <u>you over (.) that's over</u> (line 5) the instructor's intended meaning was that the instructee *had inserted too much of the cupric wire into the hole*. As she put it in the interview, **maksud saya wayar tu Suzana dah terlebih masuk saya nak Suzana masukkan kuprum tu saja tapi Suzana masukkan penebatnya sekali**. <u>Over</u> is the word used to convey the concept **terlebih masuk**. The interview revealed he did not know how to convey this concept in English. As he put it in the interview, **actually I don't know how to say I just translate lebih over (.) and Suzana understand so ok**. In dealing with his problem, M translated **terlebih masuk** from Malay, resulting in <u>you over (.) that's over</u>.

In Task B, literal translation was used for problems involving actions performed by characters in the story.

Example 7   (Task B - Story 1)

P2Fi	:	the table is high as a like at er at their double chin so how come	1
		she they can play the ping pong just the head only (.) only look	2
		each other	3

In the utterance, <u>how come she they can play the ping pong just the head only (.) only look each other</u> (lines 1-3), Fi 's intended meaning was, *how are they going to play ping pong when they can only see each other's faces*. As she put it in the L1 version of the task, **macam mana dia orang nak main ping pong hanya muka sahaja yang nampak di antara berdua**. However, she did not know how to express all this in English. Her utterance shows she translated her intended meaning into the target language. **Hanya muka sahaja yang nampak di antara berdua** when directly translated into English is *just only the head/face look each other*.

In Task C, literal translation was used for problems involving the use of words and phrases in relation to the opinions expressed about the functions of the items specified for the survival situation and their necessity.

Example 8 (Task C - Survival Situation 1)

P1Mi	:	ok we have compass (.) we also must have a map	1
P1Mii	:	map (.) oh (1.0) map is important also (.) ha that's right if	2
		we have a compass we must have a map to know the way to	3
		know where us are going we must list map after compass that's right	4

The interview revealed that in lines 3-4, in the utterance, <u>to know the way to know where us are going</u> the speaker intended to say that, *they needed the map in order to know the way they should go*. He had problems expressing this in English and, therefore, translated it from Malay. As he put it in the interview, **saya nak cakap kita perlukan peta tu untuk mengetahui arah di mana kita perlu pergi**. His utterance, <u>to know the way to know where us are going</u>, was literally translated from Malay, **untuk mengetahui arah di mana kita perlu pergi**.

The patterns of use of transfer as a communication strategy across oral tasks with regard to its communicative intent, language configuration and communicative function are summarized in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2 :   The Patterns of use of Transfer as a Communication Strategy

	Task A	Task B	Task C
C.I	The strategy was used a. to refer to objects used in the task b. to convey non-verbal actions of the task	The strategy was used a. to refer to and describe the objects and characters in the story	The strategy was used a. to convey words and phrases in relation to opinions of the functions of the items for the survival situation and their necessity
L.C	1. A Malay word was used. 2. A Malay word/phrase was literally translated into English.	The strategy was used as in Task A.	The strategy was used as in Task A.
C.F	The strategy was used a. to tackle problems at the word level b. as an independent strategy	The strategy was used as in Task A, except that it was also used as a supportive strategy with a direct appeal.	The strategy was used as in Task B.
	C.I= Communicative Intent	L.C= Linguistic Configuration	C.F= Communicative Function

My next concern was looking into the potential learning effect of transfer as a communication strategy as used by the subjects of this study. This is dealt with in the next section.

b. Transfer and second language learning

As noted in the previous section transfer is manifested in the data as language switch and literal translation. The potential learning effect of transfer is thus examined from these manifestations.

i. Language switch

Using Faerch and Kasper's rationale to language learning the linguistic strategy of transfer manifested as language switch may or may not enhance learning depending on the context in which it is used. It does not support language learning if by means of this strategy only the learner's L1 is used to tackle the language problem, that is if the learners do not use the second language at all. The speaker therefore does not learn the L2 item of the problematic word. As a result, the interlanguage of the learner is unaffected. For instance, as in Example 1, the learner does not learn the L2 word of **pelapik**. Likewise in Examples 4 and 5 the learner's interlanguage remains unaffected with regard to the use of the words **cangkul** and **jurang**. However, using L1 in order to communicate these concepts may have made the learners aware of their limited vocabulary. After the activity they can resort to sources of authority like a dictionary or the class teacher to learn the English equivalents of the problematic words. Language switch in Examples 1, 4 and 5 may therefore still be viewed as opportunities for language learning; the learner can treat them as ways of discovering and learning the vocabulary he lacks by taking remedial measures for instance in resorting to sources of authority to get the exact words in English. In this indirect way language switch may be viewed as having the potential as a language learning tool.

If however language switch results in the use of the L2 to tackle the problematic word, then learning can be said to have directly occurred during communication. This is seen in Example 2 where through the use of the word "tindih" (line 1) the learner is able to retrieve from his interlanguage repertoire a close paraphrase of the problematic word i.e. "touch" (line 1). In this case the problem may have been a realization problem and the use of language switch may have lead to automatization of the interlanguage item. Alternatively it may have been a planning problem and the learner hypothesized that "touch" is a suitable word to use to convey his meaning. This may have led to an expansion of his interlanguage repertoire with regard to the

use of the word "touch" in this new context.

A positive effect of the use of language switch on second language learning is also seen in Example 3. The use of the word "bongkok" within the request for help (lines 7-8) resulted in the L2 item "bend" (line 9), which the speaker subsequently used in her communication. This may have also been a realization problem on the part of the speaker, and the appeal supported with language switch allowed for the L2 item to be retrieved and used in communication. This may have led to learning by means of automatization of the problematic L2 item.

ii. Literal translation

Transfer manifested as literal translation may enhance learning by enabling the learner to apply his interlanguage to new contexts. In this way, he has opportunities to expand his interlanguage repertoire. Example 7 illustrates this.

In how come she they can play the ping pong just the head only (.) only look each other (lines 1-3), Fi ' s intended meaning was, *how are they going to play when they can only see each other's faces.* As she put it in the interview, **macam mana dia orang nak main ping pong hanya muka sahaja yang nampak di antara berdua.** In expressing her intended meaning she translated from the L1. It is assumed she hypothesized that the utterance, just the head only look each other, translated from the L1, **hanya muka sahaja yang nampak di antara berdua,** can be used to express the intended meaning. Positive feedback from the interlocutor would have confirmed this hypothesis. The learner, therefore, may have learnt a new context for the interlanguage utterance just the head only look each other. She could have learnt that this is the way to express the intended meaning. Her interlanguage repertoire may have expanded in this way; the learner encountered a planning problem and through translation from the L1 may have learnt to apply her knowledge of L2 in a new context.

Similarly in Example 6, the learner may have hypothesized that the utterance "you over, that's over" translated from the L1 **terlebih masuk** can be used to express the intended meaning. Likewise in Example 8 the expression "to know the way where us are going" translated from **untuk mengetahui arah di mana kita perlu pergi** may have been hypothesized as appropriate for the intended meaning *to know the way we*

should go.

In the examples above (Examples 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8) the L1 may have functioned as a tool in the discovery of the structures of the L2, thus helping to facilitate the learning of these structures. Successful communication with the interlocutor may result in these structures being incorporated into the learners' interlanguage system.

Summary of findings and Discussion

The transfer strategies of language switch and literal translation were used in all the three task-types. However, there were differences in the communicative intent conveyed. In Task A, the strategy was used to refer to objects used in the task and to express the non-verbal aspects of the task. In Task B, the strategy was employed to refer to and describe the objects and characters in the story. In Task C, it was used to convey words in relation to the opinions of the functions of the items specified for the survival situation and their necessity.

The linguistic configurations of language switch and literal translation were similar across the task-types. Language switch involved the use of an L1 word to convey the target concept and in literal translation, problem words and phrases were translated word for word from the L1. There were similarities and differences in the communicative functions of these strategies across the task-types. They were similar in that they were used as independent strategies (that is as sole attempts to tackle the communication problems encountered) across the task-types. Language switch, however, was also used as a supportive strategy to structure the interactional strategy of direct appeal. This occurred in Tasks B and C. Within a direct appeal the problem was expressed in L1. The strategy was not used in this manner in Task A. This is because the direct appeal was not used in Task A. The researcher postulates that the direct appeal was not used to deal with problems in Task A because of the nature of the task-type. In Task A, the respondents performed a task that required them to give and receive instructions. In performing the task, the objects used in the task were visible to both the respondents. For instance, in repairing the leaking tap, the tap, the spanner and the packet of washers were laid in front of both the respondents. The data showed that the problems in Task A involved the names of objects used to perform the task and the relevant verbs to express the actions required. The respondents had problems referring to the objects used to perform the task because the task required

knowledge of technical names of those objects. In solving these problems through the interactional strategy, it was not expedient to explicitly request for the name of an object or an action in the L2. It was, for instance, not expedient to ask, "what do you call kepala paip" (tap head) as it would have been more appropriate to say, "take that" (i.e. the tap head) while pointing at it. In other words, it would have been more suitable to use non-verbal strategies. This is because, as mentioned earlier, the objects used in the task were visible to both the respondents. Similarly, it would have been awkward to ask, "what is lipat" or "how do you say lipat" (fold). Because of the nature of the task, it had been more expedient to use either non-verbal strategies or the linguistic strategy, that is to use the L1 word to express a verb that was problematic to say in English, for example the word 'lipat' in Malay for fold.

In addition to having a communicative function, transfer also had the potential to enhance L2 learning. This could have occurred in several ways. First of all, by way of helping the learner to expand his L2 repertoire. This can be explained in two ways. Firstly, the use of the strategy can allow the learner to learn new L2 lexis. The strategy that could have allowed for this is transfer manifested as language switch supported with the interactional strategy of direct appeal from a source of authority, such as the class teacher. Secondly, transfer can allow the learner to learn a new context for his interlanguage items. The learner would have had the opportunity to apply his interlanguage lexis in new contexts. He may have learned that in addition to what he understands a particular interlanguage word to mean, the word can have another meaning, or can be used differently, within a different context. The strategy that may have allowed for learning in this way is transfer manifested as literal translation.

In addition to helping expand the learner's L2 repertoire, transfer also can enhance learning by allowing learners to automatize their interlanguage items. This involves instances when the learner was either reminded by his interlocutor of interlanguage items he had problems retrieving at the time of speech, or the learner himself was able to retrieve the problematic word from his mind. In these instances, the learner is made to be aware that the intended word is 'there' in his mind but he cannot recall it. When he remembers it or when the interlocutor brings it to his attention, he is able to increase the availability of the interlanguage term by using it in communication. The strategy that may have allowed for learning in this way is language switch used as an

independent strategy and language switch used as a supportive strategy within a direct appeal.

If however the learner employed only Malay to convey his intended meaning without any use of the L2, his interlanguage remains unaffected and this appears not to lead to L2 learning in any way. However, if we look at learning in a broader perspective, the use of the Malay words can bring about learning in yet another way - it can draw the attention of the learners to their own limited vocabulary, and they can on their own accord resort to sources of authority like a dictionary or the class teacher to learn the English equivalents of the problematic words, and in this way add new words to their competence.

In a nutshell, transfer has the potential to enhance L2 learning firstly, by helping learners expand their L2 repertoire by way of learning new L2 lexis and learning new contexts of application for existing interlanguage items, and secondly, by providing opportunities that help learners automatize their interlanguage items. In short, transfer used as a communication strategy can be said to have the potential to affect language learning by way of "help[ing] learners become more fluent in what they already know [and] may lead learners to gain new information about what is appropriate or permissible in the target language" (Oxford, 1990, p. 49).

With regard to L2 communication, transfer contributes in two ways. Firstly, through its use communication does not come to a halt. The learner is able to convey his intended message, that is communication proceeds and this helps in the accomplishment of the task. Secondly, transfer promotes the adoption of achievement behaviour, which is a prerequisite for successful communication and language learning. There is a school of thought that perceives transfer or switch to the L1 as undermining the learning of the L2. Willis (1981) for instance is against the use of L1 in L2 classrooms: she defines teaching English through English (TETE) as "speaking and using English in the classroom as often as you possibly can". Ellis (1986) in fact argues that skilful use of communication strategies as compensation for lack of linguistic knowledge can actually obviate the need for learning. Macdonald (1993) too follows this train of thought when he supports the view that L1 use cuts down exposure to the L2. This study however shows that using L1 in L2 communication can be more effective than avoiding its use in such communication. The study shows that careful and strategic use of L1 in L2 communication can be beneficial for both

second language communication and second language learning. The study evidences that L2 learners fall back on their first language as a steady and reliable strategy to tackle language problems when communicating in the second language.

The study also shows that in addition to being used as an independent strategy, language transfer is also often used in combination with other communication strategies particularly the interactional strategy of direct appeal. This implies that if a teacher were to discourage the use of the L1 in L2 communication he would also discourage the use of other communication strategies that co occur with the use of L1 (for instance the direct appeal) and therefore inhibit achievement based behaviour when tackling communication problems, which can inadvertently negatively impact L2 learning. This is echoed in Harbord (1992, p. 351) who argues that "translation/transfer is a natural phenomenon and an inevitable part of second language acquisition", and that disallowing L1 use in the L2 classroom would deprive learners of a valuable tool for communication and language learning. The findings of this study therefore lend support to careful and strategic use of the L1 in L2 classroom activities as a stable tool for L2 communication and learning. The implication for L2 training therefore is to not discourage L1 use in the L2 classroom but instead to encourage a strategic use of it. Learners should be taught how to code-switch skillfully and when to do it as a strategic move in L2 communication. L2 training also should not discourage the translation of L1 rules in L2 communication. The teaching environment should instead tap on this natural phenomenon as it opens up opportunities for learners to learn the correct L2 rules through peer repair and feedback or even through self repair as learners are somewhat aware of their faulty utterances in the L2 and seek for help from sources of authority.

Concluding remarks

This investigation evidences the potential in a learner's L1 as a stable and reliable strategy for tackling breakdowns when communicating in a second language. The study supports language transfer as a useful tool for effective and successful L2 communication with the possible added advantage of a subsidiary effect with regard to second language learning. The claim about language transfer as a learning strategy however may seem subjective since this part of the research was primarily deduced from Faerch and Kasper's (1980) rationale for communication strategies and language learning and lacked triangulation in reflective comments from respondents. The

findings however are an eye-opener to the promise that lies in a learner's first language for communicating in and learning a second language. As teachers, then, we must be receptive and sensitive to the place of the learner's first language in the teaching and learning of the second language. Rodolpho Jacobson echoes this in his view that teachers need to acknowledge codeswitching as a natural phenomenon and the parallel use of L1 and L2 as unavoidable in the L2 classroom (Jacobson and Faltis, 1990). It is hoped then that further research on the place of L1 in L2 communication is undertaken more aggressively for instance by incorporating reflection from respondents in a more rigorous fashion - for example by involving follow-up interviews of how individual speakers manage to improve their language quality, listen to corrective feedback from the interlocutor and adjust their own speech, rephrase and demonstrate how they improve their verbal performance, reflect on what they think they have learned, think about the speaking experience and suppose how they could do better, connect what they do in L1 transfer with other communication strategies, and so forth in order to probe deeper into how the strategy of transfer may serve to enhance second language communication and learning.

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Appendix

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Interactional Strategies
(the speaker implicty or
explicity appeals to his
listener to solve his
communication problem)

Reduction Strategies
(the speaker gives up,
avoids or revises his
original plan)

Achievement Strategies
(the speaker uses
alternative plans to
achieve his
communication goals)

Conceptual
(the speaker focuses
on the features, characteristics
or functions of the concept he
is unable to verbalize)

Linguistic
(the speaker manipulates
his linguistic knowledge
of L1, L2,L3, or even L4
to solve his
communication problem)

Holistic
(the speaker refers to a
related but superordinate or
subordinate concept
e.g. "vegetables" for "peas"
or "hammer" for "tool")

Analytic
(the speaker breaks the
concept up into its
component features)

Morphological creativity
(the speaker uses knowledge of
L2 rules to create comprehensible
L2 lexis e.g. "representator"
for "representative")

Transfer
(the speaker tansfers
one language to the
other)

FIGURE 1: Poulisse's Taxonomy of Communication Strategies (1987)

Stories used for the Dynamic Task (Task B)

STORY 1
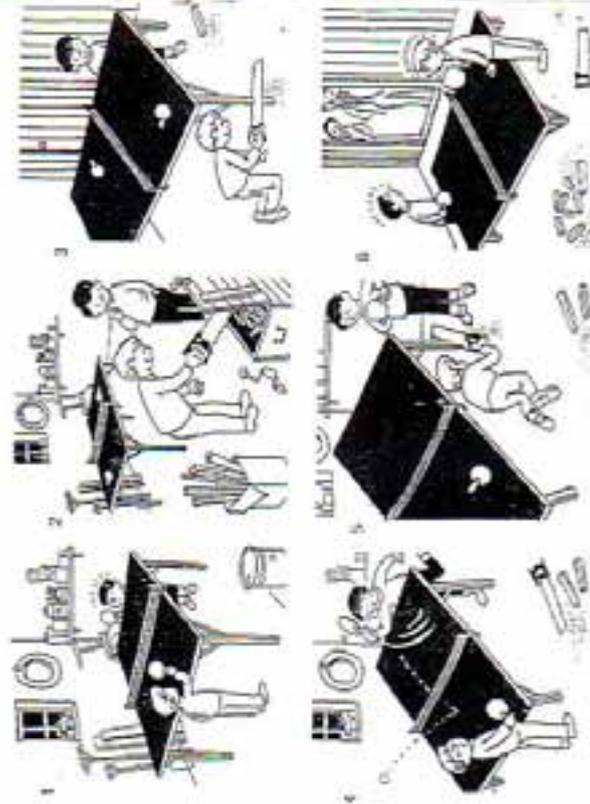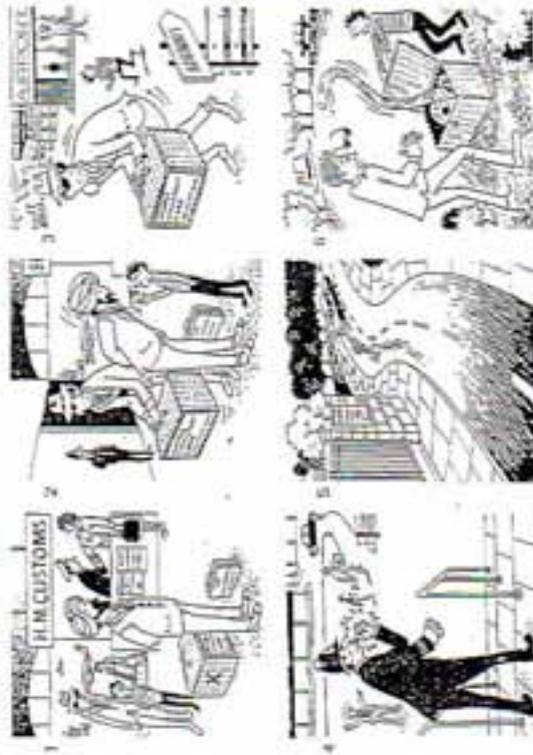
Activities used for the Abstract Task (Task C)

Survival Situation 1

You and three other people are trapped in the middle of the ocean. You have become separated from the main ship. You have about 300 miles of ocean to cover in order to reach the main ship. The following items are available, to be numbered in order of necessity of survival. Select the ten most important items. Give valid reasons for your choice. Discuss with your partner and reach consensus.

The items are:

small boat, matches, signal-flares, oars, oil-lamp with oil, telescope, map of the ocean, knife, life-jackets, string, water, tent, blankets, compass, fish-hooks.

Survival Situation 2

A group of people of which you are a member are trapped underground. Nobody knows you and your friends are trapped. You have to find your way up yourselves. You have with you a number of items which you have to number in order of necessity for survival. Select what you think are the ten most important items. You have to have valid reasons for your choice. Discuss with your partner and reach consensus.

The items available are:

twenty metres of nylon climbing rope, spade, battery-run transistor radio, torch, pick, small amount of explosives, spare batteries, water, watch, coats and warm clothing for each person, cigarette-lighter, magnetic compass, protective helmets, first-aid kit, chalk.

Transcription Guide

(.)   : indicates a brief pause, approximately half a second or less

(1.0), (1.5), (2.0) etc   : indicates a longer pause, shown as the number of seconds to one

                                         decimal place.

Utterances in bold indicate the respondents' intended meanings.

Italicized utterances indicate translations of the respondents' intended meanings.

Underlined utterances indicate the respondents' messages.

Metadiscourse Knowledge and Use in Iranian EFL Writing

Shahla Simin and Manoochehr Tavangar
Isfahan University, Iran

Abstract
Since English is recognized as one of the most widely used languages in the world, intelligible written English is not only a critical business skill but a generally-used social one as well. The major emphasis of research in foreign language writing has been predominately in the area of syntax whereas the pragmatics of metadiscourse has not received the attention it deserves. However, there are factors other than syntax that must be attended to on the part of teachers and learners for a piece of writing to be considered effective in English. Unfortunately, the pragmatic aspect of writing focusing on metadiscourse has not been seriously studied until recently. The present research is an attempt to look at the foreign language learners' written products from a pragmatic perspective, focusing on the use of metadiscourse markers. For this purpose ninety Iranian EFL students participated in this study and, based on their Oxford Placement Test (OPT) scores, they were divided into three proficiency groups: upper-Intermediate, intermediate, and lower-Intermediate. For a period of one semester, their sample essays, written on argumentative topics assigned to them, were collected and analyzed. Applying Vande Kopple's (1985) criteria for classification of metadiscourse, the number of correct uses of metadiscourse markers was counted and calculated across the given tasks. Employing a Chi-square test, the differences in metadiscourse use were shown to be significant for different levels of proficiency. From the above observations it can be inferred that the more proficient learners are in a second language, the more they use metadiscourse markers. Also it would appear that metadiscourse instruction has a positive effect on the correct use of metadiscourse markers.

Key Words: Metadiscourse, Metadiscourse Markers, Linguistic Competence, Pragmatic Competence, Discourse Analysis.

Introduction

Language is at the center of human life and thus is a vital instrument for the exchange of ideas, experiences, emotions, and attitudes. This social instrument is used by human beings to share their common world. Nowadays, with the advent and quickly spreading use of the Internet bringing various concerns of the globe together in one large community, comprehensible written English of any kind is becoming vital to any modern person's array of social skills. Since English is recognized as one of the most widely-used languages in the world, intelligible written English is not only a critical business skill, but a generally-used social skill as well.

According to Karl and Syzmaski (1990), writing begins "in the air and ends on the paper". And between the beginning and end is a complicated process. In fact, writing requires a large variety of skills. Therefore, it is not surprising that the writing difficulties faced by learners of English as a foreign language should be quite conspicuous. Research studies conducted so far have mostly paid special attention to various aspects of syntactic problems in that they have provided suggestions for improving the quality of students' written production in terms of syntactic accuracy. However, when appropriateness is considered, other factors should be investigated.

The present research looks at foreign language learners' writing productions from a pragmatic perspective, focusing on the use of metadiscourse as an important interactive feature which is believed not only to help writers to write better but also to facilitate the reading process for readers. For every piece of discourse, written or spoken, there are two levels: the primary level upon which the propositional content is established, and the metadiscourse level added to the primary level to signal the presence of authors (Vande Kopple, 1985).

In fact, metadiscourse is a set of linguistic devices used to communicate attitudes as well as to indicate the structural properties of the text. According to its different definitions, metadiscourse is the second level of discourse that fulfills the textual and interpersonal functions of language in order to direct and guide the readers rather than inform them (Crismore, 1985). According to Crismore (1985), if interpersonal metadiscourse markers are added to texts, along with first and second person pronouns, the interpersonal function of language will be fulfilled; this fulfillment will help the readers to communicate better with the writer and to have a better understanding of the text and the writer's beliefs and attitudes. With the above

remarks in mind, the purpose of the present study is to make possible better writing assessment and more productive writing instruction by moving away from a focus on formal accuracy and toward more attention to appropriacy regarding metadiscourse knowledge and use.

In the view of the facts stated above, the research questions addressed in this study are as follows:

1. Is there a correlation between linguistic competence and pragmatic competence regarding the use of metadiscourse markers in the writings of Iranian EFL learners? And if there is a correlation, how is it affected by language proficiency?

2. Does writing instruction affect the final performance of students as compared to their initial performance?

3. Is there any correlation between the students' language proficiency scores on the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) and their scores on their final essay writings?

With regard to the research questions, the following hypotheses can be formulated:

1. There is no difference between learners' pragmatic competence in the correct use of metadiscourse markers and their linguistic competence, i.e., their performance on OPT.

2. There is no difference between the initial performance of participants and their final performance on their writing.

3. There is no correlation between the students' language proficiency (OPT scores) and their scores on the final essay writing.

Language Proficiency is defined as follows: A person's skill in using a language for a specific reason. It also refers to the degree of skill with which a person can use a language, such as how well a person can read, write, speak or understand language. (Dictionary of Language and Teaching and Applied Linguistics). Linguistic Competence is defined as "the level of knowledge of a given language necessary for a speaker to be able to produce an infinite number of novel sentences" (Chomsky, 1978). Pragmatic Competence "involves knowledge of conditions and manner of appropriate use, in conformity with various purposes" (Chomsky, 1978).

Literature Review

Anyone learning a second language recognizes that the process involves more than

just acquiring the sounds, the grammar, and the vocabulary of a new language. What is also required is the ability to use the language effectively in a social setting. At the same time, with the advent of the Internet and its ever-increasing use, and with the recognition of English as one of the most widely used languages in the world, comprehensible written English has received considerable attention and has been the focus of many language studies. As a result, most educators, teachers, and parents try to create appropriate situations for students to improve the skills they need for achieving their objective.

Language used in writing, like that used in oral communication, serves three functions – ideational, interpersonal, and textual. To fulfill the interpersonal and textual functions, metadiscourse is the only device which includes those linguistic materials which do not add to propositional content but signal the presence of the author (Vande Kopple, 1988). In other words, metadiscourse helps readers organize, interpret and evaluate the information in a text. The ways of using metadiscourse in writing may vary from one language and culture to another and the conventions of its use are also different in different cultures. From this it follows that, when one engages in writing in a foreign language, new conventions may have to be adopted. Rhetorical conventions followed in the use of metadiscourse may vary in different languages and cultures.

Since written discourse, like oral discourse, is a communicative activity, and seeing that one of the devices that helps this communicative activity to be more effective is the use of metadiscourse markers, it is worthwhile to study metadiscourse in that it sheds light on its own nature, on its possible universality, and on the potential suitability and application of its categories across languages. Such a study helps us better understand the nature of rhetoric and the use of metadiscourse as a rhetorical device in writing (Crismore, Markkanen & Steffensen, 1993). Studying metadiscourse also has practical advantages. It may help explain what problems are involved in its use by foreign language learners. Although Crismore, Vande Kopple, and Meyer (1990), have carried out several studies concerning metadiscourse, it is still a rather new concept to some teachers and researchers.

Metadiscourse appears to constitute a characteristic of a range of languages and genres (Mauranen, 1993; Crismore et al., 1993; Valero-Graces, 1996). It has also been shown to be a critical feature of good ESL/EFL and native English speaker student writing (Intraprawat & Steffensen, 1995; Cheng & Steffensen, 1996),as well as an

essential element of persuasive and argumentative discourse (Crismore & Farnsworth, 1990; Hyland, 1999). Therefore, metadiscourse can be recognized as an important means of facilitating written communication, supporting a writer's position and building a relationship with an audience.

Metadiscourse is also a social, rhetorical instrument which can be used pragmatically to get things done. As such, it is not writing about the subject matter or the propositional content that is being addressed. Rather, it is discoursing about discourse, talking about talk, and talking with readers about writing. When a writer uses metadiscourse, s/he interrupts the primary discourse to comment about the structure of the text and about his/her ideas. Metadiscourse is a set of rhetorical characteristics used to communicate attitudes, and to indicate the structural properties of the content and author's attitude towards it. According to Vande Kopple (1980), metadiscourse is writing that signals the presence of the author and that calls attention to the speech act itself. Thus, metadiscourse is an author's overt or non-covert presence in the discourse in order to direct rather than inform readers.

Different scholars have classified metadiscourse differently. The one which was used in this study was based on Vande Kopple's (1985) classification for metadiscourse (Table 1).

Table 1

Vande Kopple's (1985) original classification system for metadiscourse
or metatextual functions based on Halliday's functions of language

The Textual Function

1. Text connectives (used to connect particular blocks of information to each other).
    - Sequencers (*first, next, in the third place*)
    - Logical / Temporal connectors (*however, thus, at the same time*)
    - Reminders (*As I noted earlier*)
    - Announcements (*I will now develop the idea that*)
    - Topicalizers (*There are/is, as for, in regard to*)

2. Code glosses (used to help readers grasp the meanings of words, phrases or idioms).
    - Defining (*X can be defined as… *)
    - Explaining (*that's to say, namely, in other words*)
    - Delimiting (*to some extent, some what*)

3. Illocution markers (used to make specific the discourse act performed by the author: *I hypothesize that, to sum up, for example, my purpose is*)

4. Narrators (used to let readers know [to inform] who said/wrote something: *Mrs. Wilson announced that, according to Jane, Brown notes that*)

The Interpersonal Function

5. Validity/Modality markers (used to assess certainty and uncertainty of propositional content and the degree of commitment to that assessment).
   - Hedges (*perhaps, possibly, might, would, seem, tends*).
   - Emphatics (*clearly, undoubtedly, it is obvious that, certainly*).
   - Attributors (*according to Einstein*) if used to guide readers to judge or respect the truth-value of propositional content as the author wishes.

6. Attitude markers (used to reveal author attitudes toward the propositional content: *surprisingly, I find it interesting that , it is fortunate that*)

7. Commentary (used to draw readers into an impact dialogue with the author)
   - Comment on reader moods, views, reaction to propositional content (*you may not agree that*)
   - Comment on reading prodecures (*If X, you can skip this chapter; you might wish to read the last section first*)
   - Comment on anticipations for readers (*the following materials may be difficult at first*)
Comment on author/reader relationships (*my friends, dear reader*).

In recent years, there has been an increasing number of studies related to writing because as Chastain (1988) states, writing is a basic communication skill and a unique asset in the process of learning a second language. Although a large number of research studies have already been conducted on the use of syntax in writing, there is still a need for the investigation of other aspects of writing. The reason is that mere syntactic accuracy does not guarantee that a piece of writing is acceptable in English.

Recognizing this fact, the researcher designed a basically descriptive, text-oriented study, once again analyzing a corpus of foreign language learners' written production but viewing them from a pragmatic rhetorical perspective, rather than a purely syntactic one. Given the domain of pragmatics, the focus of analyses was on metadiscourse functions associated with written texts. In analyzing the corpus, the researcher wanted to come up with answers to the research questions, which included the impact of language proficiency on L2 instruction regarding the occurrence of

metadiscourse markers.

Method

Participants

The essays used in this study were written by ninety EFL students, both male and female, aged between twenty to twenty-eight, who were second-year majors in English literature at Isfahan University, in Iran. They had enrolled for an advanced writing course i.e. Essay Writing II, after they had all passed the prerequisite courses in English writing.

Material

To ensure the homogeneity of the subjects, they were tested on the Oxford Placement Test (OPT). According to the result of the OPT, the subjects were divided into three different proficiency groups: upper-intermediate, intermediate, and lower-intermediate. Then, during a one-term period, their essays were collected, and Vande Kopple's (1985) metadiscourse classification was used in order to categorize the metadiscourse markers subjects used in their essays.

Data Collection Procedure

As mentioned above, the present study was text-oriented and involved focusing on the actual written production of a group of Iranian students majoring in English Literature. For this purpose, four argumentative topics were chosen on the basis of the students' need and interest, and with the agreement of the course instructors. The topics in question were selected with a view to fulfilling the requirements for the research questions (see Table 2). In the one-term period, 360 essays were gathered. The number of words, T-units, and metadiscourse markers were counted in each argumentative essay, and means and standard deviations were calculated (Table 3).

Table 2. Topics Assigned

Week 2	1	Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?:" Parents are the best teachers".
Week 4	2	People work because they need money to live. What are some other reasons for which people work? Discuss one or more of these reasons.
Week 6	3	Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "Children should begin learning a foreign language as soon as they start school".
Week 8	4	Some people prefer to spend most of their time alone. Others like to be with friends most of the time. Do you prefer to spend your time alone or with friends? Use specific reasons to support your answer.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for $\overline{X}$, SD Regarding Proficiency Levels

Assessment Type	Proficiency Level	($\overline{X}$) Mean	(SD) Standard Deviation
OPT	Upper-Intermediate	80.73	5.71
	Intermediate	57.73	2.80
	Lower-Intermediate	36.53	5.02
Total T-units	Upper-Intermediate	19.62	6.15
	Intermediate	17.50	5.03
	Lower-Intermediate	16.27	6.79
Total Words	Upper-Intermediate	272.97	77.28
	Intermediate	220.93	66.82
	Lower-Intermediate	197.18	81.68

Findings and Discussion

During the corpus analysis, the number of metadiscourse markers was counted. The frequencies obtained were described in terms of percentages and frequencies, and

then by applying the Chi-square test, a comparison was made to see if the differences were significant. As Table 4 shows, the percentage of metadiscourse markers was 69.9% for the upper-intermediate group: 38.6% belonging to the textual function and 31.3% belonging to the interpersonal function, Figure 1 shows the number of metadiscourse markers in each essay.

Table 4. The Frequency and Percentage of Metadiscourse Markers Concerning Upper-intermediate Group

Composition Topics / Metadiscourse Types	Parents	Work	Language	Being Alone	Total Frequency	Total Percentage
Textual Metadiscourse	586	602	557	592	2357	38.6
Interpersonal Metadiscourse	408	443	442	534	1827	31.3
Total Metadiscourse	994	1045	1019	1126	4184	69.9

$$\alpha <= 0.05 \qquad D.F. = 6$$

Figure 1. Total Frequencies of Metadiscourse Use by Frequencies Upper-intermediate Group for Each Essay Topic
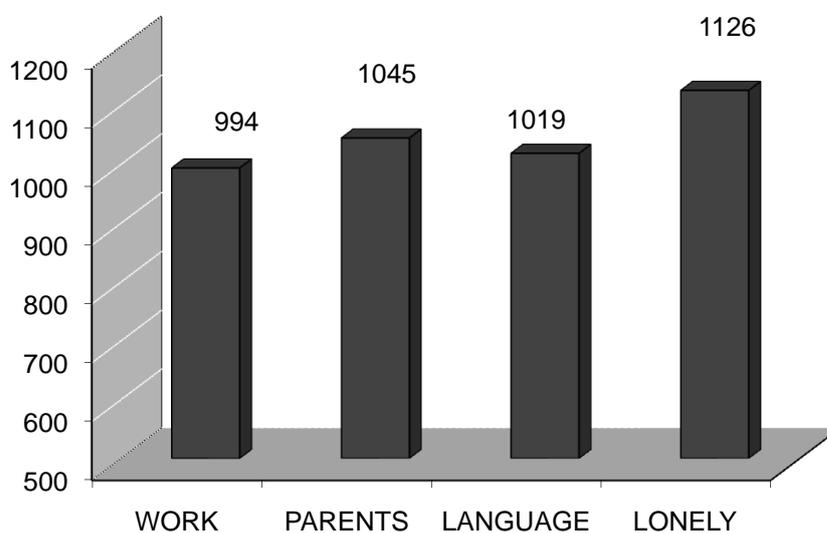
And as Table 5 below shows, the metadiscourse markers use for the intermediate group was 66%: 33.2% belonging to the textual function and 32.8% belonging to interpersonal function. Figure 2 shows the frequency of metadiscourse in each essay.

Table 5. The Frequency and Percentage of Metadiscourse Markers Concerning Intermediate Group

Composition Topics / Metadiscourse	Parents	Work	Language	Being Alone	Total Frequency	Total Percentage
Textual Metadiscourse	486	514	503	524	2027	33.2
Interpersonal Metadiscourse	335	368	386	435	1524	32.8
Total Metadiscourse	821	882	889	959	3551	66

$\alpha <= 0.05$ D.F. = 6

Figure 2. Total Frequencies of Metadiscourse Use by the Intermediate Group for Each Essay Topic
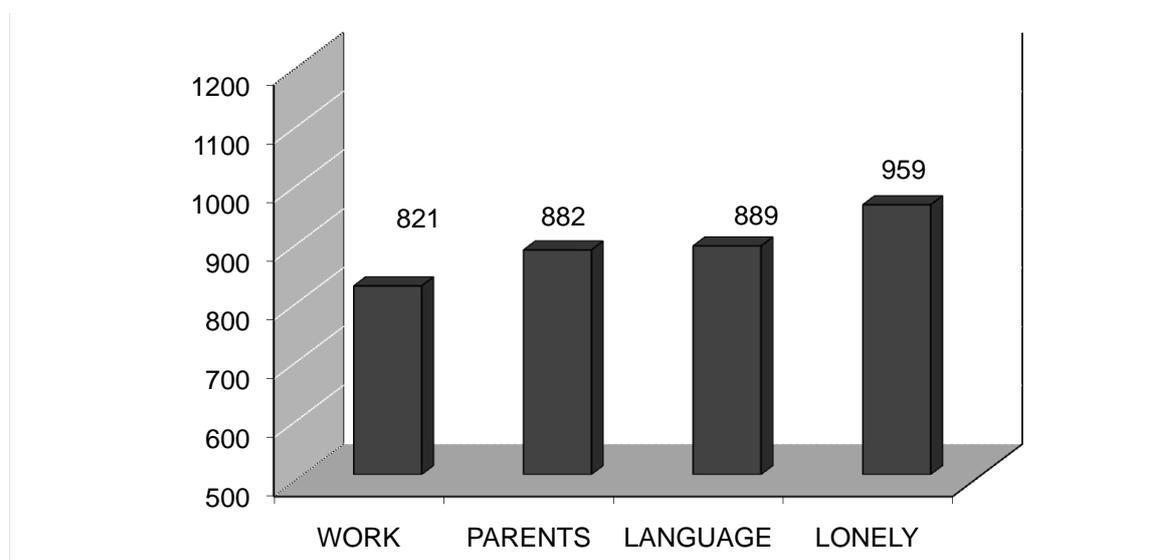
And for the lower-intermediate students, Table 6 below shows that the percentage of metadiscourse markers for this group was 56.2%: 28.2% belonging to the textual function and 28% belonging to interpersonal function. Figure 3 shows the frequency of metadiscourse markers in each

Table 6. The Frequency and Percentage of Metadiscourse Markers Concerning
Lower-intermediate Group

Composition Topics / Metadiscourse Type	Parents	Work	Language	Being Alone	Total Frequency	Total %
Textual Metadiscourse	359	453	399	512	1723	28.2
Interpersonal Metadiscourse	330	268	315	389	1302	28
Total Metadiscourse	689	721	714	901	3025	56.2

$\alpha <= 0.05$

Figure 3. Total Frequecies of Metadiscourse Use by the Lower-intermediate Group
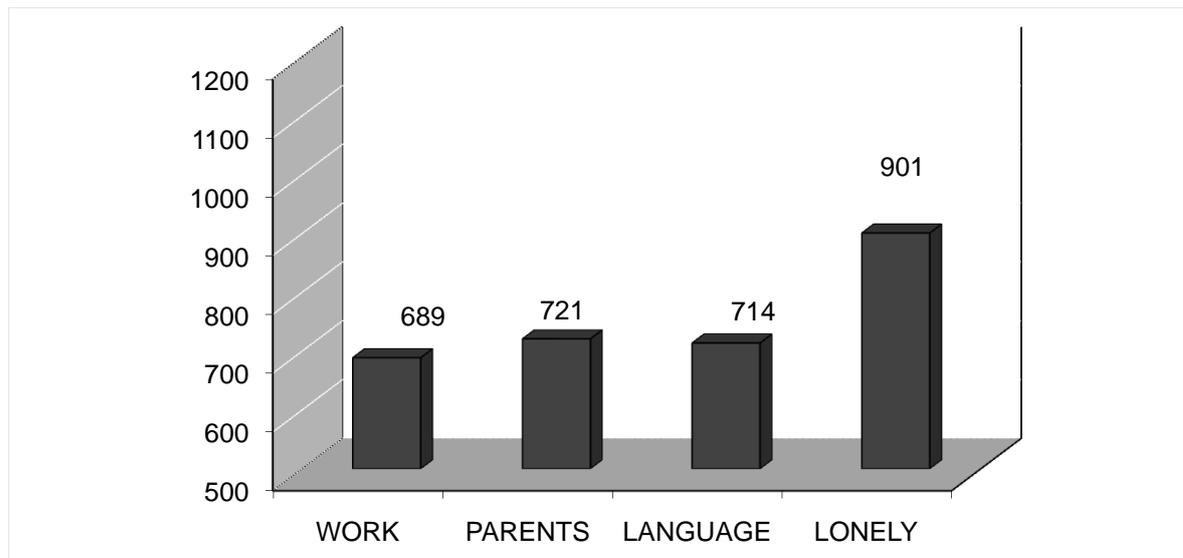
Table 7 below shows the frequency and percentage of metadiscourse markers used by all three groups. As tabulated, the number of metadiscourse markers in the upper-intermediate group is much greater than the number of metadiscourse markers in the intermediate group and the lower-intermediate group. As can be seen, the metadiscourse markers used by the intermediate group outnumbers the ones used by the lower-intermediate group.

Table 7. Comparison of Frequencies and the Total Percentage of Metadiscourse Markers for Each Group

Metadiscourse Type / Proficiency Level		Textual Metadiscourse	Interpersonal metadiscourse	Total Metadiscourse
Upper-intermediate	Frequency	2357	1827	4184
	Percentage	38.6	31.3	69.9
Intermediate	Frequency	2027	152	3551
	Percentage	33.2	32.8	66
Lower- intermediate	Frequency	1723	1302	3025
	Percentage	28.2	28	56.2

D.F = 2 $\alpha <= 0.05$ Critical $X^2 = 5.99$ Chi-square = 187.78

As it can be observed, the number of the textual metadiscourse markers used in the corpus of the three groups is greater than that of the interpersonal metadiscourse markers. This difference means that textual metadiscourse was used far more frequently in this corpus.

In order to illustrate the significance of these differences among the numbers of metadiscourse markers used by the three groups, a Chi-square test was run. The result of the Chi-square test showed that there was a significant difference between the number of metadiscourse markers in the three proficiency groups. The results also show that the difference was correlated to students' proficiency levels, that is, the more proficient the students are, the more they use metadiscourse markers in their writings. According to the findings, therefore, there is a significant relationship between linguistic competence and pragmatic competence in the use of metadiscourse markers. As a result of these findings, the first null hypothesis is rejected.

Also, based on the mean of the frequencies, the subjects were divided into two groups: high-users and low-users. As Table 8 shows, high-users were mostly from the upper-intermediate group while the majority of low-users belonged to the lower-intermediate group. The intermediate group seemed to be divided almost equally into high-and low-users (figure 4).

Table 8. Chi-square: Levels of Proficiency Based on Frequency means of Metadiscourse Use

User Group Proficiency Level	Low-users Frequency Mean	High-users Frequency Mean	Total Frequency Mean
Upper-intermediate	61	118	176
Intermediate	78	84	162
Lower-intermediate	101	38	139
Total	240	240	480

D.F. =2 $\alpha <= 0.05$ Chi-square= 46.92   Critical x^2 =5.99

Figure 4. Low-users and High-users
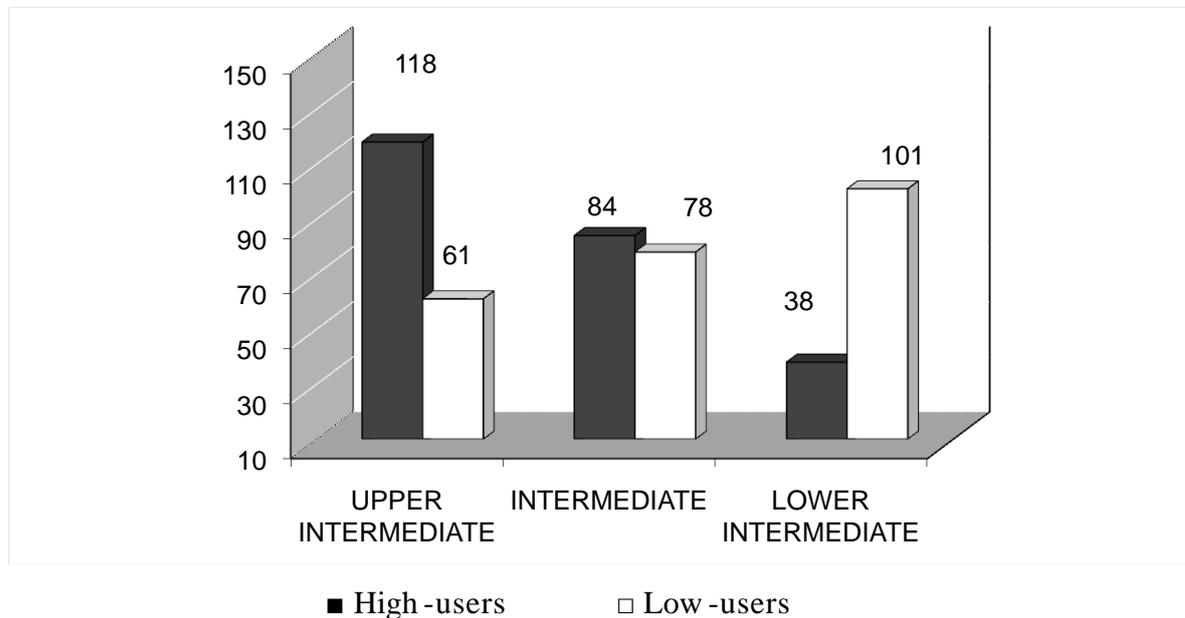
Therefore, this result provides further evidence that we can reject the first null hypothesis. And it can be concluded that the more proficient the learners are, the more they use metadiscourse markers in their writing.

In order to investigate the second null hypothesis, the Chi-square test was run. The frequencies of the use of metadiscourse markers in each essay were used as indicators to measure the degree of improvement in the performance of students over the term of the course (Table 9). On the basis of frequencies of metadiscourse markers used, as the students proceeded through the writing instruction over the term, they made more frequent use of metadiscourse markers (Figure 5). The topics were assigned at different stages of the course. The first topic was "Parents" (week two), "Work" (week four), "Language" (week six) and the last topic was "Being Alone" (week eight).

Table 9. Chi-square: The Frequency of Metadiscourse for All Three Groups

Composition Topics	Frequency
Parents	2504
Work	2648
Language	2662
Being Alone	2986

D.F.= 3 $\alpha <= 0.05$ Chi-square= 47.80   Critical $x^2 = 7.82$

Figure 5. The Total Use of Metadiscourse Markers by All Three Groups
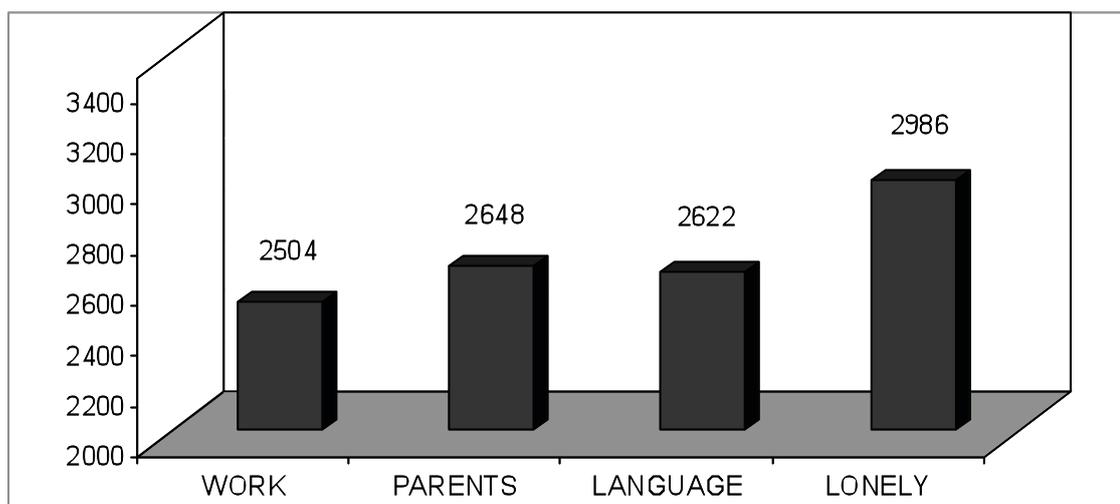
Thus, the second null hypothesis is also rejected, and it can be concluded that writing instruction about metadiscourse use given to the subjects over time has increased the use of metadiscourse markers in their writings. The subjects were given a set of transition devices and they were supposed to use them in their essays. Each session, they were exposed to a new set of transition devices along with the instructor explanation on this regard.

As for the third null hypothesis, a Pearson correlation was run to investigate the correlation between the OPT, language proficiency, and the final essay scores (Table 10). According to the correlation results, it can be concluded that there is a significant correlation between the OPT scores and students' scores on their final essay exam. Therefore, the more proficient learners are in their English language skills, the higher their scores will be on essay writing. And thus the third null hypothesis is also rejected.

Table 10. Correlation: OPT Scores and Final Essay Scores

r-observed	r-critical	D.F.
0.74	0.21	88

Conclusion

Based on the results of the present study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

It was hypothesized at the beginning of the study that there is no relationship between the linguistic competence and the pragmatic competence of Iranian EFL learners in the use of metadiscourse markers in their writing. However, the density of metadiscourse features used by the three groups showed clear quantitative differences, the more proficient the learners are in language, the more they use metadiscourse markers in their writing. These findings lead us to conclude that metadiscourse is a facet of written text that varies with the language proficiency of EFL learners. The findings are also in line with those of Intaraprawat and Steffensen (1995), who discovered that the essays ranked as good contained more metadiscourse features than those that were ranked as poor. With the above consideration in mind, the first null

hypothesis of this study was rejected and there was a relation between language proficiency and the use of metadiscourse markers in the writing of Iranian EFL learners.

As for the second null hypothesis, it was predicted that there is no relation between the writing instruction and the use of metadiscourse markers. The application of a Chi-square test, revealed that writing instruction had a positive effect on the use of metadiscourse markers. Since the essays were collected during a one-term period, a kind of improvement was observed in the corpus regarding the use of metadiscourse markers when the initial performance of the learners was compared with their final one. As a result, the second null hypothesis was also rejected.

By employing a Pearson correlation, the researcher realized that there was a positive correlation between the language proficiency (i.e. OPT scores) of learners and their scores on the final essay writing. This results means that the more proficient the learners are in language, the more proficient they are also in essay writing and therefore get better scores. As a result, the third null hypothesis was rejected, too.

The present study suggests that writers, teachers, and researchers of discourse should become more aware of metadiscourse. For as Micheal Halliday has frequently pointed out, learning to control the expression of textual and interpersonal relationship in a text is just as crucial to rhetorical and educational success as learning to control the expression of content. It is necessary here to add the additional need to understand metadiscourse as a dimension of rhetoric in writing because of the empowering benefits it may have for today's writers and their readers (Crismore and Farnsworth, 1989).

According to studies done by Cheng and Steffensen (1996) and Intaraprawat and Steffensen (1995), one of the techniques that teachers could opt for in order to enable students to use metadiscourse properly would be to raise their awareness of sociopragmatic and pragmatic linguistic concepts. Another technique for improving the writing of EFL/ESL learners in regard to metadiscourse use is to encourage and assign them to write to a real audience in the target culture. Doing this makes writing in English interesting, challenging and educational for EFL learners. This study and its results will also have pedagogical implications for teachers, syllabus designers, writers, and researchers.

In sum, not everyone becomes a great writer. However, everyone can learn to write better and to write well organized, flowing essays with a clear language. Focusing on

grammar and sentence structure alone is not the key to making better EFL/ESL student writer. Students must also be given what any writer needs: an understanding of their capacity to write, motivation, self-confidence and courage and instruction in knowledge about the appropriate use of metadiscourse as well as other rhetorical strategies.

Acknowledgement

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Appendix I: Sample of Essays
Upper-intermediate Group
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Parents Are The Best Teachers".

The Word teacher always reminds us of classes and formal situations, where we have to sit down quietly and just down as quickly as we can and then giving all the information we have already received back at the time of examinations. Now, to discuss the already represented matter that our parents are our best teachers, we should at first consider the characteristics of a good teacher.

Calling a person as our teacher is a very general claim and may cover many aspects. Necessarily and very simply, one of the ways we can call a person our teacher is when he or she teaches something to you, or you learn something from that person. Now, this teaching, considered by itself, may be in different way, and logically its worth differs according to its kind. All of us know people whom we haven't even visited directly, but we have chosen them as our teachers and have put ourselves as their disciples, for instance, take a woman singer, a favorite woman singer with many fanatic supporters; all of her attributes: the way she dresses, the mark of cosmetics she uses, and whatever you can think of would be immediately by a large number of girls and ladies. But we have many times heard this proverb that: "out of sight, out of mind"; real teachers are those we have felt their presence on our heart and mind; people who have left a long-lasting effect on our way of life, people exactly like our parents. From the very beginning day we pace toward this world of subtleties, they are our parents who guide us and lead us.

At the moment, there is another important aspect of a good teacher, one who makes it outstanding. Sometimes we learn one or more formula from somebody, and sometimes there are cases that a person's behavior or his lessons show us the path of our life; as if we had lost something and they represented it to us. Then, at this sense when we fully ponder, we come to this conclusion that they are our best teachers. They sincerely dedicated each piece of their invaluable experience that they have already got. They are our faithful teachers.

The third point is the issue of patience and impatience. To clarify this point, suppose, for example, you are sitting at your desk in the classroom, you ask your teacher a question or something that has already been discussed. Then, the teacher eagerly begins explaining the question and simplifying it in an understandable way for you. Now, imagine the second time or even the third time that somebody ask him/her the same question, he/she may be send you out of the classroom and gets angry. On the contrary, parents will answer the same questions again and again without getting angry or upset.

On the whole, there are many situations that we call a person our teacher and we can see that there are no people like our parents who can play the role of teacher in the best way. Even God said to obey and respect them and disobey only when they are misleading you, but even then you must respect them, since they are your parents and your great teachers.

Intermediate Group
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Parents Are The Best Teachers".

Learning is a major subject in each person's life and parents play a big role as teachers. Their teaching role is important because children spend most of their time with them. On the other hand, children are influenced by their parents.

Parents can work with their children and help them to learn so many things in different ways. They can direct them in the best way by encouraging and understanding them. Sometimes, children do not know what is the best or how to get the best results. They are confused and here parents can direct them and show the way.

Children are immature, so they can be influenced by their parents personalities. They see them and analyze them in their minds. They look at what their parents do and try to be like them, because they think parents are doing the right thing. Therefore, parents should be very careful about their own behavior.

At last, I think each person base of personality and behavior depends a lot on his/her teachers at home. Parents should a good model for their children in order to be good teachers for them.

Lower-intermediate Group
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Parents Are The Best Teachers".

What is the meaning of teacher? Do you know its meaning? Teacher is a person who gives knowledge or skill of something to someone. According to this definition, anybody who gives information can be a teacher. What about parents? I think parents are good teachers in many ways, they can help us and guide us with their experiences.

When a baby is born, first persons who see him/her are their parents. The baby spends a lot of time with them at home, park, party and so on. Thus, he/she could get influenced from their parents. For example, when baby becomes two years old, she/he likes to imitate his/her parents' behavior, even if the behavior is wrong. So, parents should be very careful about their actions, and behaviors.

As a rule, many people believe that behavior of children at school is the reflection of what they have learnt at home by the parents. This shows that mother and fathers have important role in training their children and they can act as good teachers if they want.

Generally, the character of human being is changeable and parents have strong power to change it in the way they want, but they must be very careful how to do it to get the best results.

Upper-intermediate Group
People work because they need money to live. What are some other reasons for which people work? Discuss one or more of these reasons.

Why do we work? Do we do it only because of money? Or because of some other reasons as well? Some experts say that as men are instinctively indolent, they have no natural keenness to work and it's only the necessity of obtaining money that compel

them to do it. On the other hand, some other adepts and scholars believes that there are some other reasons like tendency to social activities, likeness toward being independent and effort toward exploring and pondering their personalities which stimulate them to work and this is my own view that, "working is the best enjoyment".

To begin with psychology, all human like to attend ceremonies, to know and find new friends, to invite their relatives and to be invited. In their own opinion, there is a weird enjoyment I associating with their new and old friends. And therefore, working as one means of communication assists them to fill and satisfy this need better.

The second reason is mainly related to one of the dimensions of human being's spirit and one of the aspects of their instinct and that independence. At first, it may seem some how against or opposed to the former view, but it's not only different from it, but also it serves as strong justification to prove it better. To clarify this matter, suppose you are hungry, sitting at table and enjoying yourself and at the same time enjoying being among your family at the time of lunch. So generally speaking you like to be in a group and by nature you want be independent as well.

The last reason is somehow related to the man's experience and as said "working is the best man-making activity". Working, indirectly, helps us to know our potential powers and abilities better. We learn a lot through out our working and we acquire valuable lessons that are helpful for our lives.

Then, generally considered, it is not only need of wealth and better life condition that forces man to work, but there are some spiritual reasons such as enjoyment, pleasure and dealing better with problems we face in our lives. And the tendency to know and develop their inner abilities. So working is a divine blessing which has been bestowed on human beings.

Lower-Intermediate Group
People work because they need money to live. What are some other reasons for which people work? Discuss one or more of these reasons.

We have plenty of time and can fill it by several activities. The first advantage of working is that we can   spend our time in the best way and not to waste it. Another advantage is not being bored and also being healthy by working.

Scientific studies have been made of street-corner society, out of which crime inevitably develops. It is a society with a lot of spare or free time, without any work or doing something useful. This society does not need an evil to find bad behavior for such idle hands to do. They will spontaneously desire to do something. Muscles have a life of their own unless they are trained to purposeful actions like work. Activities such as working are the best to spend time in a useful way.

Not being bored or less bored is another advantage of working. If you want not to be bored you should do some kind of activities that it can be mental or physical, you need to do something in order to be active, for example, going to park, doing exercise, hunting and etc. So working can be one of this activities that you can do to fill your spare time. Working also can be good for your health. When you work, you will be active , both mentally or physically, that it is good both for your brain and your body.

Spending time in the best way and not wasting is a good way to be bored and remaining healthy. Also you can earn money and working is very important to the extend that our prophet kissed the hand of a worker.

Upper-Intermediate Group

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "Children should begin learning a foreign language as soon as they start school".

There is no doubt that in this world of communication, to know a foreign language is absolutely essential. Without knowing a foreign language, a person would be incapable of making international communication. Then, due to the importance of this matter, the need to learn a foreign language from a very early age is felt. Learning a foreign language has many advantages such as breaking the fear of learning a new language, and the capability of making a mutual bilingual system in their minds.

The first advantages of learning a foreign language from childhood is shaping a deep-seated basis of that language; more clearly said, the longer you are involved in a matter the better you can cope with it. Then the advantage is vividly felt when comparing two men of twenty years old, one started learning from seven and another started from twelve or thirteen. Then, on the whole, having a basic, established background of that language helps them to learn it much more easily at later years.

The second reason of starting language from childhood is the break of prevalent fear. Both experiments of linguistics and experience of ourselves in connection with learners of a foreign language have proved this matter. When a teenager starts learning a foreign language at the age of 13 or 14, at school, he feels it weird, strange and harrowing and that is due to the lack of any acquaintance with that language. Therefore, he takes arm against it, and knows it as a foe that should be avoided. Gradually, this feeling- specially when the teacher is inexperienced as well- causes a casual, almost naught, knowledge and learning of that language.

The third proof of the advantage of learning a second language at school is its assistance in making a mutual bilingual system in the minds of students. The importance of a mutual bilingual system is most clearly felt in speaking. In children who starts learning a foreign language from 7 or 8, an inevitable shoulder by shoulder system of two languages is made; therefore, when we want to declare their aim in a foreign language, they do not need a long period of thinking to make words and sentences one by one, because of this system, intuitively words come to their minds and they say it. Yet, on the other hand, a person who has started it from, for instance, 13 or 14, as the system of first language is much more stronger and deep-seated than the second, and as there is no preliminary background in his mind, he will have many pauses and stops in his speaking; and this is because of translational lingual system of speaking instead of mutual bilingual system. It means, he at first translates his aim from first language to the second one, and then again tries to arrange it.

On the whole, as we see, there are many proofs and reasons that show how learning a foreign language from childhood assists us learn and experience it much more effectively, and speak it and communicate with it much more easily. Then, thank those parents who make their children do this.

Intermediate Group
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "Children should begin learning a foreign language as soon as they start school".

During the history, people always communicate with each other. At first, primitive people communicated with gestures of hand but later they invented language. Language has an important role in our communication with other people and express ourselves. Learning first language does not need to be taught and we can learn it spontaneously but if we want to learn another language we need some one teach that to us, learning a foreign language is better to be started at earlier age, in childhood, because in childhood we can learn everything sooner and easier and this can help us for further learning.

The first reason for learning a foreign language in childhood is that in that time a child can learn everything faster and the range of learning is so much but when the child grows up the range of learning become less than before and things will be forgotten soon but things that are learnt in childhood will remain in our minds for a long time.

The other reason is that this learning can help us for further learning in some courses. When we learn a foreign language in childhood we will be familiar with that language and after that when we should learn that language we know many things about it and we can learn it faster and much more easily than the one who did not learn it before and do not have any experience about it.

These are two reasons for my agreement with learning a foreign language in childhood but it has other benefits for either the child or the society and today we see that children are learning English in kindergarten and they learn to speak with each other in English. So, I think it is a good program and it must be continued for all the children.

Lower-Intermediate Group

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "Children should begin learning a foreign language as soon as they start school".

What is the best time for learning second language? Do you think it is better to learn them in low ages or delay it to the higher ages? I think children should begin learning a foreign language as soon as they start school because of using their abilities in low ages, learning better than adults and standing forever.

The best reason for learning a foreign language in low ages is the ability of the children. Children have high ability. They should use their abilities. If they do not use their abilities, their brains are closed. The faculties not used in childhood, never be available in future. The children must not waste their faculties and they should use their situations to the best.

The second reason for this claim is that the children learn better than the others. The experience showed that children learn better than adults. Children's minds usually have been prepared to accept the new information. So if we want to train our children something, it is better to train it in low ages. Their brain automatically work and record the information.

The last reason for preferring learning in low ages is that it stands forever in

mind. The phenomenon that happen in childhood is more constant than the other ages. Because in this period of time children's minds are free and fresh. Because they are not engaged in problems of life yet.

So, all of us know that we should develop children's brain and the best time for training them the second language as soon as they start school, for learning better and it remains in their minds forever. Also they use their abilities in the best way.

Upper-Intermediate Group

Some people prefer to spend most of their time alone. Others like to be with friends most of the time. Do you prefer to spend your time alone or with friends? Use specific reasons to support your answer.

To be in groups or not to be in groups, that is the question. Tendency to be alone or to be in groups has always been the point of arguments and many discussions. Some people, mainly due to the specific construction of their personalities, favor to be among people and spend their time enjoying participating in activities. Some people, on the other hand, like to be left alone. Usually the reasons which are represented for their tendency to be left alone are: the tendency to have independent personality, the question and urgency of their work, and the matter of self-consciousness.

The first reason why some people tend to run a solitary life is that among groups, they fell themselves as dependent animals which are controlled by leaders or heads of small groups, and correspondingly by propagandas in lager masses. They believe that among people in masses, there are specific persons who own a feeling of leadership and mastery and consequently a willing to take command of other members of group; and others inevitably surrender to their thoughts and utterly miss their own sense. Generally speaking, in their opinion, being alone gives them a sense of satisfaction and individual independence.

The second reason of people who like to be alone is the question of their jobs. Some people are not personally tending to solitude and even they like to attend among people; but they have to be alone to cope with their tasks and responsibilities. They usually have a kind of job which urges them to work in solitude; consequently, as their work requires, they will not be among groups.

The last reason and may be the most significant reason of loneliness of people who like it is the matter of self-perception and self-consciousness. Although it's most often thought that the knowledge of one's ability and talents is made probable by participating in different activities; this group, on the contrary, believe that as in group, there is a cooperation and division in tasks between the members of that team. Then, most of the time, that piece of work that is left for them is not their favorable activity. Therefore, in their opinion, not only it does not help them to flourish their hidden gifts, but it even hinders and devastate it gradually.

After all, in addition to above noted reasons, like giving a feeling of independence, and its assistance in self-perception. There are many other factors involved. On the whole, being alone makes it possible for us to look at our environment with naked eyes and for everyone who succeeds in this issue, it will be a great luxury and of a great genius.

Intermediate Group

Some people prefer to spend most of their time alone. Others like to be with friends most of the time. Do you prefer to spend your time alone or with friends? Use specific reasons to support your answer.

In relation to our subject, people can be divided into two groups: introverts and extroverts. In contrast with extroverts, introverts prefer most of their times to be alone. Although I am fond of being with friends, I like my solitude very much.

Being with friends is enjoyable, but sometimes, it would become boring. Two or three hours a day would be desirable for me to spend time with my friends; but it takes my energy and gives nothing in return. At this moment, I feel tiredness and upset.

Furthermore, there are some times that I need to be with myself. I feel that I would like to sing, write down poems, paint, or do something meaningless. I do all of them to rebuild my missed-energy. But most of my friends not only do not like these work but they ridicule me. So, I prefer to be alone.

Although I like to be with my friends, but after that I need some time to be alone. I think I am born only one time and I must use most of my time to do my favor activities and pass this unpleasant life in the most pleasant way.

Enhancing Oral Participation Across the Curriculum:
Some Lessons from the EAP Classroom

John Trent
Hong Kong Institute of Education

Bio Data:

Dr. John Trent is currently involved in the delivery of teacher education courses at the undergraduate and postgraduate level in Hong Kong. His research interests focus on classroom interaction, language policy and spoken discourse.

Abstract

Internationally, English is increasingly being adopted as the language of post-secondary education. In Asia however efforts by universities to promote the use of the English language both inside and outside the classroom may be threatened by the supposed reticence of Asian learners. This paper problematizes Chinese learners alleged reticence by examining how one group of undergraduates at an English medium of instruction university in Hong Kong were able to meet the demands placed upon them for participation in spoken activities within their English for academic purposes classroom. Interviews with students and teachers, classroom observations, audiovisual recordings of classroom interaction and documentary analysis were used to understand how students participated in classroom discussion. The results suggest that learners adopted particular oral roles and drew upon a range of resources in ways that enabled them to conceptualize participation in classroom discussion as, in part, the result of learner agency. Implications for classroom practices in content classrooms traditionally dominated by a transmission mode of teaching are discussed.

Keywords: classroom discourse, reticence, language across the curriculum.

Introduction

Internationally, English is increasingly being adopted as the language of post-secondary education (Coleman, 2006; Phillipson, 2006.) In Hong Kong, the role of the English language in tertiary education was underlined in a 2004 review of language education at the University of Hong Kong, an English medium of instruction (EMI) institution. Emphasis was placed on the need for language enhancement and proficiency, an outcome closely linked to the use of the English language: "English should be the lingua franca for all formal and informal communication throughout the

university" (University of Hong Kong, 2004, p. 9). To attain this goal it was argued that "measures should be taken to encourage students to use English as a medium of spoken and written communication on campus" (University of Hong Kong, 2004, p. 31). However, encouraging the use of spoken English amongst Chinese learners, both inside and outside the classroom, is likely to be especially challenging. For example, the review of language education at the university conceded that "the amount of time students spent on communicating in English in class is…very limited" (University of Hong Kong, 2004, p. 10). This conclusion resonates with research describing the supposed reticence of second and foreign language learners to participate in oral interaction in both language and content classrooms (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Jackson, 2002). In the case of learners from Asian educational backgrounds, participation in classroom discussion is thought to be especially problematic (Cheng, 2000; Flowerdew & Miller, 1995; Jackson, 2002; Kim, 2006; Tsui, 1996). The move from transmission based instruction to active learning in higher education, including interactive discussion formats, means that this supposed reticence threatens not only the implementation of language policy at EMI institutions it also potentially undermines the academic success of learners. This paper investigates how the gap between espoused language policy and policy in use (Li et al, 2001) might be narrowed by examining oral language use amongst one group of undergraduate learners within the EAP classroom at the University of Hong Kong. The results are of interest to researchers, teachers and policy makers involved in the formulation and implementation of language policies at EMI tertiary institutions.

Literature review

This section reviews the reasons for the apparent reticence of second language learners that have been identified by previous research. One approach to the investigation of learner reticence locates the alleged problem at the level of the individual student or teacher. Horwitz et al (1996) maintain that learners of foreign languages frequently fear speaking in class, are concerned about being seen as less competent than their peers and are apprehensive about making mistakes in the target language. Other investigations foreground the language proficiency of learners. Cheng (2000) believes that "if Asian students have fewer problems with language, both in perception and production, they are more likely to take active roles in the class" (p. 444). Tsui's (1996) survey of secondary English language teachers in Hong

Kong reveals the widespread presence of reticence as the result of the low English language proficiency of students, a fear amongst learners of making mistakes, the teachers' dislike of silence in the classroom and tendency to ask questions of brighter students, as well as the inability of students to comprehend the instructions and questions of their teachers. Jackson (2002) examined participation by undergraduates of Business Studies in classroom discussion at one EMI university in Hong Kong. The most reticent students argued that their lack of participation reflected a fear of making mistakes, a lack of confidence and the language barrier. Business studies instructors concurred, maintaining that student participation in classroom discussion is constrained partly by the learners' limited English language proficiency and by their fear of speaking. More recently, Evans and Green (2007) report the results of a questionnaire survey of 4932 undergraduates across all departments at one English medium university in Hong Kong. Sixty percent of students indicated that they experienced difficulty in speaking accurately in English, while 40% suggested that communicating ideas fluently is difficult. Evans and Green (2007) conclude that "inadequate basic language competence results in a lack of confidence as students struggle to accomplish macro-linguistic tasks of a complex nature" (P. 15).

Moving beyond the level of the individual learner or teacher, other explanations of reticence address the role of cultural factors (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Flowerdew & Miller, 1995; Ferris and Tagg, 1996; Jones, 1999). Jones (1999), for instance, argues that compared to language proficiency, "cultural background is an equal and possibly more important cause of NNS (non-native speaker) reticence or silence" (p. 257). Cultural variables that are thought to underpin the alleged reticence of Chinese students include a collectivist culture in Chinese society, the traditional roles assigned to teachers and students (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996), the need to maintain face and a learning style that traditionally values memorization and rote learning (Flowerdew & Miller, 1995).

The perception of Chinese learners as reticent in the classroom has however been challenged by other research. Kember (2000), for instance, reports on the introduction of alternative teaching and learning methods, including problem-based learning, group projects and peer teaching, across eight universities and colleges in Hong Kong. Evaluation of the project, through questionnaires and interviews with participants, indicated strong student support. Kember (2000) concludes that "the impression that Hong Kong students prefer passive learning and resist teaching

innovations can have little or no foundation" (p. 110). Lee (1999) reaches a similar conclusion in her study of tutorial discussions at one higher education institution in Hong Kong. Based upon interviews with 22 Chinese undergraduate students enrolled in a variety of disciplines, Lee (1999) reports that learners expect to participate equally with their tutor in discussions and are aware of the need to give opinions and to respond to others. Lee (1999) believes that these results cast "some light on the misperception in the literature that 'Chinese students do not participate in discussion'" (p. 263). Kennedy (2002) notes that Chinese learners might be regarded as reflective rather than passive, with much interaction between teacher and student taking place outside the classroom. However as these studies rely primarily on interviews, questionnaires and surveys of previous research, there is potential for discrepancy between what students report about their involvement in classroom discussion and what takes place within the classroom itself. To address this concern, the study reported here undertook empirical research within language classrooms to better understand how one group of Chinese learners participated in discussion activities. To investigate the alleged reticence of Chinese learners in the classroom and how one group of students met the need for oral participation in the classroom, the data collection and analysis was guided by the following research question:

How can participation by Chinese second language learners in undergraduate classroom discussion be promoted at EMI tertiary institutions?

Method

This study investigates participation in classroom discussion by one group of Chinese second language learners at an EMI tertiary institution in Hong Kong. The experiences of a small number of learners and their teachers are examined within classroom contexts to reveal the participants' definition of the situation. A feature of this type of research is that the researcher is encouraged to use triangulation. Therefore, to better understand learners' participation in classroom discussion, as well as the thoughts and feelings of both teachers and students about this participation, data were collected using interviews, questionnaires and classroom observation over an entire semester.

Context and participants

The study was conducted at the University of Hong Kong, an English medium tertiary level institution in Hong Kong. The primary participants were eight first year Chinese undergraduate students, four males and four females, from the Department of Economics and Finance and two English language teachers from the English Centre at the university. At the time of this study the eight students were enrolled in a compulsory one semester English for academic purposes course entitled 'English for Academic Communication: Economics and Finance' (hereafter EAC). Two English teachers responsible for the delivery of EAC classes were asked to participate in the study on the basis of their prior experience in teaching this course. Another group of participants included six instructors from the Department of Economics and Finance who were experienced in the delivery of lectures and tutorials to first year undergraduate students. In this paper the names of all participants are pseudonyms.

Data collection

Multiple methods of data collection were used. I observed four EAC classes, two conducted by each of the language teachers who participated in the study, for 12 weeks throughout Semester 1 of the 2005-2006 academic year. Interviews were also conducted with both the students and their teachers. An initial interview was conducted with students and EAC teachers seeking background biographical information as well as their thoughts and feelings about participating in classroom discussion. Both the students and EAC teachers were also interviewed every week through the semester in which they reported their immediate reactions to each class. I also interviewed economics instructors once to determine their views on the oral participation of their first year students within the economics classroom. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. In addition, audiovisual recordings were made of two EAC classes throughout Week Five to Week Nine of the semester. Selected segments of the audiovisual material which were thought to be helpful in answering the research questions discussed above were transcribed. Finally, the data base also included relevant documents such as statements of university language policy, the undergraduate prospectus, the EAC course handbook as well as classroom handouts.

Data analysis

Data collection and analysis were closely linked in an iterative and on-going process that occurred throughout the entire semester in which the study was conducted. Initial coding of data involved the search for themes across the set of data that was being collected. These themes were initially represented using "indigenous concepts" (Patton, 2002, p. 454) employed by the participants themselves. As data were read and re-read more theoretical categories emerged, such as 'modes of participation' and 'resources for participation'. Data was coded according to these theoretical categories and tentative propositions were developed with the aim of constructing a coherent understanding of classroom discourse as it was experienced by the participants in this study. These emerging understandings were then tested against the data by searching for alternative explanations and negative cases. This was assisted by the steps taken to triangulate data sources and methods of collection. This allowed for data to be compared across different sources and locations – teachers, students and classes - as well as through different methods of collection - interviews, observations and classroom documents.

Findings

The role of speaking in content and language classrooms

The data revealed complex relationships between language, learning and students' participation in spoken activities within language and content classrooms. Student participation in classroom discussion appears to be highly valued by the economics as well as the English language teachers. All of the economics instructors, for instance, spoke of the importance of students' oral participation in the classroom as a medium for learners to challenge and question economic theory and practice. One economics instructor, Kenneth, summarized this view: "students should be discussing things, getting behind some of the issues and asking the good questions" (interview, 12/9/05). In practice, however, all of the economics teachers conceded that their own individual classrooms are frequently dominated by a transmission mode of delivery. When asked to reflect on the tutorials she conducted, Debbie, an economics instructor, reported that "most of our tutorials are rather one-way, I would just teach this, and then the students just sit there and absorb the thing" (interview 29/9/05). Reasons offered by the economics teachers include large class size, the shyness of Hong Kong students, learners' limited English language proficiency and lack of content knowledge.

Turning to the language classroom, English for Academic Communication (EAC) appears to leave students with little choice over whether or not to participate in such discussion; 40% of assessment in EAC is based on oral tasks and activities while the remaining 60% is comprised of various written tasks. These institutional requirements for student participation in classroom discussion were supported and reinforced by the beliefs of both EAC teachers about the role students should fulfill within the classroom. As one EAC teacher, Karen, explains:

> I would like them (students) to participate in class. I would like them to raise questions. I think participating in class is very important. I would like them to share opinions and encourage other people. (Karen, interview 8/9/05)

The other EAC teacher, Anne, agreed, arguing that students "should be contributing to classroom discussion, we place a lot of emphasis on that in every class" (Anne, interview 10/9/05). Given the apparent importance of students' oral participation in EAC, the remainder of this section explores how one group of Chinese learners negotiated the requirements for spoken discourse that confronted them within their undergraduate language classroom.

Learners' participation in the EAC classroom

EAC students argued that their participation in spoken activities represented an important part of their identity as members of the EAC classroom community:

> It (EAC) is really a spoken class, so for students in EAC, we need to actively reply to the teachers' questions and to talk with the classmates. (Pauline, EAC student, interview 16/9/05)

> Students should all be active in class. I think we (students) need to take all the chances to speak that the teacher gives us. (Victor, EAC student, interview 20/9/05)

> As a member of this class (EAC) I should listen to the teacher, ask questions and be willing to discus the topics with other students. (Ivy, EAC student, interview

Learners were positioned as active oral participants in EAC partly as a result of the

classroom practices of both of the English language teachers. For example, Karen's classroom talk made it clear that an active oral role for students was an essential part of her expectations about classroom relations. Students were required not only to respond to inquiries from the teacher but to take responsibility for the learning outcomes of the entire group. Karen frequently expressed the belief that "we (the class) learn more if we work together" (EAC classroom observation), often urging her students to "help each other, don't rely on me" (EAC classroom observation). The other language teacher, Anne, developed several small group tasks that required students to teach each other core components of the syllabus, such as how to cite and refer to material within an academic essay (EAC classroom observation). Anne used this approach because she believed it helped overcome the shyness some students might initially feel, describing how her students "really get into it (oral discussion) if they have to do the teaching for a change" (Anne, interview 20/9/05).

The students appeared to welcome the role of active classroom participant because of the confidence it gave them. Reflecting on one oral task, Elizabeth suggested that "we (students) just don't have time to be shy and nervous, we just have to go around and teach each other that material, talk to each group and move on because they're relying on us to do a good job of the explanation" (Elizabeth, EAC student, interview 13/11/05). Another student, Amanda, spoke of the freedom this provided: "the teachers just give you the bones of the topic you need to develop what you say and how you say and it just makes the whole class a lot more freedom for us and more interesting and fun, so coming to this class doesn't feel like a chore" (Amanda, EAC student, interview 26/10/05).

Resources for participation

In the EAC classroom oral fluency, rather than linguistic accuracy, appeared to be highly valued by both EAC teachers. As Anne explained:

> I've never seen the fact that their (students') language use is not good as a bad thing. I say wow; the fact that they're out there saying it is a good thing. (Anne, EAC teacher, interview 27/9/05)

Karen also placed a premium on fluency, encouraging her students to "make all the (linguistic) mistakes you want here (in the classroom)" (classroom observation 20/9/05). The emphasis on fluency meant that EAC students' participation in

classroom discussion was not defined entirely in terms of their linguistic capability. Rather, students were able to draw upon a broad range of knowledge, skills and experiences to support their participation in spoken interaction. Particularly important was the knowledge and understanding of economics and finance that learners brought to the EAC classroom. For example, in the following small group discussion within the EAP classroom, one student, Patrick, outlines the reasons for his choice of 'investment' as the topic for an assessed individual oral presentation each student was required to make to the class:

Patrick: My topic is about value investment
Student 1: Value investment.
Patrick: Yeh.
Student 2: So professional.
Patrick: You know who is Warren Buffett?
Student 2: The second richest man in the world.
Patrick: Yeh, yeh.
Student 3: Oh really.
Patrick: So what he is using is value investment.
Student 2: What is value investment?
Patrick: Value investment is that he chooses some share that the company is potential to grow in the future that means the company is really good but the value of the share price is understated.
Student 2: Doesn't reflect their value?
Student 4: Underestimated price?
Patrick: Yeh.
Student 3: Oh.
Student 1: Do you have some shares that you describe?
Patrick: Yeh Petro China.
Student 1: Do you want to buy now?
Patrick: Yeh.
Student 2: How much have you invested?
Patrick: A few thousand.
Student 1: IPO or secondary market?
Patrick: Yeh, secondary market.
Student 1: What is the price that you paid lower than Warren Buffett?
Patrick: Warren Buffett bought at two dollars per share I was three point something.
Student 2: What's the price now?
Patrick: Six   point   something.
Student 3: I see.
Student 1: It is a great profit.
Student 4: 100 per cent.
Student 2: What's his expectation on the price?
Student 1: Unfortunately Petro China stock price falls to five point zero five point nine zero today.
Student 2: Now?
Student 1: Yes, because Hang Seng Index has fallen 200 points.

> Student 4: Yes, below 15,000.
> Student 3: Really?
> Patrick: Why I choose this topic is because my dream is to become [ ] Warren Buffett.
> Student 3: Chinese Warren Buffett.
> (EAC classroom recording 19/10/05)

The way in which Patrick links his participation in EAP classroom discourse to the use of discipline specific language and knowledge provides his oral contribution with a degree of credibility; as one student noted, his topic appeared to be "so professional". In addition, all members of the group were able to share in this credibility as each introduced and displayed knowledge in the use of specialized terminology. This included references to shares, the Hang Seng Index, underestimated price, buying and selling prices, IPO, and the secondary market. Furthermore, Patrick was able to establish his professional credibility with the group by reporting what was described as a "great profit" from his investment activities. By drawing upon their disciplinary expertise, learners, both as individuals and as a group, were able to create opportunities to shape the products and processes of classroom discourse in ways that did not appear to be available to them in the Economics classroom.

Perceptions of participation

EAC learners' perceptions about their participation in classroom discourse appear to be partly shaped by the degree of control they believed they were able to exercise over the processes and outcomes of their investments in classroom discourse. The perception of control appeared to take two related forms; 'freedom from' teachers control over the products and processes of oral interaction and 'freedom to' shape these products and processes in ways that they themselves determined. First, all learners reported appreciating the oral independence and freedom that their teachers approach to classroom discourse permitted them:

> I like to be given space to think independently (of the teacher). (Ivy, EAC student, interview 13/10/05)

> Speaking in this class (EAC), it's a very free environment, its not a chore when you come to class and everyone's just having fun and I think that's the best environment if you're trying to learn a new language. (Victor, EAC student, interview 30/9/05)

Another student, Amanda, endorsed these views, going on to argue that freedom meant limited teacher involvement in the processes and outcomes of discussion:

> The teacher doesn't give you all the straight answers, like what to do - do this, do that - but just gives you an outline and then you can explore everything that you want to talk about. (Amanda, EAC student, interview 16/10/05)

These comments underline the importance for these learners of *'freedom from'* teacher control of the processes and outcomes of classroom discourse. A second closely related theme was control over decision-making. Rather than referring to 'freedom from' teachers' control, this category describes learners' 'freedom to' take control of a range of decisions before and during their participation in classroom discussions. Four learners mentioned that they welcomed the opportunity to make their own decisions in relation to what and how discussion proceeded in the EAC classroom. Pauline suggested that one particularly enjoyable aspect of the EAC classroom was that "we (students) can decide which topic (to discuss) and we can do some research on the sources before lessons and bring it to the lesson and to discuss with my classmates or (the teacher)" (Pauline, EAC student, interview 4/11/05). Amanda reported a similar positive attitude towards the fact that students were able to select their own examples to discuss in class, while Elizabeth welcomed the opportunity for her and her classmates to make their own decisions over where to "lead the discussion" (Elizabeth, EAC student, interview 23/9/05). The EAP classroom therefore might provide a successful case study of how learners' participation in oral activities could be enhanced in language and content classrooms at English medium tertiary institutions, an issue discussed in greater detail below.

Discussion

The results of this study suggest that thinking about Chinese learners' participation in classroom discussion needs to change if the language policy aims of English medium institutions in Asia are to be realized. Essentialized, reductive arguments which characterize Chinese learners as reticent must be challenged. Rather, a more dynamic, developmental view that resists overgeneralization and stereotyping is needed (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Such a view might begin by recognizing the need to ground the investigation of learners' participation in spoken activities within the situated

activities of individual classrooms. In this study a vital feature of the situated activity of the EAC classroom was the willingness and ability of this group of Chinese learners to participate in classroom discussion. This finding has implications for pedagogy regarding how Chinese learners' participation in spoken activities can be promoted in both language and content classrooms. For example, in the case of the economics classrooms described earlier, students and their instructors could initially negotiate over some of the topics and materials covered in each class, allowing student's greater scope to determine how and when they participate in classroom discussion. Economics students might then adopt specific oral roles in their content tutorials. Learners would be producers of classroom discourse as well as directors, shaping the particular topics, materials and outcomes achieved. This step, reflecting the desire of learners to shape the content and nature of their participation in oral activities, is consistent with Graham's (2006) belief that providing students with greater control over classroom events "may foster feelings of ownership and agency, which may lead to greater participation" (2006, p. 27).

The role of the teacher could be tailored to complement this student-centered oral production and direction. Instructors, for instance, should assist students in establishing connections between their unique and varied oral investments and established frameworks of economic theory and policy. This would ensure that students gain an adequate grounding in economic theory and practice and that the suggestions for teaching and learning made here do not result in content being compromised or diluted (Teemant, Bernhardt, & Rodriguez-Munoz, 1997). To accomplish this, instructors have available a long established body of research linking economic theory and policy to broader social issues and interests such as 'immigration', 'school', or 'families' (Coyle, 2002). Working within such traditions, teachers might function as a bridge, both cognitively and linguistically, to assist learners as they journey between the knowledge, skills, and experiences they bring with them to the classroom and the specialized techniques and language of economics and finance.

To summarize, this section has proposed a form of bounded control by students over oral interaction in the content classroom. The process described here could address the need to build agency amongst learners by allowing greater choice over how their participation in classroom discourse is constructed and carried out.

Conclusion

Amongst the conclusions that can be drawn from this study is that Chinese learners do participate in undergraduate classroom discussion. In this respect the study supports the conclusions of Kember (2000), Kennedy (2002) and Lee (1999). However this paper extends their analysis by offering insights from the undergraduate classroom to show how such participation occurs in locally situated settings. As a result, classroom roles, resources and perceptions were identified that may have been responsible for enabling learners' oral participation within these settings. These understandings could be of value in promoting students' oral participation in those undergraduate classrooms in Hong Kong which have been traditionally dominated by a transmission mode of delivery. Further, because the problem of learner reticence in the classroom is thought be common in education settings throughout Asia (Jackson, 2002; Kim, 2006), the results and recommendations made in this paper should be of interest to teachers and students in other EMI tertiary institutions within the Asian region. More research however is needed to determine how classroom roles, resources and perceptions about oral participation in different educational settings enable and constrain learners' participation in classroom discussion. In particular, there is a need for classroom research to assist in contextualizing what learners and instructors report in questionnaires and interviews. The results could play an important role in reducing the gap between the stated language policies of different EMI tertiary institutions within Asia and the realities of student participation in classroom discussion.

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A New Paradigm of Teaching English in China: An Eclectic Model

Lixin Xiao
Tianjin Polytechnic University, China

Bio Data:

Dr. Lixin XIAO is a professor of English language education and Intercultural Communication at School of Foreign Languages, Tianjin Polytechnic University, P. R. China. He holds a PhD in L2 & EFL Education from the School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies, Dublin City University, Ireland. He has been teaching English as a foreign language at university level in China for over 20 years, and has got research and teaching experience in Canada and Ireland. His main research interests include teaching methodology, CLT application in China, critical thinking development in EFL education, and ESP. Dr Xiao has published widely internationally.

Abstract

This paper presents an eclectic model of teaching English majors the *Comprehensive English* course at the university level. The new approach to ELT described combines strengths from the traditional teaching, communicative language teaching (CLT) and the context approach (CA) (Bax, 2003) in order to suit the current English as a foreign language (EFL) context in China at the university level. It consists of three interrelated stages in teaching English majors the *Comprehensive English* course: *pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading,* and each stage focuses on different and specific dimensions. The new approach treats language teaching and learning as an organic process and includes reading at the syntactical level (bottom-up stage) and reading at the textual and discourse level (top-down stage). The top-down stage is more significant in language teaching because it is this stage that enables the progression of a synthesized approach to take place. The proposed eclectic model is different from traditional teacher-centred practices in which teachers tend to treat new words, phrases and sentence structure patterns as discrete language points and elaborate upon them over-meticulously while the gist of the text is usually overlooked. Furthermore, the proposed approach is aimed at helping teachers to overcome the weakness of teacher-centeredness. In this eclectic approach, the prevalent Chinese methods of teaching comprehensive courses are the starting point and CLT and CA are employed to complement them. The purpose for such a synthesis is to cultivate learners' communicative competence as required by the revised curriculum for English majors at the university level.

Introduction

Since the late 1980s there has been a top-down movement to reform English language

teaching (ELT) in China. An important component of English language teaching reform has been an effort to import communicative language teaching (CLT) in the Chinese context (Hu, 2002). However, attempts to introduce CLT into ELT in China have provoked a great deal of comment and debate. Whereas some researchers have emphasized the value of adopting CLT in China (Li, 1984; Maley, 1984; Xiao, 2005), others have noted the importance of Chinese traditional ways of teaching and learning (Harvey, 1985; Sampson, 1984; Sano *et al*., 1984). Still many researchers have focused on the need to adapt CLT to the demands and conditions for ELT in China (Anderson, 1993; Rao, 1996, 2002; Xiao, 2005, 2006a). Within this debate on English teaching methodology, the study of Chinese students' perceptions and attitudes to CLT deserves particular attention. Some earlier studies show that Chinese students are inclined to prefer a pleasant mixture of classroom-based learning activities that emphasize both communicative components of CLT and formal grammatical correctness of the traditional approach (Rao, 2002; Xiao, 2005, 2006). Therefore, an eclectic approach which can combine the strengths of different approaches as well as meet Chinese EFL learners' needs is necessary.

Communicative language teaching vs. the traditional approach

Communicative language teaching (CLT) has been an influential approach for at least two decades. The very term 'communicative' carries an obvious ring of truth: we 'learn to communicate by communicating' (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p.131). CLT advocates learning a language through use. In contrast with the traditional approach, which stresses teacher classroom dominance and a very detailed study of grammar, extensive use of paraphrase and the translation and memorization of structural patterns and vocabulary, CLT emphasizes the competence of using language for communication. Learning is regarded as a process of natural growth rather than acquiring isolated items of language. As learners have their own active mechanisms for making sense of language input and constructing their own systems while receiving linguistic input, what teachers need to do is to help them operate these natural mechanisms by providing them with "triggers". In lessons, teachers can facilitate acquisition by assisting students to practice so that they can learn to use language actively for real communicative needs. CLT has some common features of practice that derive from its basic principles. First, classrooms are learner-oriented.

Second, opportunities are provided through developing a wide repertoire of activities. Third, the teacher's roles are multiple. Instead of imparting knowledge and skills to learners, s/he may act as animator, co-communicator or counselor in the classroom. Fourth, authentic materials are used in teaching. (Nunan, 1991, 1993; Mey, 1998)

Related research to date

China has the largest national population of English language learners in the world, and China is deeply involved in CLT since it was first introduced into the country in the early 1980s. However, due to multiple constraints including the linguistic competence of Chinese EFL teachers, China has had to work hard to adapt CLT to the local conditions. In China, most teachers claim to use a communicative approach in some way or other, and it is hardly surprising that no one wishes to be called a non-communicative teacher. However, as CLT was borne and developed in Western countries, it is not universally applicable in Asian contexts without proper adaptation (Ellis, 1996; Hu, 2005). The problem lies in that modified varieties of CLT might suit some present conditions for the time being, but they are far from scientific, since, as practiced in the classroom, they are not usually selected on the basis of classroom-based or academic research (Leng, 1997). In many cases, whether CLT is seen to be difficult, effective, or is rejected as inappropriate, (i.e. reports on its implementation) have been based mainly on teachers' own perceptions of CLT (Li, 1998). Only a few studies have investigated learners' views, and fewer studies still, have looked at learner views of communicative practices in the classroom.

Some researchers argue for a combination of the strengths from different approaches (cf. Liu, 2004). Liu holds that English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers choose a teaching method not because of its professional or theoretical worth, but rather because it allows them to cope efficiently with the realities of the environment. In his opinion, if L2/EFL students are actively using the target language and teaching materials and activities meet the needs of the students, whatever teaching method is used does not matter much.

Many researchers contend that both the CLT and traditional approach have their own advantages and disadvantages. Hence, a combination of the strengths from different approaches is the best (Hu, 2002; Rao, 2002; Xiao, 2005). Horwitz (1988)

suggests, classroom realities that contradict learner expectations about learning may disappoint them and thus interfere with the attainment of desired learning outcomes. Harvey (1985), based on his experience of teaching English in China, finds the constructive side of the traditional approach useful in class. He asserts that:

> What might be called "traditional" methods and skills [in China] are not fundamentally or necessarily unworkable alongside modern EFL teaching methods. The idea that the two are mutually exclusive is absurd. EFL in China needs Western experience and expertise, not Western dogma. A balanced approach and the use of existing potential both have a fundamental part to play in the development of language teaching in China (Harvey, 1985, p.186).

Rao (2002) studied the views of 30 Chinese university students on the appropriateness and effectiveness of communicative and non-communicative activities in their EFL courses in China. He discovered that the students' perceived difficulties caused by CLT had their source in the differences between the underlying educational theories of China and those of Western countries. He argues that updating English teaching methods in China needs to combine the "new" with the "old" to align the communicative approach with traditional teaching structures. But his suggestions are far from pedagogically concrete.

Xiao (2005) conducted a large scale empirical study of Chinese English majors and their teachers at the university level. He reported that although both the students and teachers concerned were inclined to see classroom activities emphasizing the real use of the target language as more effective than those emphasizing formal grammatical competence, they, however, viewed it inappropriate to totally abandon the traditional approach in favour of CLT as the notions underpinning CLT are not very compatible with the Chinese ELT context.

In reality, what we can infer from relevant studies lies in that the real issue is not to abandon the traditional approach, but to improve and modernize it. In other words, to reconcile it with CLT in such a way that both approaches complement each other. Such assertions also support some earlier studies by some other Chinese researchers (Wen, 1996; Su & Zhuang, 1996). These studies reflect the reality that no single approach can cover all aspects of English teaching and learning. In the case of CLT, various challenges confronting Chinese EFL teachers and students in their attempts to use CLT have to be taken into account and a synthesis of different approaches should be created to suit the Chinese context. Such views are also echoed by Western

researchers as well.

O'Neill (1991) draws our attention to the characteristics of English language lessons that worked well using either teacher-centeredness or student-centeredness. He emphasizes that "the critical skills that teachers need are to use their discretion to judge and select which of the two types of approaches is most likely to yield fruitful results with a particular class at a particular time" (p. 290) so that the two approaches are complementary to each other. In other words, teachers should be aware of the necessity and importance of choosing an appropriate teaching approach to suit a particular situation or context since English teaching methodologies are neither culturally-free, nor culturally transferable without proper adaptation (Larsen-Freeman, 1999).

Some researchers also point out that evaluation of a particular method depends on many factors, such as language and learning theories, teaching techniques, syllabus design and teacher and learner roles. One factor that is often easily ignored is that of *context*. A method that can be considered beneficial in one context may not be so in another. (Huang, 1996; Bax, 2003). Some Western researchers also support this view and make critical comments on CLT. For instance, Bax (2003) stresses that although CLT has served a useful function in the L2 profession particularly as a corrective to shortcomings in previous methodologies, CLT has always neglected one key aspect of language teaching, namely the *context* in which it takes place. Bax further suggests that the first priority is the *learning context*, and the first step in ELT is to identify key aspects of that *context* before deciding what and how to teach in any given class. According to Bax, the *context* refers to the teacher's understanding of individual students and their learning needs, wants, styles, and strategies as well as the course-book, local conditions, the classroom culture, school culture, national culture and so on. By taking into account all these factors as much as possible in each situation, teachers will be able to identify a suitable approach and language focus. Methodological decisions will thus depend on the results of a '*context analysis*'. In Bax's opinion, it may be that an emphasis on grammar is useful to start with, or perhaps an emphasis on oral communication. It may be that lexis will come first, or it may be that group-work is more suitable than a more formal lecture mode.

In congruence with the above pro-integration point of views from both Chinese and Western researchers mentioned above, this study shows that, in order to ensure effective English language teaching and learning outcomes, neither the traditional nor

the pure CLT approach can be wholly embraced without adequate modification to suit the present ELT situations in China at the tertiary level. In other words, an appropriate approach will probably be an eclectic one, so as to meet the Chinese ELT context. Given the situation described above, China needs to combine CLT with the traditional approach to benefit from the combined strengths of different approaches. Any teaching methodology has its own reasons to exist. Everything depends on the specific situations -- the 'context' in Bax's term, where the methods are used and popularised. The teacher and learner variables determine which methods, textbooks, and teaching styles will fit in with the stated pedagogical goals. As is evident above, it is important that communicative features of CLT should be integrated into the prevalent Chinese pedagogical practices. For such a beneficial integration to happen in China, it is necessary for Chinese EFL researchers and teachers to take an eclectic approach and make 'well-informed pedagogical choices grounded in an understanding of socio-cultural influences' (Hu, 2002).

The purpose of this study

While the above studies report on Chinese EFL learner and teacher perceptions in implementing communicative language teaching, few have looked at concrete eclectic approaches to teaching EFL compulsory courses in China at the university level, and as such, this paper examines the C*omprehensive English* (*Reading)* course from the perspective of combining the strengths of different approaches with respect to classroom practice. This paper analyses an eclectic approach to teaching English to English majors at the tertiary level in China. It offers insights into the curricular and methodological changes currently being implemented in the Chinese context. The proposed eclectic model as shown below in Chart-1, combines the strengths of the traditional approach, CLT and the context approach (CA). It treats the Chinese EFL context as the most important starting point for establishing a suitable approach to ensure effective outcomes of EFL teaching in China. This new approach does not negate the view that language is for communication, but it questions the assumed universal applicability of CLT. Meanwhile, the extent to which communicative components in instructional practices are seen by learners as essential for classroom language learning should be taken into account when making pedagogical decisions. As is evident from the discussion above, at present this proposed eclectic model may

offer a more realistic framework for EFL education in the Chinese context than merely rejecting or embracing CLT in a wholesale manner. Instead, the key issue of innovation in ELT methodology in China is not to totally discard the traditional approach, but to improve upon and adapt it (Harvey, 1985; Anderson, 1993; Rao, 1996; 2002; Hu, 2002).

An Eclectic Approach to ELT in China

This paper presents an eclectic approach for teaching English major students the *Comprehensive English (Reading)* course at the university level. As shown in Chart-1 below, an eclectic approach in this study means, in a broad sense, the combination of strengths taken from both the CLT and traditional Chinese teaching practices that have proven useful and effective in the past. The eclectic approach also includes the ideas proposed in context approach (Bax, 2003). According to Bax, the context in which EFL learning and teaching takes places is a crucial factor in the success or failure of learners because contextual factors hugely influence learners' ability to effectively learn a foreign language (Bax, 2003).

In other words, an eclectic approach to ELT combines the strengths deriving from the traditional teaching, communicative language teaching and context approach in order to suit the current ELT context in China. It consists of three interrelated stages in teaching English major students the *Comprehensive English (Reading)* course: *pre-reading, while-reading* and *post-reading,* with each stage focusing on different and specific dimensions. The new approach treats language teaching and learning as an organic process, and as such includes reading at the syntactical level (bottom-up stage) and reading at the textual and discourse level (top-down stage). The top-down stage is more significant in language teaching because it is this stage that enables the progression of a synthesized approach to take place. The proposed model in this study is different from traditional teacher-centred practices in which teachers intend to treat new words, phrases and sentence structure patterns as discrete language points and elaborate upon them over-meticulously while the gist of the text is usually overlooked. Furthermore, the eclectic approach is aimed at helping teachers to overcome the weakness of teacher-centeredness. In this eclectic approach, the prevalent Chinese methods of teaching *Comprehensive English (Reading)* courses are the starting point and CLT and the context approach (CA) are employed to complement them. The purpose for such a synthesis is to cultivate learners'

communicative competence as required by the new curriculum (English Division, 2000) for English major students at the university level.

Chart-1 An Eclectic Approach to ELT in China

An Eclectic Model: theoretical synthesis

An Eclectic Model

Eclectic Model: A Theoretical Synthesis
The overlapped areas in the above chart represent an eclectic model: EFL teaching focuses on cultivating learners' communicative competence and instruction of both language form and its use including structures, functions, notions and situations. Teaching methodology should be **suitable** to the contexts in which the teaching and learning of the target language are taking place.

(Cf. Xiao, 2006b, p. 224)

It should be noted that an eclectic approach needs to be based on a multifaceted view of communicative activities in class. It should also seek to incorporate student input into the learning process. In some cases, it is appropriate to focus on assigned tasks and small group learning. In others, a whole class format is best, while in others, a combination of formats is appropriate. Therefore, methodologies vary with different variables such as learners' English proficiency level and knowledge about the topic under discussion, the content of text materials, teachers' competence in the target

language, teaching styles and classroom management skills. In short, the methods and activities used depend on "a particular context where L2 teaching and learning takes place" (Bax, 2003). The following section presents a practical approach for teaching *Comprehensive English (Reading)* course as shown in Chart-2 below.

The choice of the *Comprehensive English (Reading)* used to demonstrate the effectiveness of the eclectic model proposed in this study arises from the following considerations. First, the *Comprehensive English (Reading)* course is the backbone of the course scheme in the curriculum for both English majors and non-majors. As the word "comprehensive" indicates, the *Comprehensive English (Reading)* course is supposed to combine multiple language skills in this course in contrast to its predecessor "*Intensive Reading*". ('Intensive' indicates paying a large amount of attention to a small amount of action, i.e. reading text materials). In other words, the emphasis is placed not only on grammatical structure and vocabulary, but also on speaking and writing skills and cross-cultural awareness. Other courses, however, are more restricted to specific aspects of EFL learning. Second, for the first 2 years of the undergraduate program for English majors, the *Comprehensive English Reading* lessons takes up about 57% of the total of 1,100 -1,160 class hours designed for English skill-based courses for English majors (English Division, 2000). The eclectic approach to teaching English reading is discussed in detail below.

Chart-2 Eclectic Approach to Teaching English Reading Skills

Reading Components	Pre-Reading	While Reading	Post-Reading
Student Information Processing	Top-down Processing	Bottom-Up Processing	Synthesis
Linguistic Focus & Classroom Activities	Introduction Raising Questions Audio & Video Aids	Semantic Items Syntactic Items Discourse Items Socio-cultural Items	Comprehension-Check-up Interactive Activities Oral Production Evaluating Outside Reading

Pre-reading stage

Pre-reading activities begin with questions to be initiated by a teacher. The teacher will start the lesson with thought-provoking questions rather than ask such questions at the end of each lesson to test learners' understanding of the text. These questions should be aimed at helping students better understand the meaning and structure of a text, to relate students' reading activity to their prior knowledge and experience,

increase their interest in the subject to be read and enable them to read with a purpose. For instance, questions beginning with *When, Where, Who,* and *What* can prompt students to look for specific information from the reading material while those with *Why* and *How* can help them to probe more deeply into the information they are to read. In addition, such activities can help students predict or make some "educated" guesses about what is in the text and thus activate effective top-down processing for reading comprehension (Chia, 2001). Based on the stimuli in a text, such as the title, photographs, illustrations, or subtitles, *pre-reading* questions can be used to encourage students to make predictions about the content of the text, and help students better understand the passage they are going to read.

At this stage, it is important that teachers be aware of *what* to ask and *how* to ask questions appropriately based on the comprehension and linguistic proficiency of the learners. The way teachers ask questions ought to stimulate learners to think, speak, predict, judge and analyse. Nuttall (1983, 1996) classifies classroom questions into six types from teaching perspective:

1. *Questions of literal comprehension*: those where answers are directly and explicitly expressed in the text. They can often be answered in the words of the text.

2. *Questions involving reorganization or reinterpretation*: those requiring students either to reinterpret literal information or to obtain it from various parts of the text and put it together in a new way, using elementary inference.

3. *Questions of inference*: those obliging students to consider what is implied, but not explicitly stated.

4. *Questions of evaluation*: those asking for a considered judgement about the text in terms of what the writer is trying to do and how far s/he has achieved it.

5. *Questions of personal response*: those where answers depend least on the writer, but instead relate to the reader's reaction to the text.

6. *Questions concerned with how writers say what they mean*: those intending to give students strategies for dealing with a text in general (pp. 132-133).

Nuttall's classifications can help teachers raise appropriate questions which can help students understand the local and global meaning of a text as well as how these meanings are expressed. For example, if teaching an English text entitled *International Trade*, teachers could assign students the following questions before they read the text:

1.   What are the reasons for international trade?

2.   Why is it impossible for any nation in the world to be self- sufficient?

3.   What countries are mentioned in the text (if any)?

4.   Why does the writer mention these countries?

To answer these questions, students have to be ready to deal with the text as an organic whole, preparing to sort out messages, select and reorganize those that they judge to be the most relevant and important to the questions they are going to answer. Here the passive reading process of input is inclined to become an active process of output, combining guessing, reading, predicting, inferring and speaking. It is crucial to note that teachers should not have preconceived, rigid notions about "correct" answers to their questions. Alternatively, they should allow student input to be genuine, and possibly, unpredictable.

While-Reading Stage

While-reading stage consists of reading a text twice, each for a specific purpose. The *first* reading concerns two important speed-reading techniques, namely, skimming and scanning. The training of these skills is of particular importance because these skills are not only indispensable for EFL learners, but also because during the process of skimming and scanning the schemata of students can be activated. Skimming facilitates text processing by initiating students into the gist and organization of the text. Scanning is helpful for seeking specific information for the pre-reading questions mentioned above. The *second* reading is a problem-solving process. The problems to be solved in this process of reading may include lexical, syntactic, discourse, and socio-cultural dimensions (as shown above in Chart-2) (Xiang & Wang, 1999). These dimensions are discussed in detail below.

Lexical and syntactic focus

While reading silently, students come across new grammatical and structural units and students have the opportunity to pick out linguistic or syntactic problems that cause them comprehension difficulties (e.g. long sentences, new structures or expressions typical of a particular writer's style). Teachers then ask students to raise their difficulties and try to interpret them according to the context. This can be done either individually or in pairs. Then, these problems are pooled and collected together. Teachers can ask students to discuss these listed problems in pairs or in a small group

in order to elicit various replies or check how much learners have come to understand these problems. At this stage, the methodological focus is that learners would do the problem-raising, discovery and comprehension rather than the teacher covering the text in a sentence-by-sentence manner and providing answers to every single language point which may not directly affect the learner.

Following this problem-raising stage, teachers can synthesize these language problems and isolate major specific elements of linguistic units for detailed explanations from the point of view of either grammar or stylistics, or both. Activities at this stage may include presenting different types of drills and students can do the exercises in pairs or in a small group.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is carried out in two aspects: firstly, how an idea is developed (such as topic sentence and support, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, generalizations and specifics, cohesion and coherence); secondly, how one idea leads to another (introduction, development, and conclusion). At this stage, questioning techniques (mentioned above in *pre-reading stage*), analytical, inductive and deductive methods are used to maximize the students' opportunities to practise their analytical and critical thinking skills.

Socio-cultural dimensions

Cultural background knowledge is also provided at this stage, which can help students to gain a better comprehension of the text content by minimizing cultural interference, and "build new culture-specific schemata that will be available to EFL students outside the classroom" (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1987). It will be especially beneficial if teachers are able to compare and contrast between the two different cultures. In addition, teachers should provide an opportunity for students to engage in personal text-based problem-solving discussions which can act as an important condition to enhance their cross-cultural awareness. Candlin (1982) stresses that [language] learning is a matter of managing problems. One way for teachers to encourage learning is to consistently confront learners with problems rather than attempt to

remove problems in advance (p.39). This will help make the students more culturally sensitive when they read on their own. This approach is a striking contrast to teacher-centred English language classrooms observed by Xiao (2005), in which teachers paraphrased almost every language point of the text that they thought might be difficult for their students. Hence, teachers gave their students so much "help" that it became a crutch without which the students could not function. That is, the students were led to formulating word-by-word reading habits, while some aspects of learning that can lead to cross-cultural awareness and discourse competence were ignored.

Post-reading stage

This stage focuses on post-reading activities and checks students' comprehension, consolidates their language skills and engages students in communicative group activities. This stage includes students' answers to the pre-reading questions and further questions are raised by teachers at this stage to check students' understanding of the text. For instance, text-based questions of inference, questions of evaluation, and questions of personal response and so on.

Take the above-mentioned text *International Trade* as an example. After reading the passage, teachers can ask students a question of evaluation: *what does this writer contribute to your understanding of international trade?* Teachers need to be aware that questions of this kind are the most sophisticated of all because they require the students not merely to respond, but to analyse their response and discover the objective reasons for it, as well as measure it against the presumed intention of the writer. To answer the question, the students cannot ignore the textual evidence, so their responses essentially involve the writer's purpose. Also, teachers need to ask the students to explain why the text makes them feel as they do and ensure that students' responses are based on a correct understanding of the text.

Evaluative questions are also important with narrative and descriptive texts, in which the writer may tell a story or recount an event and then leave it to the readers to figure out for themselves the message that the writer intends to convey. Urquhart & Weir (1998) claim that "reading ability must go beyond pure language skills and includes readers' pragmatic skills to interpret the text in terms of their knowledge and experience of the world" (p. 34). In this sense, after students read the text, they need

to interpret the meaning to respond to the textual ideas and evaluate the effectiveness of the text. Teachers should be aware that while the meaning of the text is emphasised, the issues of how the meaning is produced (in what language form), and how students respond to the meaning of the text and how they evaluate the effectiveness of the text, should be also given adequate attention.

The post-reading activities can also be carried out in small groups or in pairs. Teachers need to make sure that such a group or pair discussion differs from a "question and answer" session in that students should be encouraged to express individual, unique opinions on the same topic. At this stage, the emphasis is on learners' ability to use the target language for communication and the exchange of ideas. Their responses should be incorporated, in an identifiable fashion, into the learning process.

To initiate and then to guide the discussion, teachers need to set forth topics to arouse students' interest as mentioned above and assign students a learning task or a text-based task -- what is known as "task-based" learning and teaching (Willis, 1996). Willis points out that task-based learning combines the best insights from CLT with an organized focus on language form (Willis, 1996, p.1). She defines "task" as any activity where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose in order to achieve an outcome (p. 23). Text-based tasks require learners to process the text for meaning in order to achieve the goals of the task. This will involve reading, listening or viewing with some kind of communicative purpose and may well involve talking about the text and perhaps writing notes (p. 68). Text-based tasks should aim to encourage efficient reading strategies, focusing initially on retrieval of sufficient relevant meaning for the purpose of the task. Willis (1996) observes that:

> Task-based learning entails holistic processing, that is, gaining an overall impression, picking up detailed linguistic clues -- a combination of what are commonly called 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' processes (p. 75).

Thus, task-based learning strategies would minimise students' dependence on teachers for all "the correct answers". On the contrary, each task to be completed by students is a step on the road to learner independence. In task-based learning, teachers can ask students to predict or attempt to reconstruct the content on the basis of given clues from part of the text without having read, heard, or seen the whole. For instance, teachers can ask students to predict problem-solution and story endings by using a

text with a situation-problem-solution-evaluating pattern, namely, let students read/hear/watch only parts of a text which give the situation and problem(s). Next, teachers ask students to work in pairs or in a group to work out a couple of alternative solutions of their own, and then they evaluate another pair's or group's solution. When they have presented their best solutions to each other during a report phase, the class can be asked to predict which solutions are mentioned in the original text. Finally, they read/hear/watch the whole piece and compare and evaluate (cf. Willis, 1996, p. 77). If using a sequential text, teachers give students most of the text information and ask them to write (or tell) an ending, or give an ending, and ask them to write (or tell) the beginning. Teachers can scaffold students by giving them a few carefully chosen words from the text. In doing this, it is important to note that teachers should make sure that students do not feel they have failed if they predict something entirely different from the original text. Their imagination ought to be encouraged as this would help students improve their ability to make judgements on what they read, to express their own opinions and to grasp the structure of a text. In a word, learners' analytical, creative and critical thinking ability together with their communicative competence will improve during the process.

These activities and tasks may include inference, reasoning, negotiation of meaning, problem-solving and information transfer. They may be carried out in a number of ways: group-work, pair work, individual work and role play. They should be an integral part of a successful EFL education programme. In many cases, suitable conditions, an active atmosphere and necessary staff training need to be created for the performance of these tasks and activities to occur in classrooms.

Suggestions for employing the eclectic approach in English class

Adequate attention given to balancing form and meaning

Balancing form and meaning is one of the critical features in the proposed eclectic approach, which is where CLT and the traditional approach diverge. Savignon (1991) points out that in L2 or EFL development, communication cannot take place in the absence of structure or grammar, because grammar is "a set of shared assumptions about how language works along with a willingness of participants to cooperate in the negotiation of meaning" (p.268). Widdowson (1990) also notes the importance of

adequate attention to form in L2/FL development. He argues that the whole point of language pedagogy is that it is a way of short-circuiting the slow process of "natural language acquisition" and can make arrangements for learning to happen more easily and more efficiently than it does in "natural surroundings" (p.162). In balancing form and meaning, "the traditional approach and the communicative approach are not mutually exclusive" (Harvey, 1985, p.186). The real problem is how the traditional method can work well along with modern EFL teaching in the Chinese educational context. For instance, CLT focuses on meaning and fluency, whereas the traditional approach emphasizes form and structure. However, it would not be detrimental to Chinese EFL learners if the teacher explained some grammatical points to enhance their understanding of the link of meaning to the structure. Harvey (1985) reminds us that understanding the grammatical framework of a language is extremely important for L2/EFL learners.

However, teachers should not place undue emphasis on grammar and structure, which can prevent learners from understanding the text material at a holistic and discursive level. Grammar is a tool or resource to be used in the comprehension and creation of oral and written discourse, rather than 'rules to be learned as an end in itself' (Rao, 1996). In addition, the real purpose of adequate grammatical explanation should be aimed at teaching students how grammar rules function, and thus showing students how they can ultimately use such rules for real communicative purposes. Excessive emphasis on grammar analysis could detract from developing the students' reasoning power and lead them to forming a habit of delving too deeply into the minutiae in their learning. In turn, this may impede the cultivation of their communicative competence and has a negative effect on development of their critical thinking ability.

Grammar teaching in English class should not be taught as an end in itself, but always with reference to meaning, social factors, discourse or a combination of these factors (Celce-Murcia & Hilles, 1988). It is worth noting that teachers should be sensitive to the needs and learning styles of the students and make explicit to students the beneficial functions of integrating communicative components with the traditional approach. This inevitably requires teachers to adopt appropriate pedagogical strategies for a classroom progression in which both form and meaning is balanced.

Synthesising the progression of classroom activities

In adopting an eclectic approach, teachers need to adopt appropriate pedagogical practices to ensure a smooth progression of classroom activities in which both form and meaning are properly dealt with. The aim is to combine communicative components with the explicit instruction of form and structure. For such a smooth classroom progression to happen in the Chinese context, there needs to be general pedagogical guidelines for Chinese EFL teachers to follow. A number of L2 and EFL researchers have proposed different types of integration concerning classroom progression for the purpose of combining communicative and traditional methods. Some suggest a progression from communicative to formal instruction (Brumfit, 1978) while some others suggest a progression from formal classroom instruction to communicative activities (Celce-Murcia & Hilles, 1988; Nunn,1992), from the activities of skills-getting to skills-using (Rivers & Temperley, 1987), and from text-based mechanical pattern drills to free communication (Rao, 1999;). Littlewood (1984) takes a more flexible stance and suggests that the sequence of progression of classroom learning activities is interchangeable rather than a fixed pattern and it is up to the teacher to decide -- based on such factors as the learners, the specific content of the text materials and the kinds of activities used.

Moreover, based on my own teaching experience, teachers have an almost free choice in deciding how many communicative activities they engage students in doing. Their decisions in this area are often made on the basis of their own professional competence, classroom management expertise and the knowledge and information they possess about the topics or learning tasks concerned. They also depend on the content of lesson and students concerned. However, one thing is certain that communicative components should be an integral part of the teaching process. Taylor (1983) asserts that students' needs and the dynamics of particular classes become major factors in deciding what to teach and how to teach it. Above all, the teaching methods adopted by teachers in class should vary significantly in accordance with the *context* in which teachers find themselves working (Sano *et al.*, 1984; Bax 2003).

Conclusion and suggestion for further research

To sum up, it has to be pointed out that if teachers know how to make good use the of

pre-reading stage and the *while-reading stage* to raise questions, to offer background information, to solve problems concerning lexical, syntactic, discourse and socio-cultural dimensions, this will help learners initiate *post-reading* discussions. Students may become more interested in what they are doing and their attention would be heightened since these activities will create a vivid classroom atmosphere and enrich their prior knowledge. What is more, it helps them to link their existing knowledge to the text and directs them into a much deeper understanding.

As mentioned above, the pre-reading questions are helpful in that they help learners to make predictions and enable them to decide what they look for (either the global meaning of the text or the specific facts and details). The while-reading stage involves problem-solving and it helps students overcome the difficulties which may hinder their correct comprehension of the text. Post-reading is of great help in that it directs them into a much deeper understanding of the text and encourages learners to use their own analytical and critical thinking skills. Furthermore, communicative group activities can be organized to achieve meaningful goals assigned to different groups based on various text contents, to activate all those language items stored in learners' minds rather than concentrate on the minutiae of language points in a sentence-by-sentence manner as revealed in teacher-centred classrooms. Of course more research in this related area is needed to further refine this eclectic approach to foreign language instruction.

No matter how workable an eclectic approach sounds, there is no denying that further classroom-based empirical research should be done to test this approach. It is strongly advised that teachers should design and implement the proposed approach in actual classroom settings, and summarize its effect in terms of reading skills development, motivation, attitude changes on the part of students, as well as teachers' feedback in order to have this eclectic approach validated. For the future research, studies on more varied and creative way of utilizing an eclectic approach for EFL classrooms are needed. Further, we may capture and readily access first-hand data in classroom settings for both research and pedagogical purposes.

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The Internet and the Language Classroom: A Practical Guide for Teachers
Gavin Dudeney, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Pp. v. + 171.

Reviewed by Ko-Yin Sung
The University of Texas at San Antonio
Texas, U.S.A.

Gavin Dudeney's *The Internet and the Language Classroom: A Practical Guide for Teachers* is a resource book that provides English as a second language instructors valuable activities ranging from novice to advanced levels and introduces novice Internet teacher-readers to online tools for the development of online classroom projects.

The book is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides readers with the basic knowledge and skills required to use the Internet. First, the author explains basic Internet-related terms such as a modem, service provider, homepage, and link. Next, Dudeney uses computer screen shots to aid his explanations and walk his readers through the processes of using the Internet, email, and search engines. FAQs on Internet, email, and searches are also included in this chapter to help troubleshoot possible problems readers may encounter in their first-time hands-on experience. Chapter 2, which comprises almost half of the book, consists of 55 practical Internet-related activities that teachers can adapt to their classrooms, each of which is sorted by level and theme. Levels include young learners, elementary, lower-intermediate, mid-intermediate, upper-intermediate, advanced, and business English, and themes range from entertaining topics such as shopping and celebrations to ones that require critical thinking such as world problems and news. At the beginning of each activity, the author lists the aim, focus, level, time required, and requisite website address(es) needed to carry out the activity. The directions for each activity are then detailed in the procedure section and alternative activities are suggested in the follow-on section. Many of the activities are also accompanied by sample worksheets that are readily adaptable. In Chapter 3, the author introduces a variety of Internet tools teachers can use to promote learning through collaborations with students in other parts of the world to include email changes, discussion lists, webquests, blogs, wikis, online groups, and chat. The author states the purpose of each tool and provides existing

online examples to demonstrate how each can be applied in classroom projects. The last section of chapter 3 is devoted to the discussion of student publication on the Internet. The author lists several places students can post their work online and shows readers basic ideas for online publishing projects. Chapter 4 is a short chapter that informs teachers how to advance themselves both professionally and technologically in the vein of using the Internet in the classroom. The author discusses the advantages and disadvantages of joining listserves and lists links to sites, blogs, and groups that contain teacher development resources. The last chapter, chapter 5, lists an assortment of websites where students can publish their work, those that offer free-web-based email, and others that provide teaching ideas.

Readers who compare this edition to the first edition published in 2000 will find that this one includes many newly developed Internet tools such as blogs and wikis which help update readers' technical knowledge, yet 55 activities introduced in the first edition remain unchanged. Readers may also notice another shortcoming in that while the activities are high quality and cover a wide variety of topics, the majority of them do not sufficiently emphasize the diversity of English learners' cultures and only focus on the Western culture. Nonetheless, readers will find that the book uses easy-to-understand language to explain technical jargon and concepts and provides screen shots and figures to demonstrate the functions of websites and software, creating a reader-friendly guide that assists first-time Internet teacher-users to overcome their fear about incorporating the Internet into their classrooms.

Despite the lack of a cultural component in many of the activities provided, Dudeney's *The Internet and the Language Classroom: A Practical Guide for Teachers* is a highly recommended book that is valuable when teachers need additional activity ideas or need a jargon-free tool book to help their online classroom projects get started.

Vocabulary in a Second Language

Bogaards, P., Laufer, B. (Eds.). Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2004. Pp. xiv + 233.

Reviewed by Majid Fattahipour

Islamic Azad University

Parand, Iran

Containing eleven chapters which fit into three categories (vocabulary selection, acquisition, and testing), *Vocabulary in a Second Language,* is a creative collection of papers that provides an overview of the research in the area of second language vocabulary acquisition.

The first section begins with an article by Nation who explores an interesting contrast-- vocabulary division of levels rather than coverage--between the General Service List and the Academic Word List and British National Corpus. Cobb and Horst then demonstrate that there is no room for an AWL-like list in French since the French 2000 list fulfils both everyday and academic purposes. Adolphs and Schmitt, in the last article of the section, argue that the predictability variance of lists is not ideal, and, to reach a vocabulary coverage of mid-90% in spoken discourse, we need to address a larger vocabulary in friendship-based than business-based relationships.

The second section opens with Boers, Demecheleer and Eyckman's inquiry into the learning potential of using an etymological elaboration technique with idioms. Mondria and Wiersma then reheat an interesting controversy about the retention of receptive and productive vocabulary, Jiang scrutinizes the role of first language semantic system in learning a second language, and Dewaele investigates the role of personality in acquisition. Qian then goes on to complete the section with an article which examines the lexical inferencing strategies learners employ in acquisition.

The last section of the text focuses on testing. In the first article, Vermeer introduces a new measure of lexical richness based on word difficulty and Greidanus et al. follow by presenting the construction and validation of deep word knowledge test for advanced learners of French. Read closes the section by questioning the adequacy of using depth as an all-encompassing term, preferring instead more specific definitions

depending on the instrument used.

Readers will certainly find that the editors of this text indeed present innovative and multiple perspectives and handle a vast array of recent vocabulary related research quite efficiently, yet some may criticize the contributors' informative insights from corpus linguistics and their challenge to the tradition of English as a futuristic model. Nevertheless, *Vocabulary in a Second Language* is a promising resource for researchers, teachers, and teacher trainers. Researchers will value it as they look critically at the findings of the last two decades because, as another reviewer of this text, points out, "we all benefit from looking at things in different ways", for "there is much to be gained from bringing together empirical studies and more speculative pieces of work which explore the ramifications of the assumptions that vocabulary researchers tend to take for granted" (Maera, 2006, p. 286). Teachers and teacher trainers will also find it useful to help them broaden their views about implementing relevant concepts and tools related to vocabulary selection, acquisition, and testing.

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Reviewed by Ozgur Yildirim
Anadolu University
Eskisehir, Turkey

Lantolf and Thorne's *Sociocultural Theory and the Genesis of Second Language Development* describes the development and application of sociocultural theory, a theory of the development of higher mental functions, oriented research inspired by Lev Vygotsky. Focusing on theory, research, and applications, this book is a splendid source not only for researchers and graduate students, but also for language teachers who want to familiarize themselves with sociocultural theory and its potential contribution to the language classroom.

The authors organize the book in twelve chapters which are divided into three parts: introduction (chapter 1), theory (chapters 2-10), and practice (chapters 11-12). The aim of the initial chapter is to provide the reader with background information regarding sociocultural theory and its connection to language. Authors begin this chapter by giving a terminological clarification of the concept of sociocultural theory and devote the rest of the chapter to the discussion of "developing a sociocultural orientation to language and communicative activity" (p. 3).

In the next nine chapters, the authors discuss the primary concepts within sociocultural theory. Chapter 2 focuses on the concept of the genetic method, research methodology proposed by Vygotsky for investigating the higher forms of mental behavior. Chapters 3-5 focus on the central concept of sociocultural theory, mediation, which is based on Vygotsky's fundamental claim that "higher forms of human mental activity are mediated by culturally constructed auxiliary means" (p. 59). Chapter 3 then explores the theoretical issues of this concept whereas chapters 4 and 5 address how it operates in the case of L2 learners. Chapters 6 and 7 discuss internalization, another core concept of sociocultural theory, which refers to the process of development that is co-constructed via interpersonal and intrapersonal negotiations. Chapter 6 sets up the theoretical framework and chapter 7 discusses the

relevance of the concept for L2 development. Chapters 8 and 9 address the issue of activity theory, a later development within sociocultural theory research. Chapter 8 provides the background and chapter 9 discusses L2 research that use activity theory as its base. Chapter 10 focuses on the concept of the zone of proximal development, an aspect of sociocultural theory which has received great attention both in the field of education in general, and in the field of second language learning in particular. It also provides a historical overview of the concept as well as discussion of the concept in contemporary L2 research and pedagogy.

The last two chapters of the book, chapters 11 and 12, describe two pedagogical applications of sociocultural theory to second language instruction. Chapter 11 focuses on systemic-theoretical instruction, a model of instruction based exclusively on sociocultural theory. In this chapter, the authors discuss in detail how this model relates to language leaning by providing specific examples from studies conducted on the application of the model on second language instruction. Addressing another pedagogical approach widely based on a core aspect of sociocultural theory, the zone of proximal development, chapter 12 discusses dynamic assessment. In this final chapter of the book, providing examples from different studies, the authors discuss the conceptual basis of dynamic assessment, its differences from non-dynamic assessment, and its application on the language classroom.

Sociocultural Theory and the Genesis of Second Language Development is a seminal volume for several reasons. First of all, it is one of the first books that comprehensively integrate sociocultural theory, research, and practice from the standpoint of second language instruction. Second, it is an excellent source of sociocultural theory related literature as it reviews many texts that focus on Vygotsky-inspired research. Third, it helps the advancement of L2 research and practice bringing solid explanations to some potentially complicated concepts such as dynamic assessment. It is, however, worth mentioning that some language teachers who are not actively involved in research might find this book highly theoretical. Although there are two complete chapters focusing on application, they discuss relevant studies instead of providing ready to use classroom activities or lesson plans that a teacher might expect to find in the book. Regardless, the book is a highly significant contribution to the fields of second language instruction and applied linguistics as it bridges a wide gap in the current knowledge of language learning, teaching, and assessment.

Language, Negotiation and Peace: The Use of English in Conflict Resolution
Patricia Friedrich. New York: Continuum, 2007. Pp. x + 144.

Reviewed by Jim Bame
Utah State University
Utah, USA

Patricia Friedrich's *Language, Negotiation and Peace* is an optimistic, thought provoking book. In it, the author traces the growth of English as a lingua franca and argues that English can be a prime mover for linguistic peace education and social justice.

   A thin, well-organized volume with seven chapters, a useful index, a glossary, a reference section, and an appendix, the book is for everyone with an interest in peace, including researchers, education administrators, and pre- and in-service teachers at all instructional levels.

   Friedrich begins the text by summarizing the peace studies tradition, outlining positive and negative peace and its relationship with language. She argues that positive peace would not only be the absence or avoidance of war, but the basis for creating fair social institutions.

   In chapter 2, the author gives the theoretical framework of English as a world language and outlines the contexts (e.g. geographical/historical areas) and realms (e.g. education, law, diplomacy) of English use. She posits that the tensions and conflicts at present are due to preconceptions and attitudes towards English and should not be obstacles to the higher purposes of education and understanding, but opportunities for peaceful resolution and social change.

   In chapter 3, she describes specific examples of the contexts of English around the world, the assortment of users, uses of English, and attitudinal diversity and argues that the lack of acceptance and the "non-legitimating" (p. 48) of varieties and the employing a language of a larger community to "dominate and disenfranchise" (p. 49) leads to linguistic intolerance and conflict. However, linguistic peace can be achieved by accepting varieties of English, promoting English for communication, and encouraging peace linguistic education practices for all languages.

   Chapter 4 describes three internationally famous educators--Paulo Freire, David

Crystal, and Gomes de Matos--and their respective contributions of empowerment, ecosystem of languages, and communicative peace. Friedrich then adds another competency, that of peace and social well-being promotion, to the four traditional communicative competences (e.g. grammatical, discourse, strategic, and sociolinguistic) to describe a new linguistic peace model of communicative competence. She then describes three exemplary areas of concentration for peace education in the classroom: teaching ESL/EFL students, linguistic and cross-cultural awareness, humanizing vocabulary, and peace linguistic education of teachers. She outlines suggestions for teacher preparation and gives the three general goals of the approach--empowerment, offsetting imperialism and focusing on peace instead of conflict.

The next chapter discusses the most relevant articles of The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (in its entirety in the Appendix) in relationship to implementation of the linguistic peace education approach. The author also offers an alternative pacific vocabulary and approach indicating how to reinforce positive agreement-fostering terms rather than common negative disagreement-fostering language terms. Representative examples of these are linguistic peace instead of linguistic violence, linguistic justice substituting for killer languages (majority languages which marginalize and consequently destroy minority languages), and linguistic choice for linguistic imperialism. Friedrich says that language teaching should further the principals of peace and understanding, create a non-threatening environment, and promote multilingualism.

Chapter 6 discusses the future of languages in relationship to the ecology of all languages. Friedrich argues that the growing presence of English should not be seen as a threat, but an opportunity for global understanding and positive peace and sees the future of English as a lingua franca as having several standards locally competing and bilingualism as the norm.

The book concludes with reflections about the 21st century and English. She calls upon initial efforts for peace linguistics to be focused on establishing a framework for scholarly research and teaching, continuing to apply human rights, working toward a balanced language ecosystem, and investigating other languages' impact on communication.

This book has a positive vision of using English for peaceful purposes. However, one weakness is that it seems to be in the beginning stages, lacking off-the-shelf

applications or a detailed framework as models for locally generated materials and curriculums. Also, the book's price, $150 US for the hardback version available at present, could limit its audience. However, the book's message of teaching and using English responsibly to promote peace and learner/user empowerment far outweigh its shortcomings.

Guidelines for Submissions

Submissions for the Quarterly Issue

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The *Asian EFL Journal Quarterly* is a fully peer-reviewed section of the journal, reviewed by a team of experts in EFL from all over the world. The *Asian EFL Journal* welcomes submissions written in different varieties of world Englishes. The reviewers and Associate Editors come from a wide variety of cultural and academic backgrounds and no distinction is made between native and non-native authors. As a basic principle, the *Asian EFL Journal* does not define competence in terms of native ability, but we are a strictly reviewed journal and all our reviewers expect a high level of academic and written competence in whatever variety of English is used by the author. Every effort will be made to accept different rhetorical styles of writing. The *Asian EFL Journal* also makes every effort to support authors who are submitting to an international journal for the first time. While major revisions may be requested, every effort is made to explain to authors how to make the necessary revisions.

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Authors are encouraged to conform with international standards of drafting, but every effort will be made to respect original personal and cultural voices and different rhetorical styles. Papers should still be fully-referenced and should use the APA (5th edition) format. Do not include references that are not referred to in the manuscript. Some pieces submitted to the quarterly issue may be reclassified during the initial screening process. Authors who wish to submit directly to the Teaching Articles section should read the separate guidelines and make this clear in the submission e-

mail.

Referencing: Please refer to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.) – Contributors are also invited to view the sample PDF guide available on our website and to refer to referencing samples from articles published from 2006. Due to the increasing number of submissions to the *Asian EFL Journal*, authors not conforming to APA system will have their manuscripts sent back immediately for revision. This delays publication and taxes our editorial process.

<u>**Format for all submissions**</u> (Please read this before submitting your work)
All submissions should be submitted to: <u>asian_efl_journal@yahoo.com</u>

i) The document must be in MS Word format.

ii) Font must be Times New Roman size 12.

   Section Headings: Times New Roman (Size 12, bold font).

   Spacing: 1.5 between lines.

iii) 'Smart tags' should be removed.

iv) Footnotes must not 'pop up' in the document. They must appear at the end of the article. Use the superscript font option when inserting a note rather than the automatic footnote or endnote option.

iv) Citations - APA style. (See our website PDF guide)

Use the APA format as found in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), 5th Edition, for headings, citations, reference lists and in text referencing. Extra care should be taken for citing the Internet and must include the date the site was accessed.

About APA Style/format: <u>http://www.apastyle.org/aboutstyle.html</u>

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The abstract should contain an informative summary of the main points of the article, including, where relevant, the article's purpose, theoretical framework, methodology, types of data analysed, subject information, main findings, and conclusions. The abstract should reflect the focus of the article.

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