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## Index.

1. **David W. Deeds.** Applying Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) Principles to Business/Technology Teaching in English (BTTIE) for Asian International School Students  
2. **Maiko Ogasawara.** Classroom Analysis of an Oral Communication Class at a Japanese High School  
3. **Tuula Lehtonen.** Authenticity through Authentic Materials, Authentic Tasks, and Negotiation  
4. **Marcus Otlowski.** Preparing University EFL Students for Job Interviews in English: A Task-Based Approach  
5. **Sihong Zhang.** The Necessities, Feasibilities and Principles for EFL Teachers to Build A Learner-oriented Mini-corpus for Practical Classroom Uses  
6. **Carlo Magno.** Reading Strategy, Amount of Writing, Metacognition, Metamemory, and Apprehension as Predictors of English Written Proficiency  
7. **Hong Wang.** Language Policy Implementation: A Look at Teachers’ Perceptions  
8. **A. Majid Hayati & Ehsan Askari.** Testing Oral Language Proficiency of University EFL Students  
9. **Victoria Rusina.** Catering for the Specific Needs of Elementary Level Korean Learners in the Australian ELICOS Sector – A Case Study of a School in Sydney  
10. **Yuehai Xiao.** Building Formal Schemata with ESL Student Writers: Linking Schema Theory to Contrastive Rhetoric  
11. **Malinee Prapinwong & Nunthika Puthikanon.** An Evaluation of an Internet-Based Learning Model from EFL Perspectives  
12. **Nicholas K, Farrow.** Learning to Use the Articles, A and The, in One Lesson  
13. **Yu-Li Chen.** Factors Affecting the Integration of Information and Communications Technology in Teaching English in Taiwan  
14. **Ciarán McDonald.** Unplanned Vocabulary Instruction in the Adult EFL Classroom  
15. **Mehrak Rahimi.** What do we want teaching-materials for in EFL teacher training programs?  
16. **Selami Aydin.** An Investigation on the Language Anxiety and Fear of Negative Evaluation among Turkish EFL Learners
Title
Applying Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) Principles to Business/Technology Teaching in English (BTTIE) for Asian International School Students

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Abstract
International educational institutions teaching all subjects in English, from elementary to graduate schools, are proliferating across Asia. Most if not all such organizations dictate that students pass their respectively required English proficiency tests as an admission requirement, however, the obligation for prerequisite and/or ongoing English instruction is generally understood, as learners will initially and/or eventually need additional language training to succeed and ultimately graduate. Many Asian educational institutions have collectively substantial experience/education re: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), but Business/Technology Teaching In English (BTTIE) represents relative terra incognita. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has proven to be extremely effective re: teaching English to Asian students, and applying the “lessons learned” or principles from this area to BTTIE should benefit Asian international school students equally well. A regular school that has codified principles for CALL for local/native learners should easily be able to adapt such guidelines for an international institution so that students continue to learn: English as a means to an end as well as an end in itself; how to use computers for language and other studies; adapting computer usage to work and
life. This paper suggests that CALL principles can and should be applied to a BTTIE environment, from English “per se” to business/technology courses...to all classes.

**Keywords:** Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Business and Technology Teaching in English (BTTIE), Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), International Schools, Asian Students

**Introduction**

This educator (henceforth referred to as “I,” because using third person in papers such as this is pretentious) has for the past 2.5 years worked for Woosong University’s International Business Department (IBD) in Daejeon, South Korea. Previously, I taught English at Woosong for 2.5 years, including a one-year stint as the Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) Specialist, during which I managed Woosong’s first CALL Center. My position entailed choosing all software, creating all syllabi, maintaining all records, etc., in addition to serving as one of the primary instructors and teacher trainers. I am currently teaching business and technology subjects in English to Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian, Korean and students of other nationalities. Before our international students, who are assigned to various Woosong departments as well as our own, can be admitted to our classes, they must attain a certain score on the respectively required English proficiency tests, but we IBD teachers have determined that regardless, most if not all of our learners come to our classes inadequately prepared in at least one if not more or all English skills: reading, writing, listening or speaking.

Various “Business English” classes have been created as part of the curricula, e.g., as suggested courses for different majors, but strictly
on a voluntary and, what’s worse, ad hoc basis. In other words, students may take such a class (or not!) at just about any time during their studies, not necessarily at the beginning. What my fellow educators and I would like to establish is not just an obligatory, preliminary training course, but a mandatory “academic preparation” semester that all but the students with spectacularly high entrance exam scores would be required to take, if not every learner who studies in our department. One of the common problems is that, e.g., although a student may pass a reading/writing-centric proficiency test, the learner may nevertheless experience difficulty with listening and/or speaking. Such English-preparation semesters have been used for Woosong students who have gone abroad to study, e.g., at the University of the Philippines (UP). Woosong learners were required to study English, regardless of test scores or any other factor, for their first semester at UP before being allowed to join the general student population for their second, because experience had proven that no matter what, otherwise learners simply weren’t ready to handle business and technology (or indeed any) classes taught exclusively in English.

Such a program, still in the experimental stage, is currently being administered for students who are about to enter SolBridge (http://solbridge.wsu.ac.kr), Woosong’s new international school. However, such programs have not to date made use of educational technology and I am convinced that this is a serious mistake. Computers should be not only used in English classes, but as part of every course, especially those teaching business and/or technology. CALL principles, when properly applied via appropriate
methodologies, ideally by experienced teachers, greatly assist Asian non-native-English-speaking learners in every classroom environment, vital because no matter what such students are studying, English-skill enhancement is an inevitable part of the process, just as computer-skill enhancement is.

Scope/Research

This paper is not intended to serve as a proposal for such a preparation program, nor is a detailed description of such within this paper’s scope, although certain suggestions re: tools and techniques are inevitably addressed. This paper’s purpose is to discuss how CALL principles, generic to TESOL and specific to the usage of educational technology, learned via experience with hundreds of students, can and should be applied to such English instruction, regardless of whether it’s in the form of an intensive, language-centric preparation semester, a Business English or other similarly-oriented class, or indeed a regular business and/or technology class. In other words, in a school setting such as the IBD, it is imperative to keep in mind at all times that English teaching considerations cannot be separated from other educational factors just because English is a means to an end versus an end in itself. Woosong’s CALL Center made its debut in the summer of 2003, used for that semester break’s “camp,” attended by primarily college-age Korean students wishing to improve their English skills for various reasons.

Following the camp were five sessions, carefully analyzed for the purpose of establishing the principles stated in this paper. It should be noted that the CALL Center served Woosong Language Institute
(WLI), which is a private “hagwon,” to use the Korean term, i.e., it is part of the university but caters to a much-wider range of clientele: children to adults. Nevertheless, the typical majority of its students are roughly of university age. Classes are taught in seven-week increments, usually for a total of six per year. Upon entering WLI, students are given a “level test” to divide them into six categories: 1 = Low Beginner, 2 = High Beginner, 3 = Low Intermediate, 4 = High Intermediate, 5 = Low Advanced and 6 = High Advanced, according to generally accepted TESOL standards. (Worldport ESL, 2001) Levels 1-5 were included in this study. Typically a maximum of 15 students per class is the WLI policy: it certainly was for the CALL Center, which featured only 15 student PCs.

The one-year “CALL experiment” involved teaching one morning (10 AM – 12 PM) and one evening (5 – 7 PM) class per level in the CALL Center. Thus, a Level 1 student would spend Monday in the CALL Center and Tuesday through Friday in his/her regular classrooms, a Level 2 student would spend Tuesday in the CALL Center, and so on. Fifteen students per class, five days a week, morning and evening, would normally indicate that approximately 750 students participated in CALL classes from summer 2003 to summer 2004. The actual number of unique learners was much lower because many, more than half, of the students were “repeats,” ranging from college-age learners who moved up a level every two sessions to “ahgeemah,” i.e., middle-aged women who stayed in the same level throughout; and, of course, not every class included the maximum number of 15 students. I chose ten unique students per level per session, roughly five from the morning and five from the
evening classes, to serve as the subjects of my research, so I surveyed and/or tested approximately 250 students over the course of a year.

The first interesting point is that age or other factors had only a minimal effect on classroom learning: students tended to respond according to their level more than any other consideration. Students were given surveys and/or tests before and after each seven-week period: the results will be discussed during the presentation of the generic (to TESOL) and specific (to CALL or educational technology) principles that follow. My CALL research informally started as of 2002, so studies conducted 2002-2004 resulted in the creation of the “Top Ten CALL Principles,” intended to be part of a training program for would-be CALL teachers, that will be applied and combined with the studies I’ve conducted as an IBD teacher from 2005 to 2007 on many more hundreds of other students in English as well as business/technology classes, half of which were all conducted in computer labs. The goal is not to bog down in statistics, but rather to present percentages with the objective of making various points in a “conversational” manner. Percentages will be identified as pertaining to “CALL” (2002-2004) students or “IBD” (2005-2007) learners, as described above. Please note that, in yet another departure from convention, references are deliberately given herein without page numbers: the points borrowed from the various sources are painstakingly condensed versions of material – versus short excerpts or quotations – that cover many, in some cases hundreds of, pages. This was done to meet maximum page number and word count requirements.
Generic CALL Principles

Generic Principle #1: The best overall strategy for TESOL is (i.e., the most effective theories and techniques are derived from) the Communicative Approach.

From among the plethora of language teaching/learning models enjoying popularity over the years, one paradigm in particular has proven to be the most effective overall: the Communicative Approach, the primary goal of which is to facilitate learner ability to communicate in the target language. The Communicative Approach is the latest version of what is usually referred to collectively as the “inductive/usage model,” so called because linguistic structures are deemphasized and the teacher’s principal role is to encourage interaction (Celce-Murcia, 2001). Despite the recent influence of American educational philosophies, Asian school systems have for the most part remained loyal to traditional (meaning Chinese/Confucian in origin) “systematic/analyzing” models for teaching languages.

Thus, e.g., Korean university graduates chronically can read and write English with varying degrees of success but can’t participate in a simple conversation. This paradox is primarily responsible for the phenomenon of native-speaker teachers now serving as English instructors for thousands of Korean “hagwons” (private institutes) as well as public colleges/universities, where one form or another of the Communicative Approach is invariably used (Ch’oe, et al., 2000). The “English craze” has been gaining momentum in many other Asian countries, with China’s demand for English instruction having
grown most rapidly over the past few years. All WLI, and consequently IBD, instruction is based on this paradigm, the latter of which is distinctive only by the consistent utilization of computer technology in the process. Lessons always entail students having to demonstrate a variety of skills, including reading and writing, but listening and speaking are considered the top priorities. English is used exclusively in the classroom, with the occasional exception of direction delivery to lower-level students.

Authentic or “real-life” situations are presented as the basis for both individual and group work; engaging in role-play and other activities is favored as a technique. Grammar is inevitably covered, but the teacher’s goal is to keep the dialogue flowing while judiciously correcting mistakes versus focusing on the memorization of rules. Overall, the role of the teacher is to encourage active classroom interaction, not to present completely passive lectures or presentations (Celce-Murcia, 2001). IBD students over the years have consistently stated by at least 71% that they learn more not only about the subject matter at hand, but also re: communications in English in general via lecture-and-lab give-and-take with a Native English Speaker Teacher (NEST). Many IBD students, via qualitative research interviews, have confided that they learn as much about English than the subject matter at hand in my business/technology courses and, in fact, one of the primary reasons low-skill students choose my courses is to learn English as much as having substantial interest in the actual course material!

The main point here is that half of every IBD class takes place in a
computer lab so that what I call a “complete feedback system” is maintained, i.e., both teachers and students are engaged in a constant, reciprocal “communicative approach” to teaching/learning covering all four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. My CALL students spent one day per week in the computer lab: the rest of their studies were conducted via “book-and-blackboard,” supposedly because this method favored listening and speaking practice. In actuality, students told me they got more listening and speaking practice in the computer lab than they did in the traditional classroom sessions. My CALL students consistently and overwhelmingly favored the “communicative approach” for covering all four skills made possible by the utilization of educational technology (by at least 82%) and the majority (an average of 68%) considered computer usage as the primary factor that made it possible (others cited me, i.e., the teacher). To provide just two of a myriad of examples: Microsoft Word’s spelling and grammar checkers made it possible for students to focus on context and meaning versus details such as punctuation when writing; the interactive software gave students the ability to repeat a word many times if needed to get it right, without disturbing other students.

**Generic Principle #2:** All components of TESOL (listening, speaking, reading, writing and grammar) must be taught in accordance with the students’ level(s).

Under the guidelines of the Communicative Approach there are various “methods,” or sets of procedures, and each method features different “techniques,” or specific activities. As of the method
stratum of language teaching, it is vital to keep in mind the different
levels of learners when designing, developing and delivering
curricula. Human beings evolve through distinctly different stages of
“L2 acquisition” (i.e., other-than-mother-tongue learning) and to be
effective all instruction must correspond with stage strengths and
weaknesses. (Harmer, 2001) WLI students are assessed via oral
interviews at the beginning and end of each session to determine their
placement for the imminent term. Classroom materials, which in the
case of CALL classes include software, are chosen and utilized
according to the special levels of skills involving listening, speaking,
reading, writing and grammar. Level 6 students, with the goal of
polishing rather than developing skills, participate solely in what’s
known as the “free talking technique,” meaning that learners are
assigned topics to discuss with their teacher and classmates, so
accordingly only Level 1 through 5 students attended CALL Center
classes (WorldportESL, 2001). Level 1 CALL students used software
that presented required vocabulary and other “building blocks” via
picture association and word repetition.

Sentence structure is introduced, but seldom above clause and phrase
degree. Level 2 and 3 CALL students used software (and a
corresponding workbook) to start expressing ideas in complete
sentences. The scenarios and associated dialogs increase in
complexity substantially from Level 2 to 3, since this step represents
the advancement from meeting basic to advanced needs. Level 4 and
5 CALL students watched movies and TV programs using software
that assists comprehension and retention, since the learners’ goal at
these strata is to perfect conversational abilities (WorldportESL, 2001
& Hansen-Smith, 2000). Ideally, IBD students will one day be divided into such levels for their classes. Much more likely is a continuation of the less-than-ideal scenario of mixing students of various levels together for whatever type of class is being taught – Remedial English, Just Plain English or Business/Technology – and attempting to accommodate the needs of all students via various strategies such as inclusion. I’ve been studying using inclusion to differentiate material delivery and otherwise meet the needs of advanced and slower IBD students simultaneously in the same classroom.

Addressing this subject in detail is beyond the scope of this paper, but the conclusions, which consistently indicate that the utilization of educational technology is a primary factor re: successful teaching under such circumstances, are verified by my research results. The vast majority of both CALL and IBD students consistently stated that it was computer usage, more than any other factor, which enabled them to learn despite level “gaps” in the classroom, i.e., having higher or lower English skills than those of classmates. Put simply, computers “level the playing field” for students, allowing learners with widely varying levels of English proficiency to succeed re: their group/individual goals. Slower students feel computer usage helps them keep up and advanced students say computer usage helps them to be challenged versus bored: the strategy works, whether in the English or business/technology classroom. CALL classes, even while segregated by level, nevertheless had variations within each classroom: students who identified themselves as “behind” their classmates in English skills, as well as those who saw themselves as
“above” their peers, consistently and overwhelmingly (81%) cited computer usage as compensation for weaknesses or strengths. IBD students have contended, by a majority of at least 77%, that computer utilization allowed them to prove mastery of subject matter that otherwise would not have been possible.

**Generic Principle #3:** One of the emphases of TESOL, especially in some Asian countries, should be on students listening and talking to a native English speaker.

Koreans, e.g., who have studied English for ten or more years are typically unable to communicate verbally in the language until they receive exposure to and instruction from NESTs. This is not unusual among Asian societies, where not only was reading/writing traditionally revered more than listening/speaking, but until recently it was almost universally assumed that locals would never come into physical contact with foreigners! To this day, many Koreans sit in English classrooms led by teachers who never speak the target language, who indeed are incapable of pronouncing a single English word correctly (Ch’oe, et al., 2000 and Yamamoto, 2001). Thus it is vital that all Asian students concentrate on listening/talking to a native speaker. In the CALL Center as well as the IBD lab, of course, the native speaker may be real or virtual. The standard TESOL classroom management rule dictating at least a 75-to-25% division respectively between “student time” and “teacher time” is honored, with educational technology classes taking the split one degree further: “student time” is increased via “computer time.”
Although CALL software can be used independently of the classroom, such activity is deemed merely supplemental because of the requirement for a native speaker to clarify, correct, etc (Harmer, 2001 & Hansen-Smith, 2000). Level 1 students require some “silent reading” because of their need to form associations between how words appear and how they’re spoken. But students at all other levels ideally should be constantly participating in a conversation at least indirectly if not directly, and by following the proper procedures an educational technology teacher can maintain this consistency throughout a class, a feat harder to accomplish in a traditional classroom because of the logistics of having every learner participate simultaneously.

In an Asian country, the native-speaker classroom is often the only place for such listening/speaking opportunities to take place and one of the main reasons educational technology instruction is considered superior to the alternatives is that a much wider variety of speakers, real or virtual, is inevitably involved and so learners are exposed to different dialects, accents, etc (WorldportESL, 2001 and Yamamoto, 2001). This is an example of a “no-brainer” re: directly applying CALL principles to BTTIE. CALL and IBD students have agreed, 61% and 65% respectively, that computer usage helped them with improving their listening and speaking skills (reading and writing got much higher marks, not surprisingly...in Asia, particularly Korea, there is tremendous inertia and prejudice in favor of the traditional method of “conversational English” instruction, among both students and teachers!) better than the “book-and-blackboard” method. Re: interviews alone, I’ve managed to transform the concept of “native-
speaker listening and speaking” into somewhat of an art form. My students interview NESTs, NESTs interview them…NEST and student presentations are videotaped and played back…performances are critiqued with the goal of improving techniques…etc. Anything an English teacher can do in a traditional classroom a CALL teacher can do better in a computer lab…anything. And so it follows that anything a business teacher can do in the traditional manner an educational technology teacher can do better using hardware/software…yes, anything. Please note this caveat: The CALL and/or educational technology teacher must know what s/he is doing…but this is another matter.

**Generic Principle #4:** Teaching English grammar with a communicative end in mind requires that meaning and use are considered in addition to forms.

The underlying theories of language instruction at Korean “hagwons” such as WLI assume that students have already been taught the lexicogrammar – the structure or forms – of English elsewhere and that WLI classes are supposed to be “conversational,” with students taking advantage of the presence of NESTs to practice talking about people, places and things using English. Indeed, in comparably isolated Korean cities such as Daejeon, “hagwons” such as WLI offer the only opportunity locals have for face-to-face conversations with foreigners. At Woosong, only Korean teachers of English head classes that focus on grammar, with the functional goal of explaining structure and rules in the “L2” or “target language” as much as possible/feasible, but reverting to the “L1” or “mother tongue” as
desired/required. Korean public colleges and universities feature the same division of labor, although the ratio of Korean to native-speaker teachers of English is typically much higher. Such practices that allow different language teachers to define and perfect their niches follow precisely the recommendations of many grammar-teaching experts (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999.) Thus WLI CALL classes by design are taught exclusively by NESTs, but only those with proven abilities to also successfully teach lexicogrammar, just not to the degree that a, e.g., Korean teacher of English does.

Meaning and use are of primary importance in CALL classes. Grammar is interjected strictly in accordance with the needs of students at the different levels. Level 1 software shows students how to connect words into clauses, phrases and then sentences without “spelling out” the rules. The programs used for Level 2 and 3 students have a prominent grammar tutorial for each lesson, although as always the emphasis is on using the sentences to convey meaning in the scenarios involved. Level 4 and 5 students, who watch movies and TV programs, definitively and appropriately focus on use and meaning: plots, characters, etc (Harmer, 2001 and Worldport ESL, 2001). This is another example of a “direct mapping” of CALL principles onto IBD methodologies. It cannot be emphasized enough that in an international school setting, the teaching of English never really stops: a teacher’s conversation with students while walking down a hallway is essentially a lesson. Experience has shown that a typical IBD class of 30 students will consist of one or two Level 4 or 5 students, 10 Level 1’s…with the rest 3’s or 2’s. Accommodating the needs of students with such a wide range of English proficiencies
is a constant challenge, but the unifying concept behind all instruction is that meaning is emphasized over such details as punctuation. Asian students will quickly “paralyze” themselves if they worry too much about making a mistake versus trying to, as I bluntly tell them: “Say something!” I’ve witnessed teachers interrupting students attempting to complete an oral presentation with corrections: terrible idea. I let my students make it through and then I make the corrections…then they get another attempt.

The main point is that all international school teachers must (or at least should!) be at some level English teachers, regardless of their subject areas of specialization. Instructors must know the lexicogrammar as well as being able to teach using it…or without it…at the proper time, in the appropriate proportions, etc. The subject understandably never came up during CALL classes, but qualitative research conducted via interviews with IBD students revealed that they viewed their successes in my classes to be attributed to my ability to present material as much as my education/experience re: the subject itself. In other words, what I knew mattered, but the fact that I could explain this in deference to their needs as non-native speakers was equally as important. The Spring 2007 end-of-semester, Likert-scale survey included this statement: “I prefer an instructor with an advanced degree and at least 10 years of experience.” Only 19% strongly agreed; nearly half (47%) agreed…but 28% were neutral and 6% disagreed. Being an expert in one’s field is relatively meaningless unless you can communicate properly with students! The results suggest that perhaps the international schoolteacher selection process
should favor communications abilities over other factors such as
degrees, schools, years of experience, etc.

**Generic Principle #5:** The most effective techniques for facilitating
classroom interaction are activities (games, tasks, etc.) that engage
the learner in the learning process.

The traditional Asian classroom dynamic consists of seated students
passively receiving information, albeit while furiously taking notes,
delivered in a monotone by a teacher who never leaves his/her desk
except to write on the blackboard. After witnessing such a scholarly
spectacle, little is left to the imagination re: students’: (a) inability to
communicate in English; (b) lack of confidence and enthusiasm re:
further English study. In stark contrast, a conversational class must
by definition get students talking, and unquestionably the best
technique for achieving this is to get them involved with an activity
of some kind. TESOL certification courses for native-speaker English
teachers generally consist of two types of lessons: grammar refresher
exercises and tutorials on how to design, develop and deliver
assignments/activities.

Thus over the years “hagwons” such as WLI accumulate entire
libraries of games, puzzles, etc., that can be used to supplement
and/or replace textbook material (Yamamoto, 2001 and Worldport
ESL, 2001). I’d like to implement an “IBD certification” and start
creating such a collection of materials as well. One of the most
powerful, practical arguments in favor of CALL goes as follows:
Activities make conversational classes effective and fun; CALL
provides the widest variety of and the most entertaining activities available. Even the most CALL-skeptical TESOL teacher is amazed when the Internet’s “window to the world” is first used as a source of topics for a class. Games, e.g., are often used when a textbook runs short of material or when the book-and-blackboard routine becomes mind-numbingly predictable and dull. The WWW offers a practically unlimited number of exciting things to see and do; often finding the lesson is an activity in itself! Without a doubt, however, it is the interactive functionality and multimedia elements such as sound, animation, etc., of CALL programs that define the most enjoyable and therefore effective exercises for English students.

Most impressive re: getting the student engaged in the learning process, to cite just one example, is the power such software bestows to study at an individual pace while being part of a class, to choose one’s own “path” according to individual interests (Dudeney, 2000 and Alessi & Trollip, 2001). This is yet another obvious example of how CALL principles map directly to IBD classes taught using educational technology. My students are not given tests in the traditional sense: instead, they are assigned projects as if they were employees in the “real world.” Using a standard computer application such as FrontPage to create a website is often the first practical use knowledge has been put to for most if not all of my IBD students. It’s not just “applied knowledge,” but “practical applied knowledge” that educational technology makes possible. Projects such as creating a website business plan open an entirely new door on education for Asian students. They learn: teamwork, how the business world functions, job skills, etc., in addition to the subject matter itself! The
latest Spring 2007 IBD survey included these two statements: “Using computers helped me to understand business/technology concepts in English” and “Using computers helped me to understand business/technology concepts in general”: 79% and 87%, respectively, either strongly agreed or agreed.

**Specific CALL Principles**

**Specific Principle #1:** Computer usage in TESOL should never be considered an end in itself or a replacement for human teachers; the keyword in CALL is “assisted.”

Both anecdotal and empirical evidence suggest one of the main reasons computer-illiterate TESOL (and perhaps all) instructors resist the inevitable progression toward educational technology in their schools is simply that they’re afraid they’ll lose their positions as a result, that teachers will be replaced by PCs. Another explanation is that, whether or not job security is a concern, educators are apprehensive about their ability to learn how to use hardware and software in the classroom. NESTs’ stated concerns about the effectiveness of CALL are usually nothing more than a smokescreen to disguise worry re: job security, however, such reservations are sometimes sincere, albeit uninformed. Experience indicates that instructors can be trained to use technology as they can be persuaded that CALL has a proven track record of success as well as a sound scientific foundation. Convincing them that their TESOL careers are not threatened by CALL is often more difficult, however (Egbert & Hanson-Smith, 1999).
TESOL teachers’ trepidation over being displaced by hardware and software is unfounded. Personal computers and language programs have been around for years, and the TESOL field has not disappeared. On the contrary, it’s grown substantially. Korea, e.g., is one of the most techno-centric societies on the planet. So why are thousands of NESTs still working here? Universally, for all education but apparently for language education in particular, the near-unanimous consensus contends that technology can supplement/augment/enable teaching performed by human beings, but that hardware and software are not sophisticated/capable enough – and probably will never be – to constitute an acceptable substitute for a person as a teacher. The teacher need not be physically present, as in the case of distance education, but the teacher – human, that is – must be available.

Locally, distance education may someday become popular enough to include, e.g., webcam access to conversations with foreigners, but this represents a dramatic/unlikely cultural adjustment re: schooling and besides, the teachers would be humans, not machines, regardless (Dudeney, 2000 & Yamamoto, 2001). IBD teachers, as is most likely going to be the case with most if not all international school instructors, who have had experience in the “real world” (versus teachers who seldom if ever have ventured beyond the academic environment), generally do not fret about being rendered obsolete by machines. They are aware of my standard maxim: “Computers will never replace teachers, but teachers with computers will replace those without.” However, some instructors have nevertheless proved reluctant to adapt educational technology simply because they are, if you’ll pardon the expression, “old school” and were never taught how
to do this properly. Teacher training is beyond the scope of this document, but instituting a prerequisite program for international school teachers unfamiliar with educational technology is an excellent if not inevitable policy suggestion. One of the primary lessons to learn is that even teaching about computers isn’t just about using computers: humans are necessary because without humans computers have no purpose: it’s about context.

**Specific Principle #2:** CALL solves many of the classroom problems inherent in most if not all educational environments.

Whether the short attention span and high distraction level intrinsic to today’s learners, especially the younger ones, are the result/fault of TV, computer games, or some other culprit(s), the fact remains that book-and-blackboard classroom instruction is increasingly considered old-fashioned and boring by students…and often by teachers as well. This factor, regardless of one’s opinion about it, cannot be ignored, especially if a school is a business at the mercy of the marketplace.

The competitive “bottom line” in a country like Korea is that, for a variety of reasons, a student given a choice between a school with technology and a school without will choose the former. As of ten or fewer years ago, the cost of hardware and software necessary for a multimedia classroom was prohibitive; today for a relatively modest investment a school can offer its students all the benefits of an educational technology environment (Alessi & Trollip, 2001 and Warschauer & Kern, 2000). Arguably one of the most important advantages CALL offers is a solution to the “level split” problem.
Even the best systems for assigning TESOL students to their respective levels aren’t perfect. Human beings and their language abilities are typically too complex to fit students neatly into one category or another. The problem is bad enough in a small, intimate setting such as WLI, where classes are limited to a maximum of 15 students. At the IBD, e.g., a class might have 40 or more learners. In the traditional book-and-blackboard classroom, this means up to two-thirds of the students are bored and/or frustrated at any given time. In a CALL classroom, the teacher can personally address certain students according to their needs while other learners – undistracted because they’re wearing headphones – can either review, advance or “diversify” (i.e., continue lessons via other source material).

The latter is another example of how once students know how to use the Internet, it can serve as a practically unlimited source of teaching/learning material (Granger, 2002 and Gitsaki & Taylor, 2000). All of this is not only directly “mappable” without further comment to IBD and other international school environments, but has also been discussed to some degree already. The main point to remember is that educational technology, the Internet in particular, makes the entire planet outside the classroom/school accessible in a way that no book-and-blackboard environment has ever, can now or ever will. This enables unlimited opportunities for teaching and learning: English; business/technology; both.

**Specific Principle #3:** CALL solves many of the culture-related classroom problems inherent in Asian educational environments.
To many teachers who’ve never worked in Asia, statements to the effect that, e.g., “Koreans do this or that” may seem to approach overgeneralization if not outright stereotyping, but the fact remains that Korea, e.g., represents a remarkably homogeneous society and thus student behavior patterns are starkly similar. This predictability, if exploited properly, can be a great advantage for teachers re: solving classroom management and other problems. Introducing and using CALL can diminish or eliminate many of the difficulties language teachers encounter while teaching all language students, but in several ways CALL can assist with teaching languages to Asian students in particular. (Yamamoto, 2001) For example, Asian students, especially younger ones, are quite shy about speaking English in the classroom. It’s not the teacher’s reaction they dread if they should make a mistake, it’s the adverse appraisal of their classmates: “losing face,” as it’s called, in front of one’s peers is terrifying to them.

Thus many students simply will not speak in the classroom, a disaster by definition for a “conversational” course. Closely related is the reluctance of an Asian student to appear as “standing out” from everyone else, especially if this involves seeming to monopolize classroom time by needing special attention, e.g., having to repeat a sentence multiple times before finally getting it right. Using CALL software is a convenient answer to such cultural dilemmas. With all classmates in the classroom wearing headphones, students know that only the teacher and the computer can hear them… and neither will laugh at errors. A CALL program is infinitely patient: if a student needs to repeat a word 50 times, so be it. And the best CALL
software features speech recognition technology that, although far from perfect, offers individualized and instant feedback. These, of course, are highly specific examples, but they illustrate how CALL and indeed all online classroom environments enable teachers to customize instruction according to their students’ needs in ways that never would have been possible or even imaginable in the traditional onground classroom (Palloff & Pratt, 2001 and Hanson-Smith, 2000).

References have been made elsewhere to the fact that educational technology enables a “leveling of the playing field,” i.e., it gives students the ability to prove their understanding of the knowledge as well as demonstrate mastery of the skills in the way(s) appropriate for them. Perhaps more importantly for Asian students is the concept of being able to “express themselves” beyond the standard test: the pride on students’ faces as they present, e.g., their individual websites in my classes is enough of a “research result” for me…I will never go back to the standard multiple-choice test as long as I have a say in the matter. Again, every business/technology (or whatever the subject!) class for a non-native speaker is essentially an English class too…what works in an English class will work for other classes…and educational technology WORKS. Nothing else “liberates the creative spirit in Asian students” like the usage of hardware and software in the classroom. (Ng, 2004)

**Specific Principle #4:** CALL has the current and especially the future potential for being the ultimate means of facilitating learning via activities (games, tasks, etc.) that engage the learner in the learning process.
The TESOL classes taught in the WLI CALL Center were, by necessity, adaptations of existing courses, although the conventional wisdom re: such curriculum design maintains that it’s better to “start from scratch” in such environments. A gradual change was deemed necessary not only for the comfort of WLI students, but our teachers as well. Asian school cultural norms dictate that a teacher is in charge of a lesson’s presentation and progression: students are often “lost” without such an authority figure. This is one of the reasons why teachers aren’t considered obsolete despite the fact that students can buy the language learning software used in the CALL classroom!

Over time, WLI will be expanding its course repertoire by offering classes that are conducted mostly online, i.e., both teachers and students will need to adjust to an even more dramatic power transfer from teacher to student. If everyone involved in such a paradigm shift is prepared and trained properly for the changes involved, it should go smoothly. The primary change in, e.g., an Asian student’s view is that s/he will be more involved or engaged in making choices re: how s/he is going to learn something; from a teacher’s perspective, s/he will evolve into more of a facilitator than leader (Palloff & Pratt, 2001 and Hanna, et al., 2000). Enjoying the benefits of such change doesn’t necessarily have to wait for the future, however. Many of the requirements needed for a student to be truly engaged in the learning process are met by the average computer game or other activity related to the subject being studied. For CALL classes, numerous multimedia games and other programs are available that present a student with multiple “paths” s/he can choose. Even the simplest CALL software offers a choice of lessons that can vary according to
students’ group and/or individual interests and/or needs.

With a clear understanding of the goals or objectives for a particular language unit, advanced students can actually design, complete and even assess/evaluate their own language learning activities (Lynch, 2001 and Palloff & Pratt, 2001 and Hanson-Smith, 2000). Ultimately, Woosong and other international schools will no doubt wish to design, develop and deliver its own software for business and/or technology training. Teaching students how to, e.g., use Word to write business letters is certainly practical but hardly entertaining or even engaging for very long periods of time. I along with potential colleagues around the world are in the process of “sketching out” a wide variety of futuristic “scenario-based,” virtual-reality-type programs that will revolutionize the ways we prepare students for dealing not only with the academic environment but the “real world” beyond it. It’s the student participation in the learning process that makes the difference…and simulations, drills, performance support systems, “open-ended learning” experiences…I could go on…educational technology will ultimately make anything and everything possible (Alessi & Trollip, 2001).

**Specific Principle #5:** Computer usage in TESOL helps both students and teachers in a variety of ways, not all directly related to language learning/teaching.

Korea, e.g., is rife with unemployed college graduates who, proficient if not fluent in English, were never taught to do anything practical with the language. It seems that the ranks of TESOL teachers suffer
from an overabundance of literature and drama majors; Asian employers tend to be totally unimpressed by an applicant’s ability to analyze a plot or recite a play. Ask an average IBD freshman classroom’s students how many of them know how to use a computer at the beginning of a semester and they’ll all raise their hands. Ask how many can use, e.g., an Office application such as Word to write a letter and the small number of respondents will be shocking to the newly-arrived NEST. Again, recruiters overwhelmingly don’t require “Doom”-playing skills within their organizations.

Many programs can be considered CALL and using them in the language classroom helps TESOL students in a wide variety of practical ways, but two of the less obvious include the increased proficiency at solving problems and the advancement of independent thinking. Such progress can be used as the catalyst for a more satisfying/rewarding educational experience re: all subjects (Palloff & Pratt, 2001). The benefits of attaining and applying increased computer skills can also benefit teachers beyond the obvious blessing of continued employment. One of the reasons many students are handicapped re: their potential range of English usage is that NESTs have up until now been primarily relegated to teaching the language as an end in itself.

The demand for English instructors is simply too overwhelming for the number of NESTs here: there’s no remaining bandwidth for instructors to handle other subjects, not in the traditional onground classroom environment. One of the major advantages offered by CALL and other technological advances is that they enable one
teacher’s expertise to be accessible by larger numbers of students, e.g., an Internet-based writing class. Another benefit follows from the teacher role shift from expert to facilitator. Instead of being limited to teaching English using standard English textbooks, “layperson” instructors could teach any number of subjects in English: business, architecture, even medicine (Lynch, 2001 and Hanna, et al., 2000).

Asian students if nothing else are definitely practical re: their choice of schools, subjects, etc. They want JOBS…Korea’s workplace, e.g., features a tightly competitive employment market, but even it is mild compared to China’s. Knowing English and computers are two of the key factors that practically guarantee if not the perfect career, at least a satisfactory one. One of the primary reasons Asian students welcome the usage of computers in school is that they view such activities as being practically applicable to their futures. The same goes for English studies as well, so naturally learning how to use hardware and software in English is more valuable, even essential (Ng, 2004). Meanwhile, the shortage of teachers in general in countries like the USA means that international schools around the world are going to find meeting NEST staffing requirements extremely difficult for the foreseeable future, and “NESTs are the best,” re: teaching English both as an end in itself and a means to an end, as this paper and other research point out. Even under the best of conditions, convincing, e.g., a tenured professor with a family, home, etc., in the USA to uproot himself and come to Korea or China is often hard if not impossible. As mentioned elsewhere in this paper, experience has shown that Asian students tend to appreciate more a teacher’s ability to communicate effectively versus insisting upon
certain academic or other credentials. Perhaps training talented
English teachers to serve as instructors for other subjects will open
entirely new career paths for such professionals, which will naturally
benefit students proportionately.

Conclusion

For Asian international school students studying subjects in English,
language instruction never really stops: it’s an important, constant
consideration regardless of major, subject, etc. Ideally such students
would attend a semester-long academic English preparation program
before they would be allowed to join the rest of the student
population, but for various reasons this is not going to be feasible at
every institution. Whether or not such a program exists, English
instruction is inevitably an ongoing process and following TESOL
guidelines throughout will serve both teachers and students well.

In general, Business and Technology Teaching In English is new
ground to cover for schools in Asia, but luckily the principles of
TESOL, both CALL-generic and CALL-specific, can and should be
applied to all instruction, whether English is a means to an end or an
end in itself. CALL is the best way to do TESOL with Asian students,
and so using educational technology is the best way to teach them
every other subject in English. My research efforts are continuing in
several areas: sheltered instruction; creating special in-house software
for teaching/training students/instructors; devising evaluation criteria
for establishing “basic applications” re: educational technology; and
evaluating the success/failure of educational technology in general.
References


Title
Classroom Analysis of an Oral Communication Class at a Japanese High School

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Abstract
In Japanese English education, Oral Communication classes were introduced to improve students’ communicative competency. This research compares the outcomes of an Oral Communication class taught by a native English speaking teacher, with those of a reading class taught by a Japanese teacher of English from two previous studies (Nunn, 2004; Otlowski, 2003). Though one would expect significant differences, the outcomes of both of these classes were highly convergent and predictable. Likewise, provision of a native English speaking teacher did not induce a higher quality of English output from students. This probably results from Japanese classroom culture and the negative washback effect of examinations. The assumptions that provision of Native English speaking teachers, and that Oral Communication classes will improve communicative competence is clearly challenged, as there remain serious constraints which impede objectives.

1. Background
1.1 Introduction and practice of Oral Communication classes
In traditional Japanese English classes, the grammar translation (GT) method is predominately employed for the development of reading and writing skills for the purpose of passing entrance examinations (Dayon, 2000; Nunan, 2003; Watanabe, 2004). Almost 20 years ago, however, the Japanese Ministry of Education (present Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) took the first steps to develop students’ ability to communicate using English. In 1989, the Japanese Ministry of Education announced the revised national curriculum guidelines and officially placed pedagogic emphasis on the development of students’ communicative abilities. A new English class, Oral Communication (OC), was introduced to develop students’ communicative ability at this time (cited in Taguchi, 2005). According to the course of study for foreign languages announced in 2003 by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), the general objective of OC classes is to develop students’ ability to understand and convey information by listening to, or speaking English, and to foster a positive attitude toward communication through dealing with various topics (MEXT, 2003)

1.2 Constraints that Japanese teachers face when conducting Oral Communication classes

Regarding the actual practice of OC, Taguchi’s (2005) survey study reveals that teachers are caught between the objectives of the national curriculum and local constraints, namely, their lack of expertise and experience in designing communicative activities and the washback effect of examinations. Nunan (2003) goes on to point out the gap by stating that although the government rhetoric stresses development of
practical communicative skills, at the classroom level the emphasis is on the development of reading and writing skills for the purpose of passing entrance examinations.

Oshita (1999) expresses how difficult it is to conduct communication-oriented classes that require teachers to have very high teaching skills as well as high English proficiency. Taguchi (2005) states that only 7% of 92 Japanese Teachers of English (JTEs) surveyed reported using English as a medium of instruction in the OC classes. Activities involving student speech are rarely conducted in OC classes and “the form-based receptive instructional method used in traditional courses was also evident in the OC classes” (p.10). Watanabe (2004) suggests that teachers employ the GT method because they have learned English in this way and feel it difficult to adopt other methods. Similarly, Hulstijin (1995) points out that teachers who teach a language which is not their mother tongue strongly believe in the usefulness and necessity of grammar teaching. Evidently, it seems that most JTEs do not, or cannot design and conduct communicative activities and they tend to use traditional form-based instruction even in OC classes.

The washback effect of the examinations also has a negative effect on practice. In spite of the official curriculum changes, the entrance examinations of major Japanese universities, both public and private, have remained essentially unchanged. Among 20 universities, no university has implemented communicative entrance tests such as interviews (Kikuchi, 2006). This is true at the school level also, where written assessment is much more frequent than speaking tests (Taguchi, 2005). Watanabe (2004) suggests that JTEs tend to teach what they think would be important for examination preparation such
as vocabulary or structure. The traditional form-based receptive instructional method that was observed in the OC classes in Taguchi’s (2005) study could be due to this tendency, which causes gaps between the objectives in the national curriculum and actual practice in OC classes.

1.3 The role of JTE and non-NESTs in English classes in Japan
Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) are recruited at the national and local levels in Japan, as part of the plan to improve students’ communicative ability. It is assumed that NESTs and non-Native English Speaking Teachers (non-NESTs) will take on very different roles in the classroom. Non-NESTs (JTEs) should provide grammatical instruction, while it is assumed that NESTs will teach more communicatively. With this in mind, MEXT employs several thousand NESTs to work as Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) under the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program. Gillis-Furutaka (1994) summarizes that the role of ALTs is to “engage actively in communication and interaction with Japanese students” (p.13). Explaining facts about the English language and answering students’ questions is considered the role of JTEs.

Other studies also imply that NESTs and non-NESTs have different perceived characteristics and roles. NESTs may have an advantage in teaching a class like OC where there is less emphasis on explaining grammatical rules and active interaction is required (Hulstijn, 1995). Non-NESTs, on the other hand, can serve as models for students to emulate, having learned English as a second language themselves. They can also use their first language in class to explain new words and grammar structure (Cook, 1999).
1.4 Alternative views toward the distinction between teaching communication and grammar

The implication above is that teachers are expected to teach a communication-oriented class differently from a grammar class in Japan. Other research, however, suggests that such distinctions might not be necessary or appropriate. Facts about language such as grammar rules do not necessarily have to be taught explicitly. Grammatical structures should be encountered and taught within the context of meaningful communication instead of in isolation (Nunan, 2001; Swain, 1998). Fotos (1993) suggests that learners’ consciousness of grammatical structure can be raised through interactive grammar tasks just as effectively without explicit grammatical explanation. Furthermore, it may be inaccurate to assume that the provision of an ALT or OC classes improves students’ communicative ability most effectively. Doughty and Williams (1998) point out that in an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) environment like Japan, learners have limited opportunity for output and “there may be instructional and cultural limitations on pedagogical practices such as large class size or a tradition of teacher-centered or examination-centered language instruction” (p.200). Large class sizes, teacher-centered language instruction, and examination-centered language instruction are all common to English education in Japan. We must consider these restraints when trying to optimize the effect of ALTs in communication-oriented classes.

2. The Present Study

2.1 Research questions
This study is a comparative analysis of a NEST-taught OC class and a non-NEST-taught reading class at two Japanese high schools. The reading class was analyzed by Otlowksi (2003) and Nunn (2004). The OC class was analyzed by the author, using the same framework as Otlowksi and Nunn so that the results would be comparable. The research questions are:

1. Are the outcomes different between the non-NEST taught reading class and the NEST-taught OC class? 
2. Of what factors are the outcomes a product? 

2.2 Participants and instructional context of the NEST-taught OC class
A 50-minute-long OC class was instructed by a NEST alone who had 3-years experience as an ALT at different public schools and had been teaching at this private junior and senior high school for nearly four years. She was proficient in Japanese and seemed to be well adapted to teaching as well as to the school. She took full responsibility in class and outside of class. The students were first year high school students aged 15 to 16. In Japan, English becomes compulsory in the first year of junior high school, so all participants had received formal English education for three years and six months but it is possible that some of them had also studied English privately or in elementary school before entering junior high school. The high school is private and almost all of the students go to university after graduation. It is assumed that the participants study hard to go to prestigious universities.
The textbooks used were “Progressive Oral Communication B”, which was approved by MEXT and is used as the main textbook of the course, and “Collocation Eitango”, which presents vocabulary items for entrance examinations and was used to expand vocabulary. A fill-in-the-blank song lyric sheet was also used as supplementary material. The song played in class was pre-selected by some of the students and a worksheet was made by the teacher. The target of the class was seating position vocabulary that was covered in the main textbook, Progressive Oral Communication B, and their short-term goal was to pass the upcoming final examination. Collocation Eitango and the song lyrics worksheet had nothing to do with seating positions and the teacher did not spend much time on them. First, they worked on the song lyrics worksheets for 13 minutes. Then, they did a vocabulary drill using Collocation Eitango for 3 minutes. The remaining 34 minutes were spent learning seating positions based on the main textbook.

2.3 The reading class taught by a non-NEST

The data of the non-NEST-taught reading class is from Nunn (2004) and Otlowski (2003). The participants were 42 high school students instructed by a non-NEST (JTE). Nunn described classroom discourse with respect to four categories. Table 1 shows the definitions of the categories.
Table 1. Definitions of the four categories. (Nunn, 2004, p.25)

| Turn-taking and exchange structure | Who controls nomination, self-bidding, interrupting, initiating, responding, following up, negotiating, eliciting, recasting, repairing, evaluating, terminating…?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Input and output: text and topic</td>
<td>Who chooses and creates spoken and written texts? Who chooses, develops, changes topic? Who decides language, origin, nature and quality of texts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holistic types of pedagogical discourse</td>
<td>Who presents, reads aloud, explains, translates, conducts, drills, lectures, narrates, reconstructs a text, leads a discussion, participates in a group activity, interacts in pairs or small groups…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus and outcomes</td>
<td>Focus on product or process Convergent predictable or divergent unpredictable outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the present study, the last category, “focus and outcomes” is very important. The focus may be on product or process. If a teacher prompts students with the intention of eliciting a specific response, then product is the focus. For example, intending on eliciting a time expression, a teacher may prompt students with: “What time did you go to bed?” A student may respond with “Well, I couldn’t sleep, so…”. If the teacher rejects the response, asking: “But what time did you fall asleep?” until the student answers with a time expression, we see that the discourse is product focused. If, on the other hand, the teacher acknowledges the communicative message of the student’s initial response, inquiring as to why he or she couldn’t sleep, then process is the focus. ‘Outcomes’ refers to student production in class. In other words, it’s what students say. Outcomes are convergent and predictable where prompts from the teacher elicit specific limited answers. This would be the case if in the example above, all students know that the
teacher expects a simple time expression and they answer accordingly. Even more convergent predictable outcomes are seen when teachers conduct repetition practice. The answer: “Well, I couldn’t sleep, so...”, on the other hand, is unpredictable and divergent. Reflecting the nature of real communication, a lesson can be said to be more ‘communicative’ if the outcomes are divergent and unpredictable and the focus is on product.

Nunn (2004) provided Table 2 as representative of the non-NEST-

Table 2. Role map for the reading class (Nunn, 2004, p.29)

| Turn-taking and exchange structure | Teacher controls turn-taking  
|                                  | No self-selection by students is tolerated  
|                                  | Teacher initiates, eliciting, negotiating, repairing and terminating all contributions  
|                                  | Almost no student bidding  
|                                  | Students stand to respond if nominated before a question  

| Input: text and topic | Text and textbook is selected form a limited number of approved choices  
|                      | Teacher controls topic  
|                      | Extensive use of native language (code switching)  
|                      | Mainly mono-syllabic student contributions  

| Holistic types of pedagogical discourse | Teacher-fronted verbatim reproduction of text from the course book  
|                                        | Word by word translation  

| Focus and outcomes | **Product focus**  
|                    | Convergent, highly predictable outcomes  

taught reading class.

Otlowski (2003) provided qualitative data as shown in Table 3. The length of replies is either one or two words and there wasn’t any student-generated production. The results reflect the prevailing classroom culture in Japan. Otlowski states that the teacher’s “own culturally determined role is also a reason why the students are quiet and passive in class” (p.39).
Table 3. The length and the frequency of student production. (Otlowski, 2003, p.37)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of replies</th>
<th>Times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>one word</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two or more words</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drill practice by whole class</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the non-NEST taught reading class, the teacher focuses on production, not process, and requires very specific responses from the students. Students are also ready to give such specific responses, which are convergent and predictable. As a result, students produce only one or two words. The JTE’s culturally determined role also leads students to adopt a passive attitude in class.

2.4 Data analysis

After videotaping the NEST-taught OC class, all teacher and student utterances were transcribed and analyzed. A role map was made following Nunn’s (2004) framework and is shown in Table 4. The underlined points are the differences from the reading class shown in Table 2, after thorough analysis of the recorded class. A more complete discussion on these differences is presented later.
| Turn-taking and exchange structure | Teacher partly controls turn-taking  
**Self-selection at will**  
Teacher initiates, eliciting, negotiating, repairing and terminating all contributions  
No student bidding but free student responding  
Students don’t have to stand to respond when nominated before a question |
|---|---|
| Input: text and topic | Main text and textbook is selected from a limited number of approved choices, but some materials are pre-selected by students  
Teacher controls topic  
**Limited** use of native language (code switching)  
Mainly mono-syllabic student contributions |
| Holistic types of pedagogical discourse | Teacher-fronted **step-by-step modified** reproduction of text from the course book  
**Occasional** word by word translation |
| Focus and outcomes | Primarily product focus, but **partly process**  
**Convergent, highly predictable outcomes** |

Table 5 indicates the length (the number of words) of student utterances and the frequency with which each length appears. ‘Drill practice’ and instances where students translated the teacher’s Japanese into English are not considered independent output and were not included (counted) in Otlowski (2003) but since there are many of such contributions, they were counted in the present study and might be of interest.
3. Result

3.1 Differences between the two classes

One should expect that a NEST-taught OC class should be much more communicative than a non-NEST-taught reading class. The findings, however, indicate that although the NEST made some effort towards this end, student output (referred to as “outcomes”, in accordance with Nunn (2004)) was similar in both classes. Also the NEST’s efforts at establishing a communicative classroom environment were incomplete, perhaps because she is under some of the same constraints that her non-NEST counterparts face in Japan.

In Table 4, differences between the OC class and the reading class are indicated. Consistent with classroom observations, comparison of the outcomes reveals that the OC class carried out by the NEST looks more communicative and democratic. For example, the students in the OC class were exposed to far larger amounts of English than the reading class. The teacher rarely used Japanese in class though she could speak it fluently, unlike the non-NEST who used Japanese and word by word translation extensively in the reading class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of utterances</th>
<th>Times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students’ contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one word</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>three</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>four</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>five</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Length and frequency of student utterances
In this respect, the OC class reflects distinct objectives. The students had more exposure to English, which seems to reflect the stated goal that OC classes should improve English comprehension. Students also had more autonomy in the OC class. They were able to speak at will, whereas the non-NEST controlled turn-taking in the reading class. The song used for the dictation exercise was also chosen by the students. In spite of the differences, however, the outcomes were convergent and highly predictable in both classes.

3.2 Similarities between the two classes
According to the role map (Table 4), the NEST-taught OC class seems to induce more active interaction between the teacher and the students than the reading class. Tables 3 and 5, however, show that in both the reading class and the OC class, many student contributions consisted of only one or two words. Surprisingly, in the OC class, more than 60% of student contributions resulted from drill practice where students repeated after the teacher. The only example of an independent contribution consisting of more than two words is: “I don’t know”. The other three examples of utterances with three words resulted when the teacher asked students to translate Japanese phrases. One of the examples is provided below.

**Extract 1**
**Teacher**: What’s the name of this row? (she is pointing at the front row) How do you say “mae no retsu”[the front row] in English? Mae [front]….
**Student**: In front of
Teacher: OK. In front of is ………no mae ni, but just mae [front] is “front”. Front row. …..

Unfortunately, “in front of” is not a meaningful contribution. Similar situations to Extract 1 where the teacher provided a Japanese phrase to elicit specific words were observed 14 times. “I don’t know” and “in front of” are the longest examples of production in this class. As mentioned, the objective of OC is for students to express their ideas in English and to cultivate students’ positive attitudes to attempt communication (MEXT, 2003). The reading class clearly does not suit this goal. It seems, however, that the OC class did not provide the opportunity for students to engage in active communication which would suit this aim either.

As mentioned, in the OC class, turn taking was not controlled by the teacher and the students could speak at will. However, only two or three students were actively engaged with the teacher and spoke at will, and only in response to questions initiated by the teacher. In other words, though a small number of students seemed to speak at will, there was not a single instance of student-generated discourse. This was similar to the non-NEST-lead reading class, of which Otlowski (2003) states: “There was not one instance of a student generated question to the teacher or to any other member of the class” (p37).

We see that the outcomes (student output) in both classes are highly convergent and predictable. The teacher’s prompts required very specific responses. Where the exact required response was not provided, the teacher continued the line of questioning to elicit the expected response just like the JTE in EXTRACT 1 in 2.1. The
textbook exercises also required specific responses, which were sometimes not even oral (e.g. Raising a hand or standing up). It is these factors that lead to convergent and predictable outcomes, which we similarly find in traditional classes. Most interactions are predetermined and controlled by teachers and textbooks (Kubota, 1991). Considering the nature of communication, one would have expected the outcomes of an OC class to be more divergent and unpredictable and it is unfortunate that this is not the case.

4. Discussion and Suggestions

4.1 Constraints of normative classroom culture in the Oral Communication class

It is interesting that the outcomes of the OC class were not different from those of the reading class, despite the more democratic and communicative conditions such as uncontrolled turn-taking, self-selected material and more English input from the NEST. We should investigate why this is the case. Prevailing classroom culture and the educational environment seems to play a more important role than objectives, the type of teacher or the title of a course.

In Otlowski’s (2003) classroom observation-based research, he suggests that student and teacher roles are socially determined and place limitations on classroom interaction. The dominant role of the teacher contributes to passivity among the students. Taguchi (2005) also described the OC classes she observed as teacher-centered, reflecting traditional Japanese classrooms in which teachers assume full responsibility and students remain passive. Yet it has also been suggested that in Japan, the cultural norms against making mistakes are stronger, and mistakes could cause excessive embarrassment for
many Japanese students (Doyon, 2000). This may deter students from active participation in class if they are not sure they can present themselves in perfect English. Oshita (1999) asserts that for success in communication-oriented classes in Japan, passive attitudes need to be improved, as also stated in the course of study for OC classes (MEXT, 2003).

These studies in the Japanese context fit with other empirical and theoretical studies. Van Lier (2001) underlines the existence of authority and power in institutional settings. This sort of power is common in classrooms which have a highly normative culture (Breen, 2001). In a normative classroom, learners anticipate that evaluation is crucial, and search for external criteria for success in coping with language learning and ways of reducing the potential threat of negative judgment.

In this study, three examples from this OC class presented below, illustrate the existence of normative classroom culture. The first example is that the teacher checked students’ scores from the textbook exercise in front of the whole class. The second one was that the teacher brought up points that students learned in the past and checked if they remembered twice, which can also serve as a means to judge students. The third example is that there were only a few students who spoke at will as mentioned in 3.2. The power to judge and the power to control and evaluate the speech of others can be observed in this OC class. Normative classroom culture may have prevented most students from self-selecting to speak in class because if they made a mistake, their English ability may be negatively judged by their teacher and peers.
This research stands apart from previous research (on non-NESTs) in Japan since the teacher was a NEST, and thus free from some of the cultural baggage that JTEs carry. Although some actions of the NEST in the present study were consistent with a more traditional approach, she did provide a more communicative lesson and a more democratic atmosphere. By not controlling turn-taking or having students stand up before speaking, for example, she did not assume as dominant a role as seen in other classes taught by JTEs. Student output, however, followed the same pattern seen in the JTE’s class. Students refrained from speaking spontaneously, likely to avoid negative judgment and feelings of embarrassment from making mistakes, having long been exposed to the culturally determined roles of teacher and student in Japan.

4.2 Constraints from the washback effect of examinations in the Oral Communication class
The role map in Table 4 and the production analysis in Table 5 resemble the traditional high school English classes described in Watanabe’s (2004) study. Frequent reference to test taking techniques, mechanical oral practice, few student requests for information and a lockstep classroom setting are key features. Based on these tendencies, Watanabe tentatively concludes that the presence of entrance examinations might have a negative washback effect on some lessons. Taguchi (2005) concurs, observing that in OC classes, JTEs often do grammar drills and even direct students’ attention away from OC materials in order to prepare for university entrance examinations.
In this study also, there is ample evidence of washback effect. The teacher twice made a fairly long announcement about the coming final examination. She described the test design explicitly and gave tips on how to take the examination. The second example is that the teacher did not allow students the opportunity to respond when anything unrelated to the examination was being carried out. For instance, after completing the song lyric worksheet, the teacher wrote the answers on the board so as not to waste time instead of asking students to share their answers. Also, when using the collocation book, the contents of which were not in the upcoming examination, the teacher only conducted brief repetition practice.

We also see that the teacher tried to conduct classroom management as quickly as possible, probably because she was concerned more with examination-related material. When attending to classroom management, the teacher often posed questions rhetorically, without expecting a response. An example is provided below, wherein the teacher wanted students to straighten their desks so that they could be used to explain seating positions (the target of the lesson).

**Extract 2**
Teacher: OK, today, what I need you to do today is to make rows very straight. We are going to do seating position. We’re doing seating positions. What I need… can you move your desk?…one, two, and three, what line are you in?…OK. What I need, what I need is for you to have straight lines in your rows, so we can count them. Can you move just forward?…(She is moving the desks) Yes. So that you and she are in the second row. And you guys are in the … is this the
third row? …Yeah, yes, can you move just forward? I just want to make sure you are all in the third. Can you move back?…..Yes……

The teacher was almost talking to herself as she was moving around and giving directions quickly, both verbally as shown in Extract 2, and physically by gesturing. She did not pause to allow time for student responses. Responses were not expected by the teacher or encouraged in any way. Likewise, the students showed no verbal reaction. Some moved their desks quietly and others showed no reaction at all as the teacher moved their desks for them.

It appears that the teacher may have underestimated the value of classroom management as an opportunity for meaningful interaction. She was more eager to get on with the examination-related activity (describing seating positions), which indicates washback effect. Other research such as Oliver and Mackey (2003) has also indicated that teachers do not regard interaction in classroom management as an effective learning opportunity.

4.3 Suggestions to induce divergent unpredictable outcomes in an Oral Communication class

More divergent unpredictable outcomes could be evoked by encouraging the negotiation of meaning. Referring to Extract 1 in 3.2, when the student said “in front of”, which does not really mean anything itself, the teacher immediately spoke Japanese to elicit the exact answer she wanted to hear. Instead, she could have tried to negotiate the meaning. Negotiation of meaning is significant because it can lead to modified input, output, and feedback, which are all beneficial for learning (Long & Robinson, 1998). The problem is that
in this class, most tasks are not designed to induce interaction or lead to unplanned exchanges through negotiation of meaning.

The process of classroom management also provides useful opportunities for language learning (Nation, 2006; Oliver & Mackey, 2003). Nation (2006) emphasizes that if English is used for classroom management in a planned, consistent way, the provision of meaning focused input may facilitate language learning. This type of input was not provided in the observed class. In Extract 2 in 4.2, the teacher could have used classroom management as an opportunity to illustrate the target language that she expected students to learn. Instead of moving the desks herself and directing individual students to move their desks, she could have said: “People in the second row, can you straighten your desks?” Then she could have waited for a reaction, rephrased her instruction, or waited for a student to ask for clarification, thus encouraging negotiation and two-way communication. Meaning focused input from a teacher leads to the negotiation of meaning, and consequently meaningful exchanges between the teacher and students. In meaningful exchanges the output also becomes more divergent and unpredictable.

5. Limitation of the study and implications for future research

Further studies should evaluate outcomes in a context-sensitive, systematic way. Simply counting the word number in student utterances will be misleading in some classes. Furthermore, interviewing NESTs would provide insight into their motives and the specific constraints which they may feel.

The present study was restricted to the recording and analysis of one class instructed by one teacher. The findings from this study
are not sufficient to make generalizations regarding OC classes across Japan, or the approaches taken by NESTs in other circumstances. The purpose of this research is not to describe what is happening in all NEST-taught OC classes, but to challenge the stereotype that NEST classes are necessarily communicative. It should also be recognized that NESTs are not a homogenous group in Japan. While many have no prior training or experience, others are professional educators. Research should take this into consideration along with other conditions. Further empirical evidence is required to paint a more complete picture of what NESTs are doing in classes across the country. Large-scale studies will provide more generalizable findings.

5. Conclusion
The outcomes of the OC class carried out by the NEST are not significantly different from those of the reading class carried out by a non-NEST. In the NEST-taught OC class observed in this study, the outcomes were convergent and predictable. Even when students were given the opportunity to actively get involved in English communication, only a few of them spoke spontaneously. When they did speak, they often produced only one or two words most of the time. This was likely caused by two factors: the normative classroom culture and the washback effect of examinations. In a normative classroom culture, students search for ways of reducing the potential threat of negative evaluation by avoiding speaking English. Embarrassment from making mistakes in public also affects Japanese students and may discourage them from speaking actively.

Also, examinations seem to have a negative washback effect. Not only does the teacher refer to the examination repeatedly, she
also focuses on specific items that will affect student achievement in the coming examination. As a result, anything unrelated to the examination such as classroom management is dealt with quickly and there is no opportunity for meaningful interaction to occur. Moreover, examining classroom discourse, the teacher tried to elicit only very specific, ‘correct’ responses (sometimes using word by word translation), which were related directly to the upcoming examination. Interaction in class was clearly constrained by the washback effect.

In Japan there are widely held assumptions that NEST-taught classes are necessarily communicative and that OC classes will advance students’ communicative ability. These assumptions, however, would seem to be mistaken to some extent. NESTs are not free from the constraints that non-NESTs face such as looming entrance examinations and other cultural factors, and this can have a strong effect on teaching.

References


Title
Personal Authenticity through Authentic Materials, Authentic Tasks, and Negotiation

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Abstract
In this article, I examine the concept of personal authenticity (van Lier, 1996), using student diary entries collected during an English for academic and professional purposes course with a negotiated syllabus. Signs of personal authenticity – a concept related to autonomy - are traced in the entries. These signs suggest that personal authenticity emerged because the students were able to negotiate many aspects of their learning. In addition, open-ended tasks that carried real life transfer value enhanced the likelihood of personal authenticity. What was also important from the point of view of personal authenticity was the use of materials that were relevant to the students’ real life needs. As these findings are context-specific and stem from a localized approach, further research in Asian and other non-European cultural contexts is needed on the rise of personal authenticity through the use of authentic materials, authentic tasks, and negotiation.

Key words: personal authenticity, authentic tasks, negotiation, take up of opportunity
Introduction
In this article, I examine the concept of personal authenticity (van Lier, 1996), using student diary entries collected during an English for academic and professional purposes course with a negotiated syllabus. Signs of personal authenticity are traced in the entries. These signs suggest that the use of authentic materials, authentic tasks, and negotiation helped students create personal authenticity in my context.

I first discuss the concept of personal authenticity and the context of this study as well as the data collection process. In the section that follows, I analyze signs of personal authenticity with the help of the concepts of negotiation, authentic tasks and authentic materials. The relevance of personal authenticity and these concepts is the focus of the discussion.

Personal authenticity
Although the concept of personal authenticity (personal relevance) has been discussed in the literature on learner-centred pedagogy to an extent in the past (e.g., van Lier, 1996; Williams & Burden, 1997), it has remained somewhat intangible, under-researched and overlooked, unlike the concept of autonomy to which it is linked. For example, Wenden (2002), in her overview on learner development and learner-centred approaches, does not mention personal authenticity explicitly, although personal authenticity and learner centredness are, at least intuitively, intertwined.

To understand what personal authenticity entails, a brief look into the concept of authenticity is needed. Authenticity is often perceived from the point of view of texts: the use of authentic language data is
often considered one of the keys to learning a foreign language. However, the concept of authenticity covers a wider sphere. Widdowson writes

Authenticity (...) depends on a congruence of the language producer’s intentions and language receiver’s interpretation, this congruence being effected through a shared knowledge of conventions. (1979, p. 166)

Widdowson clearly extends the concept: the main focus is no longer on a text that is ‘genuine’ or ‘unaltered’ but on the interpretation of it. Over the years, the concept of authenticity has been elaborated further. For example, it has been suggested that materials do not have to be authentic, but a learner’s reaction to them should be (Rudby, 2003, p. 45). And in task-based instruction, a task is understood to have ‘a relationship with real worlds activities’ (Lyster, 2007, p. 74). One of the ways of considering authenticity is with the help of personal authenticity.

Personal authenticity has to do with being able to do things worth doing, in a manner that suits the learner (Lehtonen, 2000). Whatever the learner does should take place in a meaningful setting. What is meaningful might depend on, for example, the learner’s background, on the learner’s future motivations or current needs. According to van Lier,

[i]n personal authenticity all the elements of awareness, autonomy, and authenticity come together. Authentic persons know what they are doing, and attend in relaxed or focused ways, in accordance with the demands of the situation. Authentic persons are also autonomous, in the
sense of feeling responsible for their own actions, and able to deal with choices. Finally, authentic persons validate (authenticate) learning opportunities as they occur, create their own learning opportunities when the circumstances allow, and need no coaxing to take learning action. (Van Lier, 1996, pp. 143-144)

As shown in this quote, personal authenticity is linked to autonomy. Autonomy can be defined as ‘the capacity to take control over one’s own learning’ (Benson, 2001, p. 2). However, personal authenticity refers to the learner’s ‘commitment to and genuine interest in the activity in hand’ (van Lier, 1996, p.143) and to ‘the sources for the motivation to engage in learning activities’ (ibid.). Schwienhorst (2003, p. 168) writes about three learner autonomy principles, one of which is ‘[a] learner who experiments with language and participates in the learning environment.’ This definition is close to van Lier’s views on personal authenticity. It is clear that the relationship between authenticity, autonomy and awareness is tricky and that they feed into one another. For example, it is likely that an autonomous learner, aware of her/his learning and able to take control over the learning situation, finds it easier to discover personal authenticity than a learner without these qualities. In this article, I use personal authenticity to refer to the commitment or interest created in the learner based on 1) how relevant the learning activity (tasks, materials, negotiation) is, 2) how useful the learner find the activity and 3) how the activity is linked to what needs to be mastered out of class.
We can postulate that each student finds personal authenticity in different ways, as Williams and Burden (1997, p. 164) claim when discussing the use of learning strategies. As personal authenticity varies from one individual to another, it proves a challenge to anyone intending to do research on it systematically. Despite the challenge, research into personal authenticity is needed, because discovering the types of conditions, for example, tasks and materials, that seem conducive to achieving personal authenticity in many individual learners would benefit all teachers with a group of individual learners to teach as individually tailor-made learning is sometimes difficult to arrange and as some overarching parameters are likely to exist at least in a teaching context where learners share a similar background. A teacher ought to provide each learner with opportunities to learn in different ways and to find his or her own personal authenticity, but a teacher is unable to do so unless some type of general condition parameters having to do with the teaching situation are set up. These types of condition parameters can be unveiled by listening to individual voices and by establishing what they have in common.

**Research questions**

My aim is to investigate what in a teaching situation helps students find personal authenticity and what they have in common in the field of personal authenticity. What trends can be noticed in students’ realizations of personal authenticity that would help a teacher, faced with the task of providing opportunities to a group consisting of individuals? Although these questions have a local nature, I hope the findings will encourage other practitioners carry out similar experiments, as it is possible that the educational system, for example,
may play a role in the adoption of ideas connected with personal authenticity and autonomy (e.g. Sert, 2006).

The setting
The Marketing English course, equivalent to three European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits, was, at the time this research was carried out, part of the study requirements for Master's level students of Food Marketing at the University of Helsinki, Finland. Before the course, most students had taken ten years of English at school and had gained the equivalent of 4.5 ECTS credits in reading and oral skills, either by passing tests or by taking courses at the University. All the students had been expected to read hundreds of pages of required reading in English and many had used English in international contacts. Despite the seemingly similar backgrounds, the students’ skills ranged from level B1 to C1 according to the European Framework of Reference global scale (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24). B1 stands for a lower level independent user who ‘can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.’ (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24), and it is equivalent to the minimum score of 457 TOEFL PBT Total (TOEFL, 2005). C1, on the other hand, is the level of a lower level proficient user who ‘can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meanings’ (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24). C1 is equivalent to the minimum score of 560 TOEFL PBT Total (TOEFL, 2005). All in all, 16 students took the course and earned the credits. The students were, on the whole, positively attuned to taking the course.
**Interconnected tasks**

At the beginning of the course, I negotiated the course aims, contents, materials and evaluation with the students, using the know-how gained in previous courses. In addition, the Department of Food Marketing and I had carried out negotiations in the months before the course started. The negotiation process yielded for example:

*Tasks that involved individual work*

- Writing at least 4 journal entries, reflecting on one's own experiences of using /learning English in-class and out-of-class (I language-edited these entries, if the student so wished)
- 4 hours worth of language-related work of free choice, details negotiated with me (many students chose to write their CVs)

*Tasks that involved group/pair work*

- Choosing an academic article from a selection provided by the department
- Process-writing a summary based on the article and sending it to the joint mailing list (before sending it off, the student had rewritten the summary twice)
- Being in charge of running a meeting on the topic discussed in the article and activating the rest of the students
- Collecting important general academic and subject-specific vocabulary or phrases from the article, giving the list to the rest of the group and creating a test based on the collection
- Participating in the evaluation meeting with the department representative
Some of the tasks had a clear focus on language aspects (form), others on communication (function). In addition, the tasks with a focus on communication often acted as a starting point for discussions on language aspects.

**Data collection and analysis**

The data come from student journal entries collected from 10 female and three male students (i.e. the handwritten entries of three students were excluded as only electronically submitted entries were analysed). The data were verified in an end-of-course discussion and in the individual one-on-one consultations to check the parts that were unclear. The data consist of a total of 52 entries less than half a page long. These entries served several functions. They provided the students with writing exercise they had asked for and gave them a chance to reflect on their learning and other matters concerning the course. They also provided me with invaluable feedback on the ongoing course.

The following instructions were formulated in the first session, after a phase of negotiation:

In your four journal entries (about one third of a page or longer each), I would like you to reflect on what has been going on. You may write about positive experiences, new insights, learning, confusion, desperation - anything that has to do with this course and you using English here and elsewhere. In other words, you may write about your own feelings, you may write about the other course members, you may comment on the tasks and the teaching + your learning.

In addition to giving you an impetus to write in English, this task aims at making you evaluate your own language learning and use and at making me aware of what went on.
Clearly mark the weeks you write about please!

The entries show student perceptions and are therefore somewhat ‘prototypical’ qualitative data. They were analyzed with a focus on evidence of personal authenticity. In other words, signs of events, feelings and realizations that seemed to have made sense to the learners or that failed to do so were coded. The following categories were used in the final analysis: personal authenticity and 1) negotiation, 2) authentic tasks, and 3) authentic materials. These categories emerged after a lengthy reading and re-reading process. In the analysis, the materials were coded three times. The results of the analysis were shown to a group of peers to discuss and give feedback.

**Signs of personal authenticity in the data**

The verbatim entries illustrated that learner differences were evident in the extent and depth of reflection. One end of the continuum can be characterized with entries by a student who merely listed what was done in class, the other end with entries by a student who was analytic in her planning, doing and evaluating. The following focuses on what the students wrote about negotiation, materials and tasks from the point of view of personal authenticity.

**Negotiation and personal authenticity**

The data show three different types of what the students perceived as negotiation: beginning-of-the-course negotiation, where the course tasks and goals were set up; negotiation with the department representative, where the main focus was on the integration of the course to the content teaching of the department; and negotiation of
tasks in groups, where students had to make sense of what the task entailed and where students tended to subdivide the task.

As stated earlier, the course started with a session where the course syllabus was negotiated. Evaluation of this beginning-of-the-course negotiation is evident here:

I think it was a very good idea that we discussed the goals and contents of the course together on the first day, that we didn’t just get set list of tasks from the teacher. This could well be done on other courses as well in order to get students to be genuinely interested in what they do during different courses. Female student 1

Being able to influence what takes place on a course seems to have the potential of increasing active engagement, and thus personal authenticity.

Students wrote positive comments about the visit of the department representative, which in a wide sense can be interpreted as negotiating the content of future courses – an important factor for the teacher. The following is an example of the importance of negotiating issues related to the English course and the students' studies in general:

It was a very good idea to invite [the department representative] to come and discuss matters concerning our department and the Marketing English course. Many new things came up which I think was very useful to all of us. Some of the things we talked about didn’t even have anything to do with the English language itself. Female student 7

The relatively open-ended tasks encouraged the students to approaches where they could transform one task description to a task of their own or, as in the following, to a successful group task through negotiation:
Our meeting! Our Article was quit boring, because it handles very basic marketing issues and is very theoretical texts. So we X, Y and me decided to keep different kind of meeting and not to bore other with our dry article. And I had noticed that you remember things much better if you can participate and think things yourself. We decided to found a bakery company "Bun Bakery". We came up that we have a marketing problem and other can help us solve it. It was time to keep our meeting. At first I was nervous, like always. But after all, I thing it went quit well. Female student 5

The localized approach that values the know-how of all members in the learning process (see Kumaravadivelu, 2001 and 2003 for the concept of particularity), possible because of the expertise and experience of all the participants, seems to have offered the students on the course a sense of responsibility and ownership. Crabbe (2003) writes about learning opportunities that learners encounter and sometimes fail to take up. It would seem that negotiation can create a learning opportunity that encourages students to take up what has been offered.

The idea of negotiation is embedded in the paradigm shift going on in the language teaching/learning literature and practices where the teacher is no longer seen as one who transfers knowledge but as one who helps students construct knowledge (e.g., Breen & Littlejohn, 2000, Smith, 2003). Negotiation has been accepted in many circles, although it is clear it was initially met with criticism, such as the lack of externally delivered, pre-course understanding of what the course should involve (e.g., Clarke, 1991). However, negotiation is likely to enhance the chances of taking responsibility during the course, thus encouraging autonomy (see Breen & Littlejohn, 2000; Smith, 2003) and, most likely, personal authenticity, as seen in the entries. This
type of negotiation ‘enables learners to exercise their active agency in learning’, claim Breen and Littlejohn (2000, p. 20).

**Authentic tasks and personal authenticity**

Authenticity of tasks appears mainly in comments on the meetings that were based on the articles the students read. This task simulating real life gave rise to personal authenticity and evoked these comments:

Hardest task of the presentation was the coordination of the progress and to get the class discuss on the matter we had set. I think this exercise was quite useful for all of us and prepared us for the real life and for the real meetings. *Male student 1*

I find the meeting I chaired very useful for me. I am always a little nervous when I am presenting something in front of the class. And this time I had to speak in English. My plan was to read my speech direct from the paper, but I am happy I changed my mind in the last minute and decided to go this presentation though on board and speak, not read. I think everything went quite well and it was much nicer to speak, not read. I can’t read when I am in real situation either. *Male student 3*

In addition, the data gave rise to comments about CV writing that most students had opted for. In these cases, the students reflect either on ‘killing two birds with one stone’ or on the demands of similar tasks they will face again in the future:

Any way I think it was very teaching to do that CV task. And plus it was a good coincidence that my mentor from Valio [the biggest Finnish dairy company] just asked me to do the same thing - a CV in English. It motivated me much. *Female student 2*
There were cases where the act of putting together a CV in English was seen as a mind-broadening experience, allowing the student to deep-process and develop her/his personal authenticity.

Today I worked with my CV which was one of the assignments for the last week. I think it is important to practice how to make your CV in English because many companies require that nowadays. I used my Finnish CV as a model but I still had problems. Everything else were quite easy but defining the tasks of my earlier work experience was very difficult. It is difficult in Finnish too and when you try to write things down in a proper way in English it requires an extra effort for doing so. Some of the work titles in Finnish are a little bit infinite and so are the explanations what you have done. It is very difficult to find good translations for those.

I also had to do some “research” when I was writing the part of positions of responsibility. I have been involved in a lot of things but I wasn’t sure about the English equivalents so I needed to surf in the Internet for a while to find the correct translations […] I just had to make [the culturally difficult ones] up. I’m afraid I will have same kind of problems in the future too. It is hard to find correct terms for things in English. There is not much help of dictionaries.

Female student 3

Producing a CV was a popular task among the students, chosen by a majority as one of the optional tasks. However, CV writing posed difficulties to some, as exemplified in the following. The task seemed too abstract in the following student’s current situation where there was no real need for writing a CV, thus personal authenticity is lacking.

First I’m not so used to CV even in Finnish. I have done only one or two CVs in my entire life. It was quite difficult to decide what to include in my CV. What work experience is relevant to put in CV and what isn’t? What to tell about the works what I have done? What about my
activities and other interests? Should I tell something about some specific courses which I have took? I know that it all depends on the work what I am applying for. But now in this quite early stage of experience in my working life when I don’t have that much knowledge my CV would look worthless. And the main reason for my lack of decisiveness was that I didn’t have any certain job to apply for. Female student 2

Students, when given freedom to choose optional tasks, seem to need more guidance than given on the course where some students clearly chose tasks not relevant to them, maybe because of a lack of relevant options or lack of own initiative.

On the basis of the above, it is reasonable to claim that tasks with transfer value help students find personal authenticity and thus motivate them. The clearer or more imminent the transfer is the greater the chance of personal authenticity.

**Authentic materials and personal authenticity**

Most of the comments about the authenticity of the materials tackle the articles that the department had given the group. The articles presented an overview of different schools of thought in marketing, but the students were not explicitly made aware of this until the representative from the department visited the class. Despite the negotiations between the teacher and the department representative to guarantee that the work in the language course would be authentic and serve both language learning and subject (marketing) learning, the use of authentic articles and tasks did not manage to help all students authenticate their learning experience. Most students felt the articles were not very demanding. Rather, they considered them either old or boring:
Our meeting was based on Leslie de Chernatonys article 2001- The Brand Management Odyssey. The article was quite old, written in 1996, so it did not give us any new information. Actually I am quite familiar with the subject because I am doing my master thesis about brand management. *Male student 2*

There is a clear dilemma here: sometimes real life tasks are boring, but still need to be carried out – a theme that should have been brought up with the students.

What was considered interesting and worth studying were materials that allowed the students to find personal authenticity. For example, an article with information previously unknown to the students or information that allowed them to further process their thoughts seemed to fill the demands for authenticity, as the following example indicates:

... So the summary task was a real challenge for me! [...] I had to read the text several times before I started to understand the ideas that the writer was presenting. Luckily there was x who helped me a lot in getting the point!

Summarizing a text can be tricky in my opinion. Specially then, when the text is difficult and it is hard to point out the most important things in it. And the particular text that we had consisted of various different areas that all seemed to be important on the authors view. *Female student 7*

**Discussion and implications**

In this section, I aim to answer my research questions that were: What elements in a teaching situation can help a student find personal authenticity and what do they have in common in the field of personal authenticity? What trends can be traced in the various students’ reflections?
Personal authenticity seems to have the potential of emerging when a student learns in an environment with negotiation and open-ended tasks that carry transfer value. Crabbe (2003, p. 20) suggests that the take-up of learning opportunity is influenced by personal factors such as affect, style/experience and motive. Despite these individual differences, most students in my context found different forms of negotiation and open-endedness meaningful as they allowed them to do what suited them and what supported their learning goals.

It can be argued that curricular negotiation can give rise to curricular authenticity (van Lier, 1996, pp. 145) and negotiation can help create a joint culture (Bruner, 1986, p. 127). These in turn, can help in the creation of personal authenticity through the opportunities offered that make sense and engage. According to Breen and Littlejohn (2000, pp. 19-20), negotiation gives a boost to the learner’s active agency. The data give support to this claim. Breen and Littlejohn also claim that negotiation can help extend the teacher’s pedagogic strategies. The negotiation that took place throughout the course this study describes, in the form of student diaries, allowed the teacher to reflect on what was going on and also created a learning opportunity for the teacher. Negotiation cannot thus be considered a one-way street: both parties can benefit from it.

It seems paramount that a link exists between the materials and tasks, and the student’s present and future, and that materials are relevant (e.g. Tomlinson, 2003). When students are able to create an entity of the fragments dealing with language learning and the other (often more important) dimensions of their lives, language learning/using becomes authentic and responsibility is truly lifted from the teacher to the students. As van Lier (1996, pp. 136-144)
correctly points out, authenticity is much more than authentic (real) texts. Authentic texts (in the sense of real) become authentic only if there is a gap to be filled in the student’s mind, i.e. if the student finds the text and the task relevant to her/his real life needs. Schwienhorst’s (2003) MOO Virtual Environment worked well, although it did not function in the way virtual environments ‘in the real world’ function. However, his students seem to have been able to find personal authenticity and they were autonomous in that they were exploiting the opportunities offered and participating in the learning environment (Schwienhorst, 2003). What is noteworthy is that in the process of creating personal authenticity through the use of authentic materials and tasks, a learner can be claimed to become autonomous in the sense that he/she ‘is able to … take and assume responsibility for his/her learning decisions’ (Schwienhorst, 2003, p. 167).

Conclusion
The approach taken in the context where this research was carried out seems to meet the parameter of particularity, one of the parameters that Kumaravadivelu (2001 and 2003) advocates when writing about his post-method approach. Particularity, i.e. taking into account the local realities, in the form of negotiation and open-endedness concerning materials and tasks, helped my students in creating personal authenticity and autonomy. However, as this research took place in one local context, it can offer only the beginnings of a global recipe for the emergence of personal authenticity. Therefore teachers need to experiment in their own contexts, with the help of reports from other teachers, and report on their findings, to be able to contribute to the discussion on personal authenticity. It is important
to establish whether the trends exposed in this article are prevalent in other contexts. To what extent do other contexts show the relationship between personal authenticity and negotiation, and personal authenticity and authentic tasks and materials? Do students in other contexts find personal authenticity in the same way? Do they find the same kind of issues personally authentic? Do the opportunities offered have to be tailor-made to meet the needs of each learning environment or do the opportunities offered in my context work in all learning environments? Reporting on research in other local contexts is needed.

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Title
Preparing University EFL Students for Job Interviews in English: A Task-Based Approach

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Abstract
With English as the de facto lingua franca of the global economy, more and more companies, national and international, hold interviews for candidates in English. Gumperz and Roberts (1991) note that ‘interethnic encounters’ pose a daunting challenge for some learners; none more so than an English interview. Without the necessary cultural or linguistic knowledge, learners can potentially create negative impressions of themselves for interviewers. In an EFL situation, with limited time and large class numbers, how can instructors prepare students for such interviews? This paper reports on a task-based unit of work that was designed to activate the learner’s linguistic resources, develop an essential lexis for an interview, and introduce the learner to the cultural differences of a ‘western’ interview.

Key Words: task-based teaching, interview preparation, reflective assessment, student needs
Introduction

Gumperz and Roberts (1991, pp. 78-79), after examining potential conflicts within ‘interethnic encounters’, stated that ‘... perceived problems which are partly due to differences in cultural knowledge and partly to differences in rhetorical conventions provide rich pickings to justify negative evaluations and refusals.’ Nowhere for a second-language learner could there be more serious ‘negative evaluations and refusals’ than in an ‘interethnic’ job interview. A learner, without situation-specific rhetorical strategies and, at least, a fundamental understanding of the cultural differences between this particular speech event in their native and in the target language, may unwittingly create a negative image of themselves with their potential employer - a classic form of what Thomas (1983) labeled cross-cultural pragmatic failure. While this paper outlines the fundamental steps in the construction of a task-based unit, it also details a task-based approach to preparing students for a job interview in the target language. The outlined approach promotes, in the learner, an awareness of the cultural differences between the target culture and the learner’s own culture. It also introduces useful rhetorical strategies by examining authentic job advertisements, job selection criteria, listening tasks, watching simulated interviews and using a task-based role play.

Research (Gumperz and Roberts, op cit; Roberts, 1998) suggests that Western and Asian (and, by tenuous extrapolation, Japanese) interview processes are fundamentally different, especially in regard to interpersonal relationships during the interview process. A commonly held Japanese assumption is that the ‘western’ interview is a process for the applicant to actively ‘sell’ his/her abilities in a very
direct manner, whereas the Japanese interview is a situation for the applicant to show politeness and respect towards the interviewer and his company. Furthermore, within the Asian interview, the interviewee sees ‘relatively sharp, hierarchical distinction between (their role) and the interviewer’s role’ (Gumperz and Roberts, p. 68; Roberts, 1998). Whether or not these assumptions of both interview processes are correct, an interethnic interview is fraught with potential rhetorical and cultural pitfalls for the incognizant learner. So, it was with some surprise to hear in an oral communication class that a small number of students were planning to apply for positions with foreign companies based not only in Japan but overseas, and that the interview process for these jobs would predominantly be in English. This seemed the perfect opportunity to develop a task-based unit on ‘a target task that a specific group of learners need to be able to perform’ (Ellis, 2004, pp.208-9).

Unit Outline
Using Nunan’s (2004) suggested steps in task-bask design as a planning template, the following sequential steps, pre-tasks and learner-roles were developed for the task-based unit (see figure 1). For the task to maintain pedagogical integrity and maximize conditions for acquisition, each step was designed as a precursor for the following step, sequentially adding vocabulary and/or activating previously learnt language. Each step provided all, or a combination of, the following: useful vocabulary and rhetorical structures; authentic listening practice; a cultural context of the task; and preliminary practice before the introduction of the main task.
In addition to the six steps Nunan proposes for task design, an extra step, a task reflection/repetition phase was added, giving the task a spiral form, thereby allowing learners to continuously build on the language used to complete the first task and improve their performance with a repetition of the same or similar task. Although Nunan’s six-steps are a comprehensive plan of a task-based unit, Murphy (2003, p. 354) suggests that ‘Tasks should … involve learners in reflecting on the way in which they carried them out, as well as on the language they used, thereby helping to develop learner autonomy.’ This is supported by Skehan (1996) who believes that learners will have a better understanding of the task’s objectives if the original task, or a similar task, is repeated after reflection. As in the world outside of the classroom, where repetitious linguistic events are the norm – exchanging, requesting and providing personal information are just some examples - learners, through practice and reflection, will develop their rhetorical ability in a manner more akin to how young native speakers learn their first language.

**Figure 1: Unit Outline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1: Schema building</th>
<th>pre-task</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- introduction of the topic – warm up questions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- preliminary discussion – class, group or pairs – on work and career expectations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- reading of job advertisements from international companies and schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>- noting and recording key words and expressions</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Step 2: Controlled practice</th>
<th>pre-task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- use model interview for pair or small group work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- asking and answering questions requiring the use of useful words and expressions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Step 3: Authentic Listening | pre-task | - exchanging formal greetings and introductions  
- listen to several native speakers being interviewed for a job  
- read the criteria listed for this job  
- check off the job criteria mentioned by each interviewee  
- discuss the differences between a ‘western’ and Japanese interview – group and class |
| Step 4: Focus on linguistic elements | pre-task | - focus on sequence works, superlatives  
- use of intonation  
- use of adverbial clauses of time; perfect and past progressive |
| Step 5: Provide free practice | pre-task | - focus on using the studied rhetorical patterns and structures in the task setting  
- a small group interview task  
- practice of ‘western’ interview strategies (e.g. formal greeting with a handshake)  
- allow for innovation |
| Step 6: Introduce the pedagogical task | main task | - outline the objectives of the task – select company or applicant  
- write out the job position and selection criteria  
- select jobs and prepare for interview  
- interview potential candidates for the jobs |
| Step 7: Task reflection / repetition | post task | - report back to class on students selected by company  
- report on companies selected by students  
- discuss problems experienced by the students in completing the task  
- students reflect on their areas of strength or weakness  
- instructor reports observations |
The Learning Context

This task-based unit was developed for a class of lower-intermediate to upper-intermediate students from the Department of International Studies at a former national Japanese university. Although the department does not offer a formal English program, there are a number of courses taught, mainly by native speakers, in English that provide motivated students with an English-only environment. This unit was a part of one such course – an intermediate-level Oral Communication course. The course consists of 15 90-minute lessons for one term. Each task-based unit takes approximately four lessons, depending on the complexity of the task. The task described in this paper consisted of four lessons, but, with modification, could be easily reduced or extended.

A Task-based Unit: Job Interviews

Pre-task

Pre-task activities play an important role in preparing students for the main task; they provide the necessary cultural context and linguistic strategies for the learner to successfully negotiate and complete the required task. As Ellis (2004, p. 244) states, ‘The purpose of the pre-task phase is to prepare students to perform the task in ways that will promote acquisition.’ Therefore, it is essential that learners spend sufficient time doing pre-task activities to develop, activate and/or modify not only their current linguistic resources but also their cultural knowledge that may be relevant to the major task.
To begin, schema building activities were given to the students to familiarize them with the topic and to build up salient vocabulary and expressions. A variety of techniques were used to do this. Students, for example, participated in pairs, small groups and class discussions where they worked collaboratively asking questions about ‘ideal jobs’, listing job selection criteria, and job types. During this time, new vocabulary and expressions raised by students were listed on the blackboard for latter discussion and, if applicable, practiced in groups. Alongside this, students constructed their own list of useful expressions and vocabulary.

To set the task in a real-world situation, a variety of advertisements (mainly for teaching positions and work related with the travel industry), taken from different international newspapers and magazines, were copied and then distributed among the learners. Learners were asked to read each job’s advertisement and the downloaded position description and then make a note of essential criteria. This was then shared with the class and added to the class vocabulary list.

Following the vocabulary activation stage, two-short tasks were presented to the learners. The first was an ‘authentic’ listening task. It must be noted that the term ‘authentic’ here is hybrid and refers to native speakers role-playing an interview rather than an actual interview due to the nature of an interview and the issue of privacy. Notwithstanding this, the role-play allowed the learners to listen to native speakers asking and answering questions about a teaching position at a university, and it allowed them to compare their in-class generated vocabulary list with the dialogue. Learners were asked, first individually then in small groups, to listen for and check off any
of the vocabulary or expressions listed in the previous lesson. From the checked off expressions and vocabulary, the learners created short dialogues and practiced them in pairs, and later, held free conversations in small groups. Many learners noted during the listening task and through their own practice that certain grammatical forms regularly appeared; for example, the past progressive tense and the use of adverbial clauses. The learners realized they needed to tell the ‘interviewer’ what they were doing at a specific time in the past – ‘While I was in Japan, I was working at Sony. When I was at university, I was member of the soccer club.’ In pairs and groups, students created and asked questions focusing on these forms.

One benefit of pre-task work is that the learners generated a substantial amount of the required grammatical forms. As a result of learners participating in language activation tasks, student generated forms were a main part of the grammar input in the unit. This is in contrast to a more traditional PPP (present, practice and produce) task activity where much of the grammar and forms have been pre-selected by the instructor or set by a text. Instead, in a TBL unit, the necessary grammatical patterns are holistically ‘seeded’ (Ellis, 2004) in the structure of the pre-tasks, thereby, maintaining the integrity of a ‘task-based teaching’ exercise, as defined by Ellis.

**Main task**
The role of the main task, according to Murphy (2003), is to ‘channel attention towards the desired pedagogic outcome.’ In this exercise, the desired pedagogic outcomes were the activation of the learner’s linguistic resources, practice of the linguistic forms inherent in an interview, and to interact in an interview using a different cultural
paradigm. To achieve these outcomes, an ‘unfocused’ (Ellis, 2007) role-play was designed that centered on the learners negotiating meaning rather than focusing on form, and that allowed the learners to comprehend, manipulate, produce and interact in the target language (Nunan, 2004).

The class of twenty students was divided into two groups: 5 interviewers and 15 interviewees. The interviewers and the interviewees were then separated so that each group could work on their roles in the task. The instructor clearly explained to each group their role and the expected outcome of the role-play. For the interviewers, their expected outcome was to select the best job applicant for their ‘company.’ For the interviewees, they had to choose their best three companies and then be interviewed for those positions. The successful outcome for an interviewee was selection for one, or possibly more, of the advertised positions. As there were only five companies, learners were aware before the role-play began that not all interviewees would be selected. Therefore, an element of competition, something akin to a real-world situation, was added to the role-play.

Before the next class, each of the interviewers, working alongside the instructor and using a standard template - developed from actual job advertisements cited during the pre-task - wrote job advertisements for their company. As the original idea for this task derived from students in the class preparing for interviews with international companies, similar companies, positions and criteria for employment were written and then combined to create a job opening pamphlet that was distributed to the ‘interviewees’ before the next class. Each interviewee was responsible, before next class, to read the
openings, select the three positions they were interested in and prepare for each interview. Interviewees were instructed not to embellish their academic records, TOEIC or TOEFL scores, or their employment record; they were to approach this interview as if they were recently graduated students.

The role-play was held in a large room, separated into five areas for each interviewer. In front of each interviewer’s desk, there were three chairs. Each interviewer had the choice to interview each applicant individually, in a pair, or a small group of three. It is acknowledged that this arrangement may not authentically reflect how an interview would be held outside the classroom, but due to time constraints it was deemed an unavoidable condition of the role-play. One class period of 90 minutes was used for the interviews. The aim of this class was for all applicants to be interviewed by the companies that they had selected. Although the interview process was not prescribed beforehand, most interviewers established an interview pattern along the lines of the pre-task listening activity. First, they are asked general questions about the interviewee – educational background, work experience, English ability – then, more direct questions relating to the specific job – teaching experience, human relations, and ‘What if…?’ ‘How would you …?’ questions. Finally, most interviewers asked each applicant to explain why they thought they would be the best candidates for the job.

At the completion of each interview, the interviewer made notes about each candidate for future reference when selecting their applicant. Interviewees, as well, took notes about each company and the position advertised. All students, after a short period for consideration, then listed the company/applicant they had selected
and the reasons why. This information was then presented to the learners at the beginning of the next class where it was used as a resource for a post-task discussion of the role-play.

**Post-task**
The role of the post-task phase is to allow learners time to reflect upon, not only the procedural aspects of the task and its outcomes, but, more importantly, ‘those forms that proved problematic to the learners when they performed the task’ (Ellis, 2004, p. 258). As Murphy (2005) suggests, this is one way to assist learners to be more cognizant of their communicative strengths and weaknesses. Through reflection, and repetition of the task, learners can review those areas that they deem to be weak or in need of further attention, thereby promoting learner autonomy.

To begin the reflection process, the results of the interviews were announced to the class. The interviewer for each company then took turns to explain why they chose their successful applicant. Most successful applicants were chosen not only for their English ability but also their ability to clearly explain why they thought they would be good for the position advertised, or, as many students commented, their ability to ‘sell themselves.’ From this discussion many students realized that they needed to be more outgoing during their interview, and they needed to be able to give longer, more informative answers, thereby showing the interviewer their ability to converse freely and communicatively in English.

The second and main part of the reflection process was a written report on the task. This report was divided into two sections: an assessment of their performance during the task and an assessment of
the pre-task activities and the main task itself. In the first section, learners assessed their performance as suggested by Ellis (2004, p. 259) - ‘…to ask students to reflect on and evaluate their own performance of the task. … to comment on which aspect of language use (fluency, complexity, or accuracy) they gave primacy to and why, how they dealt with communication problems, both their own and others, and even what language they learned from the task.’ The aim of this reflective task is for the learner to become more aware, autonomous, and active with their learning. From this feedback and from notes made by the instructor while learners were doing the main task, a list of misused forms, common grammatical mistakes and essential vocabulary was created and discussed in class.

The second part of this report was feedback for the instructor on how the unit, as a whole, was viewed by the student. This feedback was then used to modify areas of the pre-task and to make changes to the procedural elements of the main task. Learner-based feedback on the task is essential for the instructor to improve not only the way tasks are introduced to learners but also to find those areas that learners find more relevant and useful than others.

**Discussion**
The original idea of this task-based unit was to give learners the linguistic resources and opportunity to practice a ‘western-styled’ interview in an authentic situation, at least in so far as that is logistically possibly in an EFL context. Learners, through pre-task vocabulary and form developing activities, had the opportunity to utilize not only their pre-existing grammatical structures and language but also to use this ‘new’ language. The pre-task activities
were designed to provide as many opportunities as possible for the learners to be exposed to new language from authentic texts rather than the instructor providing this prescriptively. With this new language, their pre-existing linguistic knowledge, and awareness of the cultural differences between western and Japanese interview processes, learners were deemed to be sufficiently prepared to complete the main task. Therefore, success for this task would be three-fold: one, learners would show they had sufficient linguistic resources to manipulate and fluently use English in an accurate manner to create a favorable impression on the interviewer; two, learners would display relevant context-specific cultural knowledge during their exchanges; three, learners would feel that they had extensive unplanned communication with a variety of ‘interviewers.’

Areas of Focus

a. vocabulary

The written feedback from learners clearly supports Murphy’s statement (2003, p. 358) that ‘the influence of learners on the task can jeopardize the task designer’s goals.’ Even after allowing for extensive time during the pre-task phase to develop and practice vocabulary and forms, many learners could not utilize the new language successfully, and resorted to their pre-unit language resources. Reflecting on the task, many students noted that they lacked ‘special term about jobs’, or remarked ‘my vocabulary is lacking.’ The following are some of the more pertinent learner reflections.
• we need more words; special term about jobs and more examples; maybe your demonstration. I didn’t know how to continue the interviews

• It is difficult for me to find words for my opinion

• Usually I do not use words that special for the job, so I recognized that my vocabulary is lacking.

• In Japan we end a interview with special sentences, but I do not know how to end English interview

Significantly, one learner remarked upon a major difference between the interview process used in the main task and in a typical Japanese interview. The learner remarked that, in Japanese, there are ‘special sentences’ – formulaic expressions – that are used by all interviewees when thanking and leaving an interview. Although the learner is a proficient English speaker, she did not know what these ‘formulaic expressions’ were in English. As a result, she felt she lacked ‘accuracy’ in the manner that she ended the interview. Clearly, as Murphy (2003) believes, no matter how much planning goes into a lesson/unit of work, into activities to activate learnt language, or into pre-tasks to expose learners to new language, there will always be learners whose language resources are not sufficiently developed to complete the task, and/or there will always be vocabulary and forms absent from the presented body. By using a post-task reflection activity, those forms, vocabulary, or any other problems can, collectively, be discussed and studied by the learners.

b. consciousness-raising

In regard to the consciousness-raising objective of this unit, the overall impression from students was that the task was successful in showing and giving them a chance to have an interview in English.
As the comments from the learners clearly show, most, if not all, learners realized the difference between the two interview types, and felt that the task was a valuable exercise in preparing them for a future interview in English. Learners remarked on some of the differences they found during the interviews: ‘Japanese interview is question and answer style’, ‘Japanese interview always tend to be passive one’, and ‘The biggest difference was that job seekers had many opportunities to ask questions.’ From the feedback, most learners believe that the ‘western’ interview provides more opportunity for the interviewee to ask questions about the position, conditions and the company, questions they thought would not be asked during a similar Japanese interview.

- I think that Japanese interview is question and answer style. This time I had to sell by myself. That is the most different point. I think that foreigners are good at telling about themselves and something to know, but Japanese people are poor at explaining our opinion.

- In Japanese interview, we should use honorific words to show the politeness and it is very difficult. Though in English, we do not have to take care about honorific words. So I thought it was the good point of the interview in English.

- I guess that we must try to be polite, modest and obedient in Japanese job interview, but non-Japanese style is different. We must try to sell ourselves. This is the biggest different that I found.

- Japanese interview always tend to be a passive one.

- Through the interviews, I noticed that the way of having an interview is really different from Japanese style. The biggest
difference was that job seekers had many opportunities to ask questions.

Nevertheless, some learners’ reflections show a degree of generalization and, possibly, cultural naivety that, if not corrected, would potentially cause what this unit was intended to prevent: ‘negative evaluations and refusals’ stemming from an ‘interethnic encounter.’ Although the differences between the two sets of interviews were clearly explained, discussed and viewed, it is clear that some learners have made generalizations that are clearly not the case. For example, ‘Though in English, we do not have to take care about honorific words’ and ‘I guess that we must try to be polite, modest and obedient in Japanese job interview, but non-Japanese style is different.’ Clearly, the learners need to be made aware that, although English does not have the same universally used set of politeness structures that Japanese has, there are forms that are just as equally polite and formal. For learners to avoid any potential ‘negative evaluation’ they should be conscious that the context of a ‘western’ interview, like the context of a Japanese interview, is a situation where politeness is recognized as a positive factor. Examples of this would be showing gratitude to the interviewer: ‘I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to come and talk to you today’ or ‘Thank you for giving me the time to come and discuss the position.’

Again, the usefulness and necessity of having students reflect upon the tasks is clearly demonstrated in this situation. Without students providing some feedback about their performance and, in the case of this cultural conscious-raising task, their understanding of the cultural
paradigms they are using, then the instructor is left without the necessary knowledge to correct and change those areas of the task that the learners did not perform well in, or misunderstood.

c. communicative chance
A final objective of this role-play was to give learners an opportunity to develop their fluency in an interview situation, where they could activate their language resources and interact in an unplanned communicative situation. As previously discussed, there were areas in this interaction that some learners found difficult, mainly due to their perceived lack of vocabulary. Nevertheless, a majority of students commented that the length and amount of interaction exceeded other methods of practice they had so far experienced in their studies. Others commented that, although the task was difficult and challenging, it gave them a valuable opportunity to practice for an interview.

• The interesting point about this practice was that we could get much more opportunity than before

• It was enjoyable activity because I could experience Western style of having an interview, and could find out how to ask questions in job interview.

• It was just like a real interview, so I really enjoyed.

• I could have high-quality communication with others in English.

• It was a really exciting game, actually, now I try to be ready to do the job hunting.

• In this practice, explaining my way of thinking well is really difficult, but that is what I’m interested in.
• *It was difficult for me that to give them my answer soon.* Interviewer gave me unexpected questions, so I took long time to collect my thoughts.

The feedback and observations made by the instructor suggest that an unfocused task-based approach to developing communicative ability in this particular speech event, an interview, is effective. Learners had more opportunity to focus on fluency and complexity compared to more prescriptive and restrictive communicative practices. Yet, as with all forms of communicative language practices, improvements can be made to the structure and the implementation of the task to improve learners’ interaction.

**Task Assessment**

Using Ellis’s (2004, p. 8) assessment of task success - ‘Ultimately the assessment of task performance must lie in whether learners manifest the kind of language use believed to promote language learning’ – the objectives of the task were achieved. During the task, learners activated their pre-unit linguistic knowledge, while utilizing the new language developed during pre-task activities. Furthermore, they showed their ability to interact and communicate in a different cultural paradigm. Nevertheless, for some students, a lack of content-specific vocabulary, or an over-generalization of the cultural norms of the interview process, impeded their task performance.

Some researchers (Swan, 2005) have questioned TBL’s ability, compared to more traditional grammar-focused courses, to provide linguistically rich material for learners. The findings from this unit could be interpreted to concur with Swan’s concern: the learners did not have sufficient vocabulary to successfully complete the task due
to the inherent design of task-based instruction. However, Oxford (2006, p. 10) suggests a different explanation: ‘… individuals have a limited capacity for attention … so when a task is more cognitively demanding, attention is diverted from formal linguistic features – the basis of accuracy - to dealing with these cognitive requirements.’ Comments from the learners and the instructor’s observations support this explanation. Due to the complexity and intensity of the task, learners ‘diverted’ their linguistic resources from the language studied during the pre-task stage and reverted back to pre-unit learnt language. Because the task required learners to react in real time to a dynamic conversation that consisted of a series of unrehearsed questions, the focus of attention for most learners was processing the input, as promptly as possible, for meaning and a possible response. As a result, some learners found it difficult to locate the correct form or expression during the task, and instead, relied on expressions and forms they could produce without over utilizing their already stressed linguistic cognitive functions.

Furthermore, considering the extensive class work done during the pre-task phase, involving reading authentic texts, watching an example of the main task, discussions on the topic and a variety of forms of practice, any claim that the task might be perceived as linguistically poor is probably not fair or valid. Communicative events are dynamic; the language that will be used during an event cannot be predicted. If it could, then the job of teaching English would become far easier. The aim of the pre-task stage of task-based learning unit is to develop the necessary language and to activate previously learnt language for use in the main task. If the activities
carried out during the pre-task are extensive and intensive, then learners can be exposed to a linguistically rich lexis.

**Teaching Implications**

Reflecting on the interaction of the learners with the task, it is clear that some areas could be modified and/or extended to provide learners with more intercultural pragmatic awareness and to lessen the cognitive overload some learners experienced. One area was the activation of the pre-task generated lexis. To improve the activation rate of the generated lexis, repeating the main task over the length of the course may lead the learners to become more familiar with the interview dialogue, thereby, lessening the demands placed on the learner to respond immediately using pragmatic appropriate language. With rhetorical experience comes the rhetorical knowledge of what to expect during a speech event.

To increase the learners’ socio-cultural knowledge of a ‘western’ interview, the instructor could possibly role play an interview - a suggestion made by one student in their reflection on the task - with another native speaker. Learners could then ask and/or answer questions about the role play. The ensuing discussion would allow the learners to ask questions to each native speaker about why they reacted or answered a question in the way they did. Such discussions may lessen the anxiety some students have towards such linguistically challenging tasks while also giving them essential socio-cultural background knowledge necessary to complete the task.

Yet, as Kumaravadivelu (1991, p. 106) succinctly states, ‘mismatches between teacher intention and learner interpretation may
be inevitable, but *they need not be totally negative* (author’s emphasis). Because a few learners found the task challenging and, in some cases, could not perform the task in the planned manner, it is suggested that the class as a whole benefited; their difficulties prompted class discussions and revision of key lexis that was practiced when the task was repeated. Instead of immediately repeating the task and experiencing similar difficulties, the discussed problems, instead, became valuable learning points that helped the learner to focus on better communicative accuracy, fluency and complexity during the repeated task.

Instructors should not be discouraged if the interaction between the learner and the task does not go as planned. The often-stated adage ‘We learn from our mistakes’ should be kept in the forefront of all instructors’ minds when observing tasks and learners interacting in unintended ways. If learners are asked to reflect on such a task, then it is possible that a key teaching or planning point may appear that will enhance not only the learner’s experience and promote the learner to be more autonomous with their learning, but also improve the instructor’s ability to create a more effective unit. This knowledge, acquired from unforeseen events, can be beneficial for both the learner and the instructor.

**Conclusion**

To prepare learners for interviews in English, the task-based approach outlined herein can be an effective way to provide learners, in an EFL environment, the chance to experience a ‘western’ style interview process. If a variety of schema building activities are used and recycled during the pre-task stage, students can develop their
fluency and accuracy. Through class discussions and reading of authentic materials students can be made aware of the cultural differences between the two interview processes. Although some learners had difficulty with the task, it is suggested that, if instructors want to provide their learners with the best possible chance for them to practice their English ability and obtain a degree of cultural insight into the pragmatics of a ‘western’ interview, then units such as this one are one possible solution. In comparison to a prescriptive approach, where learners practice only the language that has been presented by teacher or found in a textbook, a task-based approach allows the learners to process and react to language in an unscripted natural way that more commonly reflects what happens in a real communicative event.

References


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Title
The Necessities, Feasibilities and Principles for EFL Teachers to Build A Learner-oriented Mini-corpus for Practical Classroom Uses

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Sihong Zhang has been a teacher of English at Anhui University of Traditional Chinese Medicine since his graduation with a B.A. in English Education from the School of Foreign Languages, Anhui Normal University in 1995. He then continued his study in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Linköping University, Sweden and was awarded an M.A. in Linguistics with an A-level graduation thesis focusing on corpus linguistics. His research centers on EFL teaching methodology and recently, the application of linguistic corpora to FEL teaching and learning.

Abstract
Corpus linguistics is developing at such an amazing rate that established corpora of different genres and for different purposes are emerging rapidly in recent years. However, though the advantages of all these corpora to language teaching and learning are well acknowledged, they haven’t produced “tangible pedagogical results” (Nunn, 2005) in an EFL classroom context. With a brief review on the evolution of EFL teaching methods and a short introduction to the established general and learner corpora, this paper analyzes the main reasons why there is a gap and a lag between on-going corpus linguistic research and EFL teaching and learning, and concludes that it is necessary and feasible for EFL teachers, focusing on some basic principles, to build a learner-oriented mini-corpus to complement the existing shortcomings of the established corpora in EFL teaching. In addition, this paper also points out that an EFL teacher should endeavor to use various teaching methods or measures to meet EFL learners’ diverse needs, including the use of corpora, either the self-built or the established ones or their collaborations.
**Key words:** self-built mini-corpus, established general and learner corpora, EFL teaching and learning

**Introduction**

English has been undoubtedly established its status as an international language, regardless of people’s likes or dislikes. Smith (2007) even states that with English gaining status as the primary global language in almost every trade and profession, literacy now often includes and assumes the need for competence in English. Whether she is right at this point is not important. What matters is that English currently enters classrooms in nearly every corner of the world, and a lot of EFL teaching methods have been explored and investigated to arm EFL teachers. With the development and application of computer techniques, CAI (Computer Assisted Instructions) and CMI (Computer Management Instructions), and the Internet in the digital era have provided brand-new teaching methods (Gao, 2005) which include the use of linguistic corpora in the field of EFL teaching and learning.

McEnery & Wilson (2001) state that, “From being a marginalized approach used largely in English linguistics, and more specifically in studies of English grammar, corpus linguistics has started to widen its scope” (p.1). In recent years, linguistic corpora of different genres and for different purposes have been growing like mushrooms, whose applications touch nearly every aspect of language, including EFL teaching and learning. However, in EFL countries like China, there is a widening gap and a growing lag between on-going and intensive corpus-linguistic research on the one hand and classroom teaching on the other. Granger (2004) reports, “research into the use of corpora
for language teaching is almost entirely done by linguists; the contribution of SLA researchers to – and the participation of EFL teachers in – what happens in corpus linguistics is still relatively low” (p.136). Even if there are a few EFL teachers such as Yang & Liao (2004) and Tian (2004) who tried out corpora in their classrooms, most of them still relied on established corpora like BNC (British National Corpus), LOB (Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus), LLC (Longman Learner Corpus), ICLE (International Corpus of Learner English) and etc. A much more disappointing fact is that even fewer EFL teachers consider using those established corpora combined with one or more mini-corpora built by themselves in their classroom teaching, though it is not an unattainable goal at all. Focusing upon the above-mentioned phenomena, this paper first brings a brief review on the evolution of EFL teaching methods and the development of linguistic corpora, esp. ICLE, the representative of the learner corpora, then analyzes why there exists a gap and a lag between corpus-linguistic research and classroom teaching. Based on the studies of the previous corpus work and the presentation of a small corpus built by the author himself and the pedagogical theories of EFL teaching, the paper points it out that compared with those established corpora, a self-built mini-corpus has its unique advantages, which can contribute to eliminate the drawbacks of the established corpora to a large extent. Finally, the paper concludes that it should be necessary and feasible for an EFL teacher, abiding by some basic principles, to build an EFL learner-oriented mini-corpus for practical classroom uses when she or he intends to apply corpora to EFL teaching.
Evolution of EFL Teaching Methods

In the history of English education, where there is EFL teaching and learning, there is a successive pursuit of ideal teaching methods. Different methods have been introduced, tried out and found unsatisfactory, among them, the ‘Direct Method’ in the early decades of last century, the ‘Situational Method’ in the 1960s, the ‘Audiolingual Method’ in the 1970s, and the ‘Communicative Approach’ in the 1980s (Yan, Zhou, & Dai, 2007). Through trial and error, people have realized no single method seems good enough to be universally accepted as best (Yan, Zhou, & Dai, 2007). Thus, the best method is most likely to be the collaboration of the positive parts of different methods. Only when an EFL teacher can familiarize him/herself with the essences of those methods and flexibly put them into teaching in accordance with the particular classroom situations can he/she reach the summit of successful EFL teaching. To briefly look back at the evolution of EFL teaching methods, the author aims to indicate that though this paper is in favor of the use of corpora, it does not claim that this is the only method applicable to classroom teaching. The paper also intends to indicate that although this paper advocates the use of a mini-corpus built by EFL teachers themselves, it does not object to the use of established corpora, on the contrary, does suggest the combination of self-built corpora with the established ones.

Modern General Corpora and Learner Corpora

According to McEnery & Wilson (2001), “a corpus in modern linguistics might be described as a finite-sized body of machine-readable text, sampled in order to be maximally representative of the
language variety under consideration” (p. 32). The history of the development of modern machine-readable corpora began from the Brown corpus of American English, then, LOB (the Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen) corpus of British texts. In these representative corpora, the criteria used for text selection were set, so as to ensure how the language variety is to be sampled, and how many samples of how many words are to be collected so that a pre-defined grand total is arrived at (McEnery & Wilson, 2001, p. 31). So, when the pre-defined number of words arrives, these corpora will not increase in word collection. Some major corpus projects such as the BNC (British National Corpus) -- a 100,000,000 word representative corpus of contemporary British written and spoken texts stand in direct line of succession to Brown and LOB. Quite differently, monitor corpora, such as the Bank of English at Birmingham University, represent a different approach. These corpora often have no final extent because, “like the language itself, it keeps on developing.” (Sinclair, 1991, p. 25)

General corpora, which collect authentic (or standard, or native) language, “are important in language learning as they expose students at an early stage in the learning process to the kinds of sentences and vocabulary which they will encounter in reading genuine texts in the language or using the language in real communicative situations” (McEnery & Wilson, 2001, p.120). However, “one should not ‘exaggerate’ the impact of native corpora on foreign language teaching and, while having access to comprehensive frequency lists may well help course designers compile better lexical syllabi, it will not give them access to learners’ actual lexical problems.” (Granger, 1994) What Granger remarked may well explain why learner corpora
are compiled. Being different from a general corpus, a learner corpus is “a computerized textual database of the language produced by foreign language learners” (Leech, 1998). Generally, learner corpora are important because they provide a deviation from the standard, that is, the language of the native speakers of a particular language.

The first learner corpus created in an academic setting is ICLE, launched by Sylviane Granger in 1990 and currently being coordinated by her at the University of Louvain-la-Neuve in Belgium. The corpus, at first, aims to collect dependable evidence on learners’ errors and to compare them cross-linguistically in order to determine whether they are universal or language specific. In addition, the comparison is carried out to determine to what extent they are affected by factors in the learner’s cultural or educational background. The second objective of ICLE is to investigate aspects of foreign surroundings in non-native essays, which are usually revealed by the overuse or underuse of words or structures with respect to the target language norm. This investigation is done by means of a comparison between individual L2 sub-corpora and native English corpora, such as the International Corpus of English, the LOB, and the Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays.

Centered on the study of learners’ own EFL learning processes and outputs, learner corpora are psychologically much nearer to EFL teachers and learners in comparison with those general corpora. Recently, the learner corpora of different types and language backgrounds have expanded enormously and developed quickly, especially in Europe and Asia, such as LLC, CLC (Cambridge Learner’s Corpus), PELCRA (Polish-English Language Corpus Research and Applications), HELC (Hungarian EFL Learner Corpus),
JEFLL (Japanese EFL Learner’s Corpus), CCLE (Project of 1 million word Corpus of Chinese Learner of English), HKUST (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology) Corpus of Learner English, and etc.

**Established Corpora and EFL Teaching and Learning**

Since its establishment, each of the corpora has contributed more or less to language, lexically, structurally, lexico-grammatically, morphologically, phonologically, and of course, pedagogically. Especially the learner corpora such as ICLE provide excellent materials for EFL research in many different areas. They have brought new insights into learner language, which can be applied to EFL teaching material design and classroom methodology. Theoretically, corpora of different categories, like general corpora, learner corpora and multilingual corpora can all benefit EFL teachers and learners to a high degree, with the result that some optimistic linguists, like Sinclair (1996) announced that “the deployment of corpora would improve the teaching and learning of English worldwide.” Technically, Tribble (1997) predicted that “as the rapid development of telecommunications for computing meant that now (or very soon) a large number of teachers and students would be able to access the BNC or the Bank of English on-line and use the same search engines as their university or commercial counterparts.” He then pointed it out that the corpus was “no longer the sole preserve of the university or commercial research team” (Tribble, 1997).

However, it is very disappointing that at present, a decade after their announcement, corpora haven’t been embraced by most of the EFL teachers and learners in nearly every nation. Reasons for this
poor reception are manifold, and some major ones are summarized as follows:

1. The terms employed by a corpus may ‘frighten’ common EFL teachers and learners who know little about computer science. With a brief survey of the most influential established corpora, we can find participants building a corpus can be divided into 2 main groups: one is only composed of computer professionals, and the other, both linguists and computer professionals. This implies that staff with an educational background in computer science exerts much influence on the process of corpus compilation. As a result, terms of computer sciences, such as parsing, tagging, token, node and etc. frequently appear in books or papers relevant to corpus linguistics. Examples of these terms may be fairly understandable to computer professionals, but they are rather difficult for EFL teachers and learners to know what they exactly mean, even if they are translated into their native language. To EFL teachers and learners, this is undoubtedly frustrating because they are usually required to be familiar with those technical terms and sometimes quite complex search procedures for carrying out corpus investigations.

2. Though there are free online sample corpora available, it must be expensive for EFL teachers and learners to deeply investigate the corpora such as LOB, BNC, ICLE, and so on. The online availability of corpora could undisputedly benefit EFL teachers and learners and promote their knowledge of corpora to some certain extent, but if they want to further use
the corpora, their attempts are frequently hindered because “large general corpora are only available to researchers who have access to powerful workstation computers.” (Landry, 2003)

3. Authenticity is a word often associated with the value of corpora. It seems that established corpora could expose students to genuine texts in the language and help to expand their linguistic awareness. But, what is so-called authenticity? Taylor (1994) says, “The concept of authenticity is an abstract quality that depends on too many variables to be defined.” He believes that the classroom itself creates its own ‘authenticity’ (Taylor, 1994). In language teaching, the individual learner’s language level and his/her progression are more important than many of the other things. For example, a student, whose English language is not good enough, is most likely to be impatient with the huge size of the instances of word concordances retrieved from the established corpora. Moreover, it is also tough for him/her to understand the enormous range of background knowledge related to those instances, cultural as well as linguistic.

4. Judging from the brief introduction to modern general and learner corpora, it goes without saying that most of the texts collected in an established corpus (with the exception of a monitor corpus) are relatively not updated because of the characteristics of their finite size. Psychologically, what and how much is learned is much influenced by a learner’s motivation. A person is most interested in whatever is around or closely linked with him/her. Consequently, it is nearly
unbelievable that texts in such corpora as Brown and LOB are still attractive to today’s EFL teachers and learners. The students are “unlikely to be motivated by a language learning activity if the instances of language use that they are studying are taken from contexts, which make no connection with their interests and concerns” (Tribble, 1997). In general, then, it is quite obvious that from the perspective of a specific classroom context – or, for that matter, from a specific teacher’s perspective – corpora are required to include the language of the learners that are present in the very classroom.

**Self-built Mini-corpora and EFL Teaching and Learning**

Just as only one of the teaching methods fails to provide versatility in EFL teaching and learning, only making use of established general and learner corpora is not sufficient in classrooms, either. A competent EFL teacher can never explore too many effective measures to improve his/her teaching capacity. With the prevailing of computer-assisted tools used in EFL classrooms and the development of corpora linguistics, it is a meaningful attempt for EFL teachers to try out the uses of corpora in teaching activities. However, it is necessary for the EFL teachers to find an ideal method to eliminate the drawbacks of those established corpora in order to take full advantage of corpus research findings. Based on the investigation into the established corpora and the aims to inspire the learner’s study motivation, the application of self-built learner-oriented mini-corpora is then recommended in EFL teaching and learning in this paper.

With recent computer technology and online information available, a common EFL teacher, can easily and undoubtedly build a learner-
oriented corpus by him/herself in an economical way, even if he/she knows little about computer:

1. Judging from the perspective of hardware support, a PC plus mobile mass storage devices can store as many linguistic materials as possible.

2. The software, needed to build a corpus, can be downloaded from websites, even sometimes free of charge, such as ConcApp (see http://www.sussex.ac.uk/languages/1-6-6.html) and Wordsmith Tools (see http://www.oup.com/elt/catalogue/guidance_articles/ws_form?cc=global).

3. Websites like http://bowland-files.lancs.ac.uk/courses/ahaw-nsc1/l04_top.htm voluntarily provide very understandable instructions on how to build a corpus for personal uses in simple words.

So, if an EFL teacher wants to self-build a corpus, he/she can absolutely attain this goal without any difficulty. In comparison with the established corpora, a self-built corpus has its distinctively pragmatic effects:

1. The teacher can present his/her learners with the most recent texts or those texts most related to the learners’ interests or concerns. For example, the Olympic games will be held in Beijing, China in 2008, and the topic of Olympics is heated among Chinese students. The teacher can then collect some recent Olympic news from the Internet as the raw material of
his/her corpus, and compared with those established corpora, such as LOB, the self-built corpus can of course expose students to the newest instances (See Figure 1 and Figure 2.). This may stimulate the learners to get further knowledge of the Olympics by themselves, which spontaneously promote their motivation to study.

(Figure1: Word *Olympic* displayed on a self-built mini-corpus.

2. The teacher can organize learner-centered activities in an EFL classroom. For example, by handing out to learners the error data collected in a written examination, the teacher can ask the learners to help each other correct the mistakes. Then, the learners will not only profit from the correction of their own mistakes but also from the analysis of their peers’ errors and corrections. In addition, since corpus-linguistic software allows learners not only to look for particular words and patterns but also for particular categories of errors, they may also find it useful to review their errors in terms of error categories.

3. The teacher can observe the learning process of his/her own learners’ language both quantitatively and qualitatively. For example, by collecting the assignments submitted by the learners in his/her own corpus and using the corpus built by him/herself, the teacher could generate wordlists to check the range of the vocabulary that learners of the whole class or individual learners have used.
4. The teacher can evaluate the progression in learners’ language with a longitudinal perspective and then focus either on the class as a whole or on specific learners in particular. For example, by comparing the learners’ data collected in his/her own corpus of the first semester with those of the second semester, the teacher can find out whether specific kinds of errors occur more frequently or less frequently after one semester.

5. The teacher can not only analyze the corpus in its entirety, but also focus on individual learners. For example, the teacher can provide specific feedback to an individual learner by providing him/her with concordance lines that highlight frequently occurring kinds of mistakes in that particular learner’s language.

6. The teacher can decide the size of and the degree of difficulty of the texts collected in his/her own corpus in accordance with the learners’ language level. By doing so, the learners will be less likely to be deluged in hundreds or thousands of examples and be confused by the lack of cultural and linguistic knowledge, which they may often encounter in the established corpora.

**Principles of self-building a mini-corpus**

Before an EFL teacher begins his/her work to build a mini-corpus, he/she should take the following into consideration:

1. A mini-corpus must be learner-oriented: This means that the texts collected must be of learners’ interest or concerns, that
learners’ own work such as their written assignments or test papers must be included.

2. A mini-corpus must be understandable: In a mini-corpus, the EFL teacher should try to interpret things in common words instead of the specialized terms, which are intricate to the learners, such as those in computer sciences.

3. A mini-corpus must be difficulty-suitable: When building a mini-corpus, the EFL teacher must decide whether the content of text collection will be difficult or not for the learners by evaluating the learners’ language level. Otherwise, the learners may be frustrated with the instances displayed in the corpus they don’t understand.

In addition, what Aston (1997) lists in his arguments for the use of smaller corpora in data-driven learning is also applicable to a self-built mini-corpus:

4. A mini-corpus must be fully analyzable: It must be possible for an individual learner or for a group to collectively investigate all of the lexical types, which occur with any frequency in a mini-corpus.

5. A mini-corpus must be easy to become familiar with: The learners, either individually or in groups using jigsaw techniques, can read through an entire mini-corpus. Then, they can draw on familiarity to help them interrogate the corpus.

6. A mini-corpus must be more clearly patterned: Collocations and other word associations must be self-evident to identify in a mini-corpus.
Conclusion

The diversity of needs of English language learners has long been acknowledged (Tarone & Yule, 1989, p.10). It is necessary for an EFL teacher to make endless efforts to pursue the most efficient and effective teaching methods to meet his/her learners’ various needs. Corpus use contributes to language teaching in a number of ways (Aston, 2000; Leech, 1997; Nesselhauf, 2004). Research on learner corpora also contributes to “our understanding of language learning processes” (Granger et al., 2002). However, it has taken many years for now established corpora such as the Bank of English to “produce tangible pedagogical results” (Nunn, 2005). At present, there are still very few studies, which “relate the findings from learner corpora to actual classroom practice” (Tono, 2003). Consequently, it is both the corpus linguists’ and the EFL learners’ responsibility to narrow the gaps between corpus linguistic research and EFL teaching and learning. The development of computer technology and the Internet has made it completely possible and feasible for EFL teachers to make good use of corpus linguistic research findings and also, to compile a learner-oriented mini-corpus to complement the existing drawbacks of the established general and learner corpora. The use of established and self-built corpora is compatible with all other teaching methodologies and deserves to be tried out in an EFL classroom context so as to benefit EFL learners in the long run.
References


Title
Reading Strategy, Amount of Writing, Metacognition, Metamemory, and Apprehension as Predictors of English Written Proficiency

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Abstract
This study investigated whether reading strategy, amount of writing, metacognition, metamemory, and apprehension significantly predicts writing proficiency in English. The sample is composed of 159 college students taking up their English course. Five instruments were administered for each of the predictor variables of written proficiency. The participants were asked to make an essay as measure of their written proficiency and were rated using the Test of Written English (TWE) scoring guide. The Pearson r was used to correlate the predictor variables with written proficiency. A multiple regression analysis was used to determine which predictor is significant. The intercorrelations revealed that all seven variables (reading strategy, amount of writing, knowledge of cognition, regulation of cognition, MMQ-contentment, MMQ-ability, MMQ-strategy, and apprehension) were significant and had high correlations with written proficiency. Correlation coefficient values ranged from .41 to .76 and significant at \( \alpha = .001 \). The multiple regression analysis revealed that reading strategy, metamemory strategy, and regulation of cognition
are significant predictors and when combined explained 58% of the variance in written proficiency. The semipartial correlations indicated that metamemory strategy as the best predictor, explaining 5% of the variance in written proficiency. Reading strategy, the next best predictor, explained 4% of the variance, and regulation of cognition explains 3.5% of the variance. Pedagogical implications include using the strategies in teaching students to write English compositions.

**Introduction**
Students upon entering tertiary education are already expected to have gained proficiency in communication especially in written form. There are numerous factors that can be accounted for in the development of English written proficiency. Previous researchers commonly concentrated on using predictors of the elements of written proficiency itself such as type of writing, duration, words, word sequence, spelling, characters written, sentences, and expository passages in predicting written proficiency (Lee & Krashen, 2002; Espin, Shin, Deno, Skare, Robinson, & Benner, 2000; Harris, Rogers, Qualls, 1998; Gansle, Noell, VanDerHeyden, Naquin, & Slider, 2002). It is also evident in English written proficiency that domains of language proficiency are related to writing ability such as reading, listening and oral communication (Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; Lett & O'Mara, 1990;). As compared with other communicative competence such as oral proficiency, other factors that can predict written expressions are cognitive and affective components such as awareness of one’s learning (metacognition), awareness of memory functioning (metamemory), enjoyment of writing and fear of evaluation of one’s writing (apprehension). These cognitive and affective components were strong predictors of English written
proficiency (Lee & Krashen, 2002; Schraw and Dennison, 1994; Victori & Lockhart, 1995). It is not yet clear how each of these factors relate to English written proficiency in the presence of other factors. Using the mentioned factors that lead to English written proficiency there are only a few studies using cognitive and affective factors concurrently.

**Reading Strategy**

Reading strategy involves understanding the purpose of reading, activating relevant background knowledge, allocating attention to main ideas, critical evaluation, monitoring comprehension, and drawing inferences (Brown, Palincar, Armbruster, 1984). There is evidence that reading improves writing. Writing and reading are related and depend on each other (Scholastic Parent and Child, 2004). Students who engage more in reading activities result to write better. In a study conducted by Lee & Krashen (2002) reported that reading was a strong predictor of grades in writing, and it is an excellent predictor of writing competence. The Test of Written English (TWE) scores were reported to be correlated with the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores with coefficients ranging from .51 to .68 indicating moderate to high relationship with reading ability included as a components (Educational Testing Service, 1996).

The following studies show the relationship between reading and writing. A study by Nash, Schumacher, and Carlson (1993) indicates that subjects reading a similarly organized passage wrote essays with better organization. Another study by Shell, Murphy, and Bruning (1989) found significant canonical factors of reading achievement having the highest loading with writing achievement. In the same
way, the results of the study of Klingner, Kettmann, and Vaughn (1996) suggest that initial reading ability and oral language proficiency seem related to gains in comprehension. In another study by Frijters, Barron, and Brunello (2000), found in their study that home literacy accounts 18% of the variability in predicting written language. In an experiment conducted by McCutchen, Covill, Hoyne, and Mildes (1994), they found that skilled writers showed more fluent sentence-generation processes than did less skilled writers. This was revealed in their better performance on reading span and speaking span tasks. In the experimental studies presented, other factors were investigated to influence reading and writing tasks but not directly looking into their relationship. On the other hand, more recent studies on correlating reading with writing abilities are consonant with these experimental findings.

Shahan and Lomax (1986) have proposed three models that explain the reading-writing relationship. Their model includes the interaction of reading and writing, reading-to-writing-model, and writing-to-reading. In his model, both reading and writing have their own components and were investigated using path analysis. Path analysis was used to investigate the effect of reading on writing factors and vice versa. The results proved that the reading-to-writing was superior. In this model, writing is expected to affect reading where reading knowledge can influence writing, but that no writing knowledge would be useful or influential in reading. Development among grade school students occurs first in reading, and that this knowledge can then be extended or consolidated through writing. It was further recommended the need for theories of the reading writing relationship that are explicit about the sources of particular types of
information. To address this need, instead of using the usual reading achievement variable, the reading process is further investigated by using reading strategy explaining writing performance.

**Amount of Writing**

There is evidence that the more students write, the better they make written compositions (Krashen, 1984). Writing quantity was used as a predictor for writing grades in the study of Lee and Krashen (2002). However, the results of the correlation in their study are not significant indicating that the more the writing done, the lower the writing grades. In their study, the relationship among the factors are still unclear. They considered rejecting the amount of writing as non-significant predictor as premature considering the need for more sensitive measures. However, their result supports the findings of Gradman and Hanania (1991) that the amount of writing of international students is not a significant predictor of TOEFL scores. There are few research literatures showing the evidence in the relationship between amount of writing and writing performance and the study contributes to the growing literature.

**Metacognition**

Metacognition refers to the knowledge of one’s own cognitive system and its regulation (Flavell, 1979; Kluwe, 1982). Moreover, it refers to the ability to reflect upon, understand, and control one’s learning (Schraw & Denison, 1994). As applied to second language learning, Victori and Lockhart (1995) refers to it as “the general assumptions that students’ hold about themselves as learners, about factors influencing language learning and about the nature of language
learning and teaching” (p. 224). It is composed of two main aspects: knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition. Knowledge of cognition refers to the declarative aspects of knowledge and offers information about different aspects of cognition like knowledge about personal capabilities, reading processes, writing, memory, strategy awareness and applicability, and problem solving (de Carvalho and Yuzawa, 2001). On the other hand, regulation of cognition refers to the procedural aspect of knowledge that enables the effective linking of actions needed to perform a given task; and it encompasses planning, monitoring, and correction of on-line performance (de Carvalho and Yuzawa, 2001). The use of metacognitive strategies leads to profound learning and improved performance. One of its profound effects is on the second language learning. Second language learners have a variety of strategies from which to choose when they encounter vocabulary that they do not know and that they have determined they need to know to understand the main idea in the text (Anderson, 2002). Most of the studies on metacognition involve its influence on language proficiency on general but not specifically writing proficiency. For example, in a study by Bremner (1999), it was found that metacognitive strategies are used higher on language proficiency as measured by two spoken tasks, two written tasks and two discreet-item language tests. Another is Mullins (1992) who found that there is a high and positive association between metacognitive strategies and language proficiency. Most studies include metacognitive strategies as related to language proficiency in general (Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; Green & Oxford, 1995; Ku, 1997; Mochizuki, 1999; Peacock & Ho, 2003; Rong, 1999). Knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition can be used as predictors of
written proficiency since the component skills involved like declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, planning, information management, comprehension, monitoring and evaluation are needed to produce good writing (Markel, 1984). It was further explained by Victori and Lockhart (1995) that “language learning should help the learner develop a self-directed learning approach whereby he can eventually set his own needs and objectives; choose materials and resources in accordance with his goals; monitor and evaluate his progress overtime (Metacognitive strategies)” (p. 223).

**Metamemory**

Metamemory is the insight or awareness of an individual’s own memory functioning (Troyer & Rich, 2002). Metamemory includes the components of contentment, ability, and strategies produced from factor analysis conducted by Troyer and Rich (2002). Contentment is the confidence, concern and satisfaction in the ability to remember things. Ability refers to the ease in remembering events and information. Strategies involve asking someone to remember, creating rhymes and visual images, organizing, saying out loud, making a list, and elaboration.

The relationship between memory and the writing process has been investigated only recently. Metamemory as a strategy have shown influence over language proficiency but not isolating written proficiency as a dependent measure Ehrman & Green & Oxford, 1995; Goh & Foong, 1997; Ku, 1997; (Mullins, 1992; Oxford, 1995; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985). Although in a study by Bedell and Oxford (1996), Rong (1999), and Bremner (1999), it is the least strategy used in language learning with Chinese students as their
participants. Memory as a strategy in language proficiency is commonly used as individuals need to retain English vocabulary and construction overtime to be able to use it when necessary. This has been illustrated in some research where learners are more likely to remember the items that they have just generated on their own than the ones presented or read (Kinjo & Snodgrass, 2000; Moshfeghi & Sharifian, 1998; Slamecka & Graf, 1978). It can also be explained that as the level of proficiency in second language increases, cognitive processes such as memory also approximates development (Sharifian, 2002).

The link between memory and the writing task was explained by Olive (2004) using the dual-task technique. It was explained that in writing during the planning stage, writers construct a preverbal message that corresponds to ideas that they want to communicate. The ideas are retrieved from the long term memory and organized. The preverbal message is then transformed into a verbal message. During the transformation, the plan is grammatically encoded by retrieving the mental lexicon, the meaning of words and rules for word formation. The written text is then improved by comparing the mental representation and the text already written. Lastly, during the psychomotor level, there is the execution or graphic representation of the linguistic message producing handwriting. From this model, writing is viewed as a cognitive task where information is retrieved from memory, and then the execution of writing takes place. It can be noted that memory takes an important role in writing since morphology, syntax and semantics are accessed in memory.

**Apprehension**
Writing apprehensions refers to anxiety about writing (Lee & Krashen, 2002). It is one of the primary predictors of second language acquisition. Across studies, it is evident that the higher the anxiety, the lower the measures of language proficiency achievement (Lee & Krashen, 2002; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 2000). In a study by Lee and Krashen (2002), they found that writing apprehension is the strongest predictor of grades in a writing course. And the study also supports other findings that it is negatively associated with writing performance, although the contribution of apprehension was not statistically significant in their study. In addition to this, Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) found that language anxiety is the best single correlate of achievement. In the study by Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, and Daley (2000), their findings indicate that foreign language anxiety was one of the best predictors, approximately explaining 22% of the variance of foreign-language achievement. Other studies have also reported that students’ anxiety accounts for high variance in language learning (Sanchez-Herrero & Sanchez, 1992; Horwitz, 1991). It is important to include writing apprehension into the model as it is one of the evidently potent predictors of second language performance.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine further the role of cognitive and affective factors in writing ability. The variables such as reading strategy, amount of writing, metacognition, metamemory (cognitive factors), and apprehension (affective factor) are used as predictors of English written proficiency among college students. Reading strategy and apprehension are unidimensional which only measures one skill.
Metacognition is composed of knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition and metamemory is composed of contentment, ability and strategies. The proportion of variance in written proficiency explained by each predictor is compared.

Method

Participants
The sample is composed of 159 freshmen students (72 males and 87 females) taking an English course at a private university in metropolitan Manila. The students volunteered to participate to receive an extra course credit in general psychology.

Instruments
The questionnaires used in this study included the Informed Strategies for Learning (ISL), a survey was constructed to measure amount of writing, Metacognitive Assessment Inventory (MAI), Multifactorial Memory Questionnaire (MMQ), Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Scale (WAS), and the Test of Written English rating scale (TWE).

The Informed Strategies for Learning by Paris, Cross and Lipson (1884) was used to measure reading strategy. It is composed of 20 items in a multiple choice form with three alternatives for each question (see Appendix A). The items reflect awareness of reading goals, plans and strategies, comprehension and meaning, and evaluating and regulating reading. The ISL provided information about declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge about reading strategies in conjunction with practice and guided learning. The items were content validated by a professor of psychology expert in line with learning strategies and an English teacher both from De
La Salle University. To establish the reliability of the test, a test-retest procedure was conducted and yielded a significant correlation coefficient of .43 indicating low reliability.

A survey was constructed to determine the amount of writing produced by the participants (see Appendix B). It is composed of items that include reaction papers, essays, research reports, literary materials and others where students indicated the amount of writing completed for each during the term. The total number of writings produced during the term indicates the amount of writing produced. The questionnaire was content validated by two English professors from De La Salle University.

The Metacognitive Assessment Inventory by Schraw & Dennison (1994) was used to measure metacognition (see Appendix C). The test is composed of 52 items, 17 of them assess knowledge of cognition (KC) and 35 assess regulation of cognition (RC). The knowledge of cognition part measures the degree of awareness of one’s own knowledge and ways of monitoring. The items depict academic situations in which awareness of one’s knowledge and awareness of skills are assumed to be related to effective monitoring. It includes three subprocesses that facilitate the reflective aspect of metacognition. On the other hand, the self-regulation part includes a number of subprocesses that facilitate the control aspect of learning like planning, information management strategies, comprehension monitoring, debugging strategies and evaluation. The survey has a response format of a bipolar scale: the right end of each scale indicated the statement that is “Always false” (1) to “Always true” (100) about the individual. The response is recorded by drawing a slash across the rating scale at a point that best corresponds to how
true or false the statement is about the participant. The coefficient alpha of the questionnaire reached .88 using a factor replication analysis.

The Multifactorial Memory Questionnaire by Troyer and Rich (2002) was used to measure metamemory (see Appendix D). The MMQ assesses three dimensions of self-reported memory, involving overall contentment or satisfaction with one’s own memory ability (MMQ-contentment), perception of everyday memory ability (MMQ-ability), and use of everyday memory strategies and aids (MMQ-strategy). The respondents indicated the frequency with which each strategy was used using a 5–point verbal frequency scale (all the time, often, sometimes, rarely, never). For each of the items, 1 to 5 points were given on the basis of frequency use. The criterion for content validity of the scale was 70% agreement among 12 memory-expert raters. The agreement on the 61 items tended to be high. The eigenvalues of the three components ranged from .45 to .74. Test-retest reliability indicated a correlation of highly reliable scores with a coefficient of .93. The internal consistency using Cronbach’s alpha indicated highly reliable scores on contentment with alpha coefficient of .93, ability with alpha coefficient of .93 and strategy with alpha coefficient of .83.

The Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Scale was used to measure anxiety about writing (see Appendix E). The questions on the WAS prove several anxiety-related factors that includes fear of evaluation, fear of writing, enjoyment of writing, and ease of writing. The scale is composed of 26 items. The items on enjoyment of writing and ease of writing were negatively scored to reflect an overall writing anxiety with the other two factors. Previous research shows that similar
students showed levels of reliability with an alpha coefficient above .90.

The TWE rating Scale was used to evaluate the English written proficiency of the essays produced (see Appendix F). The TWE is the essay component of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). It uses a criterion-referenced scale to provide information about an examinee’s ability to generate and organize ideas on paper, to support those ideas with evidence or examples, and to use the conventions of standard written English. The rating scale provides concise descriptions of the general characteristics of essays at each of six points on the criterion referenced scale. The readers assign scores from 1, the lowest, and 6 being the highest demonstrating high competence in writing ability. The scoring guide also serves to maintain consistent scoring standards and high interrater reliability within and across administration. The reported interrater correlations and coefficient alpha indicate that reader reliability is acceptably high, with correlations between first and second readers ranging from .77 to .81 and the values of coefficient alpha ranging from .87 to .89. Construct validity was established where the TWE scores was related with the TOEFL scaled scores as it is part of a general construct of English language proficiency. For its content-related validity, the TWE committee developed items to meet the detailed specifications that encompassed widely recognized components of written language facility.

**Procedure**
The participants in this study were scheduled to take the ISL, MAI, and MMQ. They were tested in groups of students per classroom.
The researcher, upon entering the classroom informed the students that they would be answering three survey questionnaires. They were also instructed to answer it as honestly as possible. They were told that they would further receive instruction on how to answer. During the administration they were told to read carefully and follow the written instructions.

The ISL was administered first. The participants were instructed to read the following statements and think about their habitual reading practices and encircle the option for each item that applies to them.

The MAI was the next instrument administered. The participants were instructed to think about their habitual academic behavior, and rate each item by putting a slash in the most appropriate space on the scale that follows each statement in the checklist.

The MMQ was the last instrument to be administered. The participants were instructed to think about how they remember things and read each statement and encircle the frequency that corresponds to their own experience.

After the first session, the students were scheduled again to answer the survey of the amount of writing they produced in the last week of the term because they have produced several writings in different classes. During the administration of the survey, the participants were requested to approximate the number of writings that they have produced for the term. After the survey, a one page paper was passed around, and students were instructed to write an essay about “the factors that can make oneself abnormal” corresponding to the topic taken up in their general psychology class. The students were given 30 minutes to plan, write, and make any necessary changes in their essay as indicated in the TWE test book. They were informed that the
essay would be graded on the basis of its overall quality. After finishing the essay, the students were given the WAS to determine their anxiety towards writing. After completing all the questionnaires, the students were briefed about the study and were informed that predictors of English written proficiency were being determined.

**Data Analysis**

The responses in the questionnaires were scored and encoded in a spreadsheet for analysis. To determine the participant’s proficiency in written English, two raters were asked to serve as readers for the essays. The raters were two English college professors from a university. The raters were oriented in the scoring procedures by the researcher using the TWE scoring guide and TWE sample essays. Each batch of essay is scrambled between the first and second readings to ensure that readers are not unduly influenced by the sequence of essays. The score assigned to an essay is derived by averaging the two independent ratings.

The scores of each participant for the ISL, MAI, MMQ and WAS were also obtained. The amount of writing for each participant was also encoded.

The Pearson’s product moment correlation coefficient was used to assess the relationship among written proficiency, reading strategy, amount of writing, self-regulation, knowledge of cognition, MMQ-contentment, MMQ-ability, MMQ-strategy, and apprehension. The magnitude, strength, and significance of the correlations were reported.

The multiple regression technique was used as the major analysis. The statistical procedure determines which, among the independent
variables, are significant predictors of English written proficiency. In the procedure, the optimal combination of reading strategy, amount of writing, self-regulation, knowledge of cognition, MMQ-contentment, MMQ-ability, MMQ-strategy, and apprehension predicts English written proficiency. In this study, the criterion used was the maximum proportion of variance explained (R²), which provides a measure of effect size. In multiple regressions, the relative contribution of each of the independent variables in the prediction of English written proficiency is assessed. To assess the unique contribution of each independent variable, the semi-partial correlation coefficient and partial correlation coefficient was used.

**Results**

The means, standard deviations, and relationships among reading strategy, writing quantity, metacognition, metamemory, apprehension and written proficiency were obtained. The multiple regression was conducted where writing proficiency was predicted using the other factors as the predictor.

Table 1 shows the mean scores and standard deviation of reading strategy, writing quantity, RC and KC for metacognition, MMQ-contentment, MMQ-ability, MMQ-strategy for metamemory, apprehension and writing proficiency.
Table 1
Mean Scores for the Predictors and Criterion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading strategy</td>
<td>15.79</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing quantity</td>
<td>20.97</td>
<td>20.81</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Cognition</td>
<td>73.07</td>
<td>12.27</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulation of Cognition</td>
<td>66.69</td>
<td>15.31</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metamemory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMQ-contentment</td>
<td>52.77</td>
<td>7.58</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMQ-ability</td>
<td>45.65</td>
<td>12.60</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMQ-strategy</td>
<td>57.73</td>
<td>12.57</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprehension</td>
<td>71.22</td>
<td>10.61</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Proficiency</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The highest possible score for the ISL is 20 and the mean of the scores obtained is considerably high (M=15.79). In the amount of writing, the reported maximum number of writing reported is 135 and 2 as the least number. The mean number of writing for the entire term is quite small with individual scores being far from the mean as indicated with a large standard deviation (SD=20.81). A median spilt was used to assess the levels of KC (Mdn=74.06) and RC (Mdn=68.67) scores. The KC mean score (M=73.07) is low and the RC mean score (M=66.69) is high when compared with the median of all scores separately on the two metacognitive scales. The scale on contentment (M=52.77) and strategy (M=57.73) of the metamemory are high when compared with the norm means (M=39.3, M=40.1) obtained by Troyer and Rich (2002) and the same level (M=45.65) for ability (M=45.0). The level of writing proficiency when compared with the TWE reference groups indicates that the performance of the
participants is on the 85.25th percentile rank. For the general norm of
the TWE classified by native language (M=4.27) and by country
(M=4.24), the mean score of the participants is high (M=4.58).

Table 2 shows the intercorrelation among the predictor variables
and the criterion written proficiency.

**Table 2**

**Correlation Between Reading Strategy, Writing Quantity,
Metacognition, Metamemory, Apprehension and Written
Proficiency**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Written Proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading strategy</td>
<td>0.76***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing quantity</td>
<td>0.67***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Cognition</td>
<td>0.56***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulation of Cognition</td>
<td>0.67***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metamemory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMQ-contentment</td>
<td>0.41***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMQ-ability</td>
<td>0.67***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMQ-strategy</td>
<td>0.67***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprehension</td>
<td>-0.65***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

All of the variables are significantly correlated with written
proficiency. The use of reading strategy has the highest correlation
with proficiency in writing. Previous studies presented reading as a
performance but not as a strategy and it is related to general language
proficiency. This supports the reading-writing model of Shanahan
and Lomar (1986) where results proved that the reading-to-writing
was superior. Indeed the basic skills and strategies used in reading
leads to better writing performance.
Writing quantity is also highly correlated with written proficiency. This indicates that the more the participants engage in writing, the more they become proficient in writing. The results did not support the study of Lee and Krashen (2002) where they found negative relationship between reading and writing. This can also be explained with the use of rehearsal where the more an individual writes the more proficient one becomes in the activity undertaken.

In the components of metacognition, RC and KC are highly correlated with written proficiency. This indicates that the more the individual becomes aware of one’s learning, the better they write. It was explained by Anderson (2002) that second language users have a variety of strategies to choose when they encounter unknown vocabularies and that they have determined the need to know. As individuals use more metacognitive approaches in learning, the more they write proficiently.

The use of metamemory in the same way is highly correlated with writing proficiency. The result supports various studies relating memory strategies and language proficiency (Mullins, 1992; Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; Green & Oxford, 1995; Ku, 1997; Goh & Foong, 1997; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985). This result strengthens the dual-task technique propped by Olive (2004) where in the primary task of writing, memory processes are taking place as secondary.

Apprehension is highly correlated with writing proficiency with a negative magnitude. This result supports most studies where apprehension is negatively associated with writing performance (Lee & Krashen, 2002; Onwuegbuzzie, Bailey & Daley, 2000). It indicates that the more anxious the participants in writing, the better their writing performance.
Multiple regression was performed where the variables were tested as significant predictors of written proficiency. Table 3 shows the regression model and significant predictors of written proficiency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>p-level</th>
<th>Partial Correlation</th>
<th>Semipartial Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading strategy</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>0.009*</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing quantity</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.004</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Cognition</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>-0.016</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.178</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulation of Cognition</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.019*</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.031*</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metamemory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contentment</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.263</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.027*</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprehension</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>-0.013</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.256</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R = 0.58,  R^2 = 0.34,  F(8, 150)=460.62,  Adjusted R^2 = 0.55

(*p<.05)

The regression analysis revealed that reading strategy, regulation of cognition, and MMQ-strategy contributed significantly to the prediction of written proficiency. These significant predictors combined to explain 34% of the variation in written proficiency. The strongest predictor of written proficiency is reading strategy. Greater use of reading strategy is associated with better writing performance. Then it is followed by metamemory strategy and regulation of cognition. It can be noted that the predictor variables that are used as
strategies significantly predicts writing proficiency. The proportion of the variance explained ($R^2=0.34$) indicates a large effect size as it exceeds 26% (Cohen, 1988).

The semipartial correlation coefficient indicates that overall metamemory strategy was the best predictor of written proficiency explaining 5% of the variance in written proficiency. Reading strategy the next best predictor, explained 4% of the variance. Regulation of cognition explained 3.5% of the variance. In using the semipartial correlations values to assess the effect sizes for each independent variable, all the predictors showed small effect sizes.

In comparing the results of the intercorrelations and regression done, reading strategy, amount of writing, metacognition, metamemory and apprehension were all significantly related to written proficiency. The magnitude reported were all positive and all correlation coefficient values are high ranging from .41 to .76. In the regression analysis only reading strategy, metamemory strategy, and regulation of cognition met the tolerance level to be included in the model. These three predictors were notable to have the highest correlation coefficients in zero order correlation with written proficiency. As reported also in the regression model, the beta coefficient for writing quantity, knowledge of cognition and apprehension have negative values indicating an inverse relationship. In the intercorrelations, these variables were positively related with written proficiency. The inverse relationship that occurred supports the study of Lee and Krashen (2002) where negative relationship was found in writing quantity and apprehension. This indicates that the more anxiety and writing a person undergoes, the poorer the performance in writing although this is not significant. In considering
the beta weights to determine the strongest predictor of written proficiency, reading strategy is the strongest but for the meta-analysis based on the semipartial correlation, metamemory strategy accounts for the largest effect size followed by reading strategy. On the other hand, regulation of cognition showed the lowest effect size and predictive ability.

Discussion
The purpose of this study was to determine the significant predictors of written proficiency using reading strategy, amount of writing, metacognition, metamemory and apprehension as independent variables. The study found that all the variables are significantly related with written proficiency. Likewise, reading strategy, metamemory strategy, and regulation of cognition are significant predictors of written proficiency.

Prior research in determining the relationship between reading and writing indicates significance and this study resulted in the same outcome (Scholastic Parent and Child, 2004; Lee & Krashen, 2002; Educational Testing Service, 1996; Nash, Schumacher, and Carlson, 1993; Shell, Murphy, & Bruning, 1989; Klingner, Kettman, and Vaughn, 1996). The difference is that previous studies used reading as a form of an achievement or performance measured using ability tests but in this study reading is used as a strategy (Brown, Palinear, Armbruster, 1984). The results indicate that as individuals use reading strategies such as understanding the purpose of the reading material, activating relevant background knowledge, focusing attention to main ideas, evaluation, monitoring and making inferences, the more likely they can make better writing compositions. The
reading strategies enable an individual to acquire the necessary framework in building one’s vocabulary, comprehension, spelling, semantics and syntax in language development (Shanahan & Lomax, 1986). These prior skills enable an individual to make better writing. The model proposed by Shahan and Lomax (1986) supports the findings that reading strategy can predict writing. This also supports the findings of Frijters, Barron, & Brunello, (2000) and Shell Murphy & Bruning (1989) where high variability is accounted for in writing.

Among the variables relating amount of writing with writing proficiency, only Krashen (1984) and other follow-up studies made notable literature in the field. However, there has been no consistent result from his prior studies in the relationship of amount of writing to writing performance. This research, however, have supported the findings that the more writing done, the more proficient one becomes in writing. This phenomenon can be explained as the consolidation of activities such as writing leads to better performance.

Metacognition is strongly related to writing proficiency, and this result supports considerable studies (Bremner, 1999; Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; Green & Oxford, 1995; Ku, 1997; Rong, 1999; Mochizuki, 1999; Peacock and Ho, 2003). In this study, regulation of cognition resulted to be a significant predictor. It shows that planning, information management, comprehension monitoring, debugging, and evaluation involved in self-regulation when highly used leads to better performance in writing. Writing involves a series of tasks for preparation as compared with other language components and using these tasks brings about increase in performance.

Metamemory is found to be significantly related to written proficiency. Other studies used memory alone simply as a strategy for
language learning and not as a metacognitive process like in the present study (Mullins, 1992; Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; Green & Oxford, 1995; Ku, 1997; Goh & Foong, 1997; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985). In this study, it was found that strategy as a metamemory component is a significant predictor. Metamemory, as a strategy, includes asking someone to remember, creating rhymes and visual images, organizing, saying out loud, making a list, and elaboration. These strategies when used highly enable the storage of information overtime. The information stored over time creates schemas in the generation of thoughts needed in writing. This process is explained more by Olive (2004) where thoughts lead to the act of writing.

It was found that the more an individual becomes anxious in writing, the better the performance in writing which is not supported from previous studies (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey & Daley, 2000; Sanchez-Herrero & Sanchez, 1992; Horwitz, 1991). Having a high anxiety may lead to better writing performance since an individual may become aware of the elements that he need to accomplish in the process.

It can be observed that the significant predictors of writing proficiency turn out to be strategies in general that include reading strategy, metamemory strategy and regulation of cognition. This indicates that with the use of different strategies in reading, memory and control of learning, writing can be best facilitated. As explained by Victori and Lockhart (1995), “the exposure of learners to a range of strategies allows them to handle different types and learning situations efficiently with confidence” (p. 223). Using strategies lead students to effectively perform in different writing tasks.
Improvement in writing can be attained by using reading strategies as mentioned, metacognitive strategy such as regulation of cognition, and metamemory strategy. These strategies that are significant are cognitive strategies which can be used for learning effectively. The other factors having a significant relationship in a zero order correlation with writing such as apprehension, amount of writing and the other metacognitive and metamemory components can be utilized to improve writing as well. As a pedagogical implication, teaching students to make use of the three different strategies may lead them to produce improved compositions, narrations in written form, essays and written reports. In the classroom, the application of strategies can help learners to be competent writers. Different benefits are gained through the use of the strategies in writing. In view of the learners, as they develop insightful beliefs about the language learning process, they tend to develop a more active part in their own learning, taking charge of it especially if the situation calls for a writing task. The use of adequate strategies may compensate for possible deficiencies encountered as they engage in the task. These strategies when taught enable students to become effective second language learners. The quality of writing is enhanced by increasing the learners’ repertoire in the use or reading, memory and metacognitive strategies.

References


**Appendix A**

Items for Informed Strategies for Learning

1. The best way to focus on the important points of an article that you read is to…
   - underline the main idea
   - read the story 3 or 4 times
   - ask someone else to explain it

2. The main goal of reading is …
   - to say all the words
   - to understand the meaning
   - to read quickly without mistakes

3. Mark the one that is false
   - Skimming tells you what kind reading it is.
   - Skimming helps you study before and after you read.
   - Skimming is reading every word more than once.

4. Reading and puzzles are similar because
   - only adults do them right
   - both are very easy
you need to stop in the middle of both sometimes to see if you are getting closer to the goal

5. Skimming is reading all the short words and not the long ones a quick way of finding out what the story is about something that only poor readers do

6. When you finish reading you should think about the information and make sure you understand it close the book and do something else not go back and read it over

7. Reading the same article twice can help you understand the difficult parts is boring do you shouldn’t do it takes too much time

8. A bag of tricks for reading helps you read better because reading is tricky you don’t have to think if you know the tricks special plans and tricks help you understand the story

9. If you cannot understand a word in an article, you should guess it and make one up skip it use the rest of the sentence as a clue

10. A really good plan for your reading is to skip the hard parts to read every word over and over to look back in the story to check what happened

11. Mark the answer that would put you on the road to reading disaster. skipping sentences that are hard to understand checking to see if sentences make sense and fit together asking help for new vocabulary skills

12. A good reading detective gathers clues about the purpose, content, and difficulty of the reading
reads the story first and asks questions later
reads very quickly

13. Saying a definition in your own words is important because
you don’t have to worry about what the definition means
then you know if you tracked down and rounded up the main ideas in
a summary
you can tell if it is a fact, fiction, or opinion

14. Being a reading detective means that you
Use a magnifying glass when you read
Read fast or slow depending upon the kind of story and reason for
reading it
Like to read mystery stories better than animal stories

15. The best way to round up your ideas and prevent them from
slipping away is to
make sure that you can spell all the words
mark your place in the book with a bookmarker
ask yourself who, what, why and where questions

16. What reading sign is a bad plan for you
‘stop’ means to think and say it in your own words
‘curve S’ means to skip the hard parts
‘speed limit’ means to adjust your speed to the reading task

17. What is the best reason for judging your reading when you
finish?
so that you can tell your teacher that your through
so that you can be sure that you understand the meaning
so you can tell if the author was telling the truth

18. A good reading map
is a picture
helps you plan your reading
is not necessary

19. Inferring the hidden meaning when you read means that
you figure out what happened even though the words didn’t say it
exactly
you try to memorize what the author said
you need to use a dictionary to understand it completely
20. The three kinds of meaning in reading are literal, inferential, personal fiction, poetry, comics words, sentences, paragraphs

Appendix B
Amount of Writing Survey

Name: __________________________
Course/major: ____________
Gender: ___ Male   ___ Female   Year level: ______________

Approximate the number of writings that you have produced for this term on the following papers. Write on the blank the number you have produced for each kind of paper.

Number of writings produced
1. Reaction paper
   ________

2. Essays
   ________

3. Research Reports (Thesis, experiments empirical reports)
   ________

4. Literary Materials (Poems, stories etc.)
   ________

5. Others
   ________

   TOTAL ________

Appendix C
Items of the Metacognitive Assessment Inventory
Knowledge of Cognition
3. I try to use strategies that have worked in the past.
5. I understand my intellectual strengths and weaknesses.
10. I know what kind of information is most important to learn.
12. I am good at organizing information.
14. I have a specific purpose for each strategy I use.
15. I learn best when I know something about the topic.
16. I know what the teacher expects me to learn.
17. I am good at remembering information.
18. I use different learning strategies depending on the situation.
20. I have control over how well I learn.
26. I can motivate myself to learn when I need to.
27. I am aware of what strategies I use when I study.
29. I use my intellectual strengths to compensate for my weaknesses.
32. I am a good judge of how well I understand something.
33. I find myself using helpful learning strategies automatically.
35. I know when each strategy I use will be most effective.
46. I learn more when I am interested in the topic.

Regulation of Cognition

1. I ask myself periodically if I am meeting my goals.
2. I consider several alternatives to a problem before I answer.
4. I pace myself while learning in order to have enough time.
6. I think about what I really need to learn before I begin a task.
7. I know how well I did once I finish a test.
8. I set specific goals before I begin a task.
9. I slow down when I encounter important information.
11. I ask myself if I have considered all options when solving a problem.
13. I consciously focus my attention on important information.
19. I ask myself if there was an easier way to do things after I finish a task.
21. I periodically review to help me understand important relationships.
22. I ask myself questions about the material before I begin.
23. I think of several ways to solve a problem and choose the best one.
24. I summarize what I have learned after I finish.
25. I ask others for help when I don’t understand something.
28. I find myself analyzing the usefulness of strategies while I study.
30. I focus on the meaning and significance of new information.
31. I create my own examples to make information more meaningful.
34. I find myself pausing regularly to check my comprehension.
36. I ask myself how well I accomplished my goals once I’m finished.
37. I draw pictures or diagrams to help me understand while learning.
38. I ask myself if I have considered all options after I solve a problem.
39. I try to translate new information into my own words.
40. I change strategies when I fail to understand.
41. I use the organizational structure of the text to help me learn.
42. I read instructions carefully before I begin a task.
43. I ask myself if what I’m reading is related to what I already know.
44. I reevaluate my assumptions when I get confused.
45. I organize my time to bet accomplish my goals.
47. I try to break studying down into smaller steps.
48. I focus on overall meaning rather than specifics.
49. I ask myself questions about how well I am doing while I am learning something new.
50. I ask myself if I learned as much as I could have once I finish a task.
51. I stop and go back over new information that is not clear.
52. I stop and reread when I get confused.

Appendix D
Multifactorial Memory Questionnaire
1. I am generally pleased with my memory ability.
2. There is something seriously wrong with my memory.
3. If something is important I will probably remember it.
4. When I forget something, I fear that I may have a serious memory problem.
5. My memory is worse than most other people my age.
6. I have confidence in my ability to remember things.
7. I feel unhappy when I think about my memory ability.
8. I worry that others will notice that my memory is not very good.
9. When I have trouble remembering something, I’m not too hard on myself.
10. I am concerned about my memory.
11. My memory is really going downhill lately.
12. I am generally satisfied with my memory ability.
13. I don’t get upset when I have trouble remembering something.
14. I worry that I will forget something important.
15. I am embarrassed about my memory ability.
16. I get annoyed or irritated with myself when I am forgetful.
17. My memory is good for my age.
18. I worry about my memory ability.
19. How often do you forget to pay a bill on time?
20. How often do you misplace something you use daily, like keys or glasses?
21. How often do you have trouble remembering a telephone number you just looked up?
22. How often do you not recall the name of someone you just met?
23. How often do you leave something behind when you meant to bring it with you?
24. How often do you forget an appointment?
25. How often do you forget what you were just about to do, for example, walk into a room and forget what you went there to do?
26. How often do you forget to run an errand?
27. How often do you have difficulty coming up with a specific word that you want?
28. How often do you have trouble remembering details from a newspaper or magazine article you read earlier that day?
29. How often do you forget to take medication?
30. How often do you not recall the name of someone you have known for some time?
31. How often do you forget to pass on a message?
32. How often do you forget what you were going to say in a conversation?
33. How often do you forget a birthday or anniversary that you used to know well?
34. How often do you forget a telephone number you use frequently?
35. How often do you retell a story or joke to the same person because you forgot that you had already told him or her?
36. How often do you misplace something that you put away a few days ago?
37. How often do you forget to buy something you intended to buy?
38. How often do you forget details about a conversation?
39. How often do you use a timer or alarm to remind you when to do something?
40. How often do you ask someone to help you remember?
41. How often do you create a rhyme out of what you want to remember?
42. How often do you create a visual image of something you want to remember, like a name and a fence?
43. How often do you write things on a calendar, such as appointments or things you need to do?
44. How often do you go through the alphabet one letter at a time to see if it sparks a memory for a name or word?
45. How often do you organize information you want to remember; for example organize your grocery list according to food groups?
46. How often do you say something out loud in order to remember it, such as a telephone number you just looked up?
47. How often do you use a routine to remember important things, like checking that you have your wallet and keys when you leave home?
48. How often do you make a list, such as a grocery list or a list of things to do?
49. How often do you mentally elaborate on something you want to remember; for example, focus on a lot of the details?
50. How often do you put something in a prominent place to remind you to do something, like planning your umbrella by the front door so that you will remember to take it with you.
51. How often do you repeat something to yourself at increasingly longer and longer intervals so that you will remember it?
52. How often do you create a story to link together information you want to remember?
53. How often do you write down in a notebook things that you want to remember?
54. How often do you create an acronym out of the first letters in a list of things to remember, such as carrots, apples, and bread (cab)?
55. How often do you intentionally concentrate hard on something so that you will remember it?
56. How often do you write a note or reminder for yourself (other than on a calendar or in a notebook)?
57. How often do you mentally retrace your steps in order to remember something, such as the location of a misplaced item?
Appendix E

Items for the Writing Apprehension Survey

1. I have no fear of my writing being evaluated.
2. I look forward to writing down my ideas.
3. I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated.
4. Taking a composition course is very frightening experience.
5. Handing in a composition makes me feel good.
6. My mind seems to go back when I start to work on a composition.
7. Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time.
   I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for evaluation and publication.
8. I like to write my ideas down.
9. I feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas in writing.
10. I like to have friends read what I have written.
11. I’m nervous about writing.
12. People seem to enjoy what I write.
13. I enjoy writing.
14. I never seem to be able to clearly write down my ideas.
15. Writing is a lot of fun.
16. I expect to do poorly in composition classes even before I enter them.
17. I like seeing my thoughts on paper.
18. Discussing my writing with others is an enjoyable experience.
19. I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in a composition course.
20. When I hand in a composition I know I’m going to do poorly.
21. It’s easy for me write good compositions.
22. I don’t think I write well as most other people.
23. I avoid writing.
24. I don’t like my compositions to be evaluated.
25. I’m no good at writing.

Appendix F

TWE Rating Scale

Readers will assign scores based on the following scoring guide.
Though examinees are asked to write on a specific topic, parts of the
topic may be treated by implication. Readers should focus on what the examinee does well.

Scores
6 Demonstrates clear competence in writing on both the rhetorical and syntactic levels, though it may have occasional errors. A paper in this category
– effectively addresses the writing task
– is well organized and well developed
– uses clearly appropriate details to support a thesis or illustrate ideas
– displays consistent facility in the use of language
– demonstrates syntactic variety and appropriate word choice

5 Demonstrates competence in writing on both the rhetorical and syntactic levels, though it will probably have occasional errors. A paper in this category
– may address some parts of the task more effectively than others
– is generally well organized and developed
– uses details to support a thesis or illustrate an idea
– displays facility in the use of language
– demonstrates some syntactic variety and range of vocabulary

4 Demonstrates minimal competence in writing on both the rhetorical and syntactic levels. A paper in this category
– addresses the writing topic adequately but may slight parts of the task
– is adequately organized and developed
– uses some details to support a thesis or illustrate an idea
– demonstrates adequate but possibly inconsistent facility with syntax and usage
– may contain some errors that occasionally obscure meaning

3 Demonstrates some developing competence in writing, but it remains flawed on either the rhetorical or syntactic level, or both. A paper in this category may reveal one or more of the following weaknesses:
– inadequate organization or development
– inappropriate or insufficient details to support or illustrate generalizations
– a noticeably inappropriate choice of words or word forms
– an accumulation of errors in sentence structure and/or usage
2 Suggests incompetence in writing.
A paper in this category is seriously flawed by one or more of the following weaknesses:
– serious disorganization or underdevelopment
– little or no detail, or irrelevant specifics
– serious and frequent errors in sentence structure or usage
– serious problems with focus

1 Demonstrates incompetence in writing.
A paper in this category
– may be incoherent
– may be undeveloped
– may contain severe and persistent writing errors

Author’s Note
This paper was presented at the conference “LANGSCAPE: Exploring ways of Teaching and Learning English” last April 27 and 28, 2006 at the Regional English Language Center in Singapore. Further correspondence can be addressed to Professor Carlo Magno, Counseling and Educational Psychology Department, De La Salle University-Manila, 2401 Taft Ave. Manila, Philippines. Email: crlmgn@yahoo.com or magnoc@yahoo.com.
Title
Language Policy Implementation: A Look at Teachers’ Perceptions

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Abstract
This study explores teachers’ perceptions of the language policy implementation in the Chinese tertiary context. With data collected from classroom observations and follow-up interviews, the findings revealed a discrepancy between policymakers’ intentions and teachers’ executions. Teachers failed to implement faithfully what was required from policymakers in the classroom. Rather, they conducted teaching based on the classroom and political realities. Their factors were mainly student and departmental, which included large class size, students’ language proficiency, motivation, learning behaviour, perceptions of teachers’ role, and institutional evaluation mechanism on teaching excellence. The implications of this policy implementation point to the importance of understanding why there exists such a discrepancy within that context.

Key words: teachers’ perceptions, language policies, implementation, discrepancy, classroom reality, college English teaching.
Introduction

Curriculum policy implementation in any educational jurisdiction involves a variety of stakeholders. Their roles in executing the curriculum policies contribute to the degree which new or revised curricula will be implemented in the local institutions. Researchers have been cognisant that teachers as implementers are the most important players. Studies have also demonstrated that implementers did not always do as told nor did they always act to maximize policy objectives (Cohen & Ball, 1990; McLaughlin, 1987). Moreover, teachers have often been diagnosed as “resistant to change,” or just simply lazy when they ignored or subverted curricular innovations (McLaughlin, 1987; Smit, 2005). Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer (2002) looked at their situation in a different light, explaining that this is because implementers often lack the capacity - the knowledge, skills, personnel, and other resources - necessary to work in ways that are consistent with policy. Spillane et al. warned that even if implementers construct understandings that reflect policymakers’ intent, they may not have the necessary skills and resources to do what they understand the policy to be asking of them.

Wang and Cheng (2005) concurred, saying that teachers’ failure to implement policy as policymakers hoped may signal their uncertainty about outcomes and their assessment that new practices are not as good as the previous ones. Gross et al. (1971) found that teachers’ will to implement the imposed change declined over time because the change was not supported by their education director in ways that impacted them. Through their empirical study on English language instruction in classrooms in China, Japan, Singapore, Switzerland, and USA, Silver and Skuja-Steele (2005) examined how policy and
classroom practice interact by comparing classroom practices and teachers’ statements of pedagogical rationales with governmental policies. They found that teachers were aware of policy initiatives related to language education. However, teachers were focusing on immediate classroom priorities that influenced daily lessons and put their emphasis on student learning. Their findings revealed that language policies were reinterpreted into structural priorities which indirectly influenced classroom priorities and so filtered through to classroom practice. Furthermore, teachers’ willingness to implement language policies was influenced by the social and personal dimensions of classroom teaching and by teachers’ goals and beliefs. In other words, changes were mitigated by the local (contextual) factors.

Researchers (Gross et al., 1971; Spillane et al., 2002) have discussed impediments to implementation and reasons of why implementation fails in actual practice on the part of teachers, the implementers. In summary, these obstacles are: teachers’ lack of clarity about the innovation; lack of knowledge and skills needed to conform to the innovative initiative; unavailability of required instructional materials; incompatibility of organizational arrangements with the innovation; lack of staff motivation; teachers’ prior knowledge, beliefs, and experiences; different interpretations of the same policies; and misunderstanding or superficial understanding of the policies. All of these reasons potentially impede teachers from being able to implement the intended curriculum policies.
The Research Context
This study explored two teachers’ perceptions of the national English as a foreign language (EFL) curriculum policies. It was conducted in the Chinese tertiary setting, where two types of English language education exist: one for English major students and the other for non-English major students (Wang, 2001). Language education for English majors centres on developing students’ language proficiency to advanced/sophisticated level; only a small number of university students are enrolled in such a program. Language education for non-English majors is called “College English,” which refers to the English language instruction in both universities and colleges. Non-English majors constitute the largest proportion of tertiary-level students pursuing undergraduate degrees in a variety of disciplines such as arts, sciences, engineering, management, law, and medical science. These students study English primarily as a tool to help them achieve advancement in their own fields. In 2003, approximately 3.1 million students (http://www.china.org.cn) were enrolled in such English instruction at 1,571 Chinese universities and colleges (http://www.edu.cn) in 32 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities.

Under the guidance of College English Teaching Syllabus (College English Syllabus Revision Team, 1986, 1999), all college English students are required to study English for two years. They take a total of 280 teaching hours of English (about 70 hours each term or 5 to 6 hours each week) in order to meet the basic requirements. In terms of textbooks which represent the syllabus, dictate what needs to be taught, and “are compiled by a government-appointed panel of experts” (Wang, 1999), college English teachers
are expected to closely follow the structure of textbooks to plan their teaching. Moreover, to examine the implementation of the curriculum, students are assessed using a nationwide, standardized English proficiency test called the College English Test Band 4 (CET-4) after the first two years of English study. The CET-4 focuses on testing students’ language proficiency in listening, reading, and writing. Most of the test items are in a multiple-choice format.

**Methodology**

**Sampling**

Using purposive sampling (Patton, 2002), I chose a veteran senior teacher and a novice young teacher for the classroom observations. The intention was to ensure that the selected two teachers could provide “information-rich” cases with respect to the purpose of the study. I expected them to have a sound knowledge and better understanding of college English teaching in China. The sampling started upon my arrival in Xi’an, the research site. I first contacted the department heads via telephone and invited them to recommend teachers who might be interested in my study and requested their contact information. In lieu of ethical consideration (of a power distance relationship between the administrators and their teachers), I asked the department heads or the directors of the teaching and research groups to provide a pool of potential subjects. Then from that list, I made phone calls or approached teachers directly after I delivered my research seminar in their university and eventually decided upon two teachers as my participants for this study.
Instrumentation: Observations and Interviews

Research question

Classroom observations and follow-up interviews in this study were intended to address the following research question: How is the intended curriculum interpreted by classroom teachers? From classroom observations, I saw how much teachers adhered to the objectives of the 1999 College English Teaching Syllabus (the 1999 Syllabus thereafter) in their classroom teaching activity; how teachers conducted their teaching; how much the target language, English, was used; and whether the nationwide College English Test exerted any impact on teachers’ classroom teaching. From interviews, I wanted to find out why teachers conducted teaching in the ways that they did. In so doing, I aimed to examine how teachers actually conducted their teaching to achieve the intended curriculum.

Observation guide

I designed an observation guide (see Appendix A) to facilitate my classroom observations. This guide referred to Fröhlich, Spada, and Allen’s (1985) COLT (Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching) category, comprised of three main features: (1) participant organization, (2) activity type, and (3) use of target language. Participant organization describes who is conducting most of the talking in terms of teacher talk and student talk. Activity type focuses on what kind of teaching activities are conducted in the classroom to promote students’ language learning. Use of target language identifies how much mother tongue and target language are used respectively in classroom teaching and learning.
I referred to the COLT observation model (Fröhlich et al., 1985) because it embraces more communicative orientation on what teachers and students do in the classroom and how they interact with each other. Drawing upon Part A of COLT, I described classroom events at the level of activity. This was particularly essential in my investigation of the college English curriculum implementation because the 1999 Syllabus laid special emphasis on communicative activities. Drawing upon Part B, I focused on the use of target language (L2) and the use of mother tongue (L1).

**Interview protocol**

The instrument used in interviews with teachers followed what Patton (2002) referred to as the interview guide approach. In this approach, I listed the questions to be explored in an interview and used the list as a guide to “ensure that the same basic lines of inquiry are pursued with each person interviewed” (p. 343). I did not have to follow these questions one by one during the interview in any chronological order (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Rather, this interview guide provided the topic dimensions associated with syllabi, textbooks, and tests within which I was “free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject” (Patton, 2002, p. 343).

The interview protocol (see Appendix B) with the two teachers was divided into eight dimensions. They were: (1) demographic information about teachers’ language learning experience, educational background, and teaching experience; (2) clarity and appropriateness of the syllabus; (3) the college English teaching syllabus; (4) college English textbooks; (5) the college English test;
(6) teacher training support received from the department; (7) rationale of English and Chinese use in teaching and the student-centred approach, and (8) challenges faced.

Data Collection

I adopted what Patton (2002) referred to as “unobtrusive observations” (p. 291) or non-participant classroom observations in collecting observation data. Out of ethical considerations, I first informed the two teachers of my research purpose and obtained their permission, which allowed me to enter their classroom to collect observation data. Then I worked out an observational schedule with each individual teacher. Final arrangements were confirmed about the location of each class period and the content of their instruction.

Classroom observations with the two teachers lasted from June 7 to 23, 2004. Together, five classroom observations were carried out with each teacher, Lily and Sally (pseudonyms), within a span of two weeks. During each time slot, there were two class teaching periods, each lasting 50 minutes. I observed one unit of the “Reading and Writing” (eight class teaching periods) and one unit of the “Listening and Speaking” component (two class teaching periods). To facilitate observations and remedy what is lacking through audio recording, I took field notes to record what I heard and observed as each lesson progressed. I recorded my reflections following each observation session to minimize any disruptive influence that I might have on the classroom environment.

Two face-to-face follow-up interviews were also conducted with each teacher. The initial one was an informal 15-minite conversational interview, which asked demographic information
about their education, learning experience, and teaching experience. The second interview was a formal one, more structured and in-depth. It centred on teachers’ experience in following the 1999 Syllabus and their perceptions of various issues with regards to the curriculum implementation in their classroom. Particularly, this interview focused on clarifying questions or inquiring about teachers’ rationale for employing various strategies in their teaching. Each formal interview lasted 50 to 60 minutes and was conducted mainly in Chinese (Mandarin) only with English words, phrases, or sentences added for the purpose of clarification and elaboration or when the interviewees felt a need. The interviews were held in the staff meeting room on their university campus. The two EFL teachers were given pseudonyms, coupled with an indication of whether they taught English at a large or small university. With their permission, the interviews were tape-recorded.

Data Analysis
Analysis of the observation data in this study involved combining readings of my field notes with listening to audio-taped sample lessons. Following the observation guide, I conducted the analysis as follows. In the first stage, I listened to all the lessons recorded from the two observed EFL teachers and examined my field notes. In the second stage, I reviewed my detailed field notes coupled with interviews and identified themes that emerged. I described and supported these themes with evidence from both field notes and interview transcripts. In the third stage, through analysis of lessons recorded and field notes, I demonstrated how the curriculum policies were interpreted by the two teachers.
Interview data analysis adopted the “interpretive model” (Hatch 2002, p. 179) in the qualitative paradigms. By interpretive, Hatch (2002) referred to “a way to transform data that emphasizes interpretation” (p. 180). According to Hatch and other scholars as well (Denzin, 1994; Patton, 2002), interpretation is a defining element that permeates all qualitative research through making inferences, developing insights, attaching importance, refining understandings, drawing conclusions, and extrapolating lessons. Since researchers carry out interpretations in the research process, they make sense of the phenomenon under investigation. This interpretive analysis was intended to link interpretation to the data in order to result in meaningful data. Therefore, I followed what Hatch (2002) delineated as the steps in the analysis of the interview data. First, I read the data, immersed in them to get a sense of overall impressions. Then I reviewed the impressions and identified and recorded them in memos. After studying the memos for salient interpretations, I read the data again, coding places where interpretations were supported or challenged. Finally, I identified the excerpts that supported the interpretations.

Findings
The findings resulted in a number of themes which I have summarized and grouped into the following four emergent themes: adherence to and knowledge/understanding of the syllabus, the learner-centred approach, use of the target language, and impact of the CET on teaching. Below is the presentation of each of these themes.
Adherence to and Knowledge/Understanding of the Syllabus

It was set out in the 1999 Syllabus, that “College English aims to develop in students a relatively high level of competence in reading, and an intermediate level of competence in listening, speaking, writing, and translating so that students can communicate in English” (College English Syllabus Revision Team, 1999, p. 1). With the syllabus objectives as a reference, both Lily’s and Sally’s teachings are reported through activity types in the classroom. According to Fröhlich et al. (1985), the activity type describes what kind of teaching activities are conducted in the classroom to promote students’ language learning. Through these activities, I demonstrated whether or not the two teachers followed the syllabus to cultivate students’ five language skills.

On the whole, the classroom observations revealed that both Lily and Sally’s teaching focused more on developing students’ receptive skills of reading and listening than on promoting students’ productive skills of speaking and writing. These two teachers conducted classroom teaching exclusively in accordance with the textbooks assigned to them instead of adherence to the objectives set out in the syllabus. Cultivation of students’ reading skills was fully covered in their teaching activities. This was reflected in both teachers’ detailed explanation of texts and of reading skills.

In terms of listening skills, both Lily’s and Sally’s students received sufficient practice. Translation practice was common in both Lily and Sally’s teaching activities. While Sally involved her students in English to Chinese translation exercises, Lily conducted both English to Chinese and Chinese to English to engage her students in pattern drill practice and to check whether students understood the text or not.
However, compared with the time spent on cultivation of students’ reading and listening skills, writing and speaking skills were underrepresented in Lily and Sally’s teaching, particularly speaking skills. Lily conducted a few activities in which she encouraged her students to practice oral English. For example, Lily organized one speaking activity “asking about people’s opinions and giving opinions” in “Listening and Speaking” class. She asked students to listen to a dialogue first and pay attention to the communicative function. Then she assigned students in pairs working on “opinion giving” about two social problems. Three pairs of students were asked to present their pair-work to the whole class. However, during my observations of her ten teaching periods, Sally did not organize any speaking activity at all except that she engaged her students in choral repetition of sentences and of listening passages in both “Reading and Writing” and “Listening and Speaking” components.

The over-representation of receptive skills of reading and listening in Lily and Sally’s instruction seemed to be in line with the requirements of the syllabus, thus being faithful to the intended curriculum proposed by policymakers. However, the under-representation of productive skills of writing and speaking prevented them from completely implementing the proposed curriculum. In my opinion, speaking in particular was least emphasized in classroom activities in both Lily’s and Sally’s teaching.

Although the national policymakers expected teachers to adhere to the objectives and the specifications of the syllabus in their teaching and to be knowledgeable and clear about the syllabus, interviews with Lily and Sally revealed that these two teachers failed
to meet the expectations. They claimed that they did not have a sound working knowledge of the 1999 Syllabus, nor did they have a deep understanding of it, although each of them was given a copy by their department head. Both teachers said that they only had very “vague” idea about the language skill requirements in the syllabus. Lily told me that her whole impression of the 1999 Syllabus was that it focused on reading and emphasized on input (i.e., reading and listening) rather than output (i.e., writing and speaking).

Sally expressed her lack of interest in this curricular document. She said, “Although there are several versions of syllabus, I’m not interested in it and I don’t read much either. … every time I was assigned to teach new textbooks, I would teach in the same way as before” (TEIN01SU04). For her, there was no change in her teaching because of syllabus change. Similarly, Lily expressed her unawareness of the syllabus:

*I really don’t understand much of that syllabus. So if you ask me, I really feel, I don’t know much of the syllabus, so I don’t have much to say. Many years ago, we were given this syllabus. I remember we had teachers talking about it. But to tell you the truth, I never read it. … I should say, I don’t think I have a good understanding of it, because seldom did I study it or read it. It’s a waste of my time. … I don’t take it seriously, and maybe, ok, for personal reasons, I don’t like such kind of thing. I want to get in touch with something really concrete and specific, that kind of thing.* (TEIN02LU01)

**The Student-centred Approach**

The national policymaker in terms of textbook implementation clearly stated that language teaching and learning in the classroom should centre on students, should reduce teachers’ speaking time, and should encourage student participation. The observations from Lily
and Sally’s classes revealed that both teachers had adopted a teacher-centred approach. To see how their classroom teaching was conducted, I reported on both Lily’s and Sally’s lessons through participant organization, a parameter to describe basic patterns of classroom interactions between teachers and students (Fröhlich et al., 1985, p. 53). The rationale was to find out who was speaking the most in the classroom, particularly by comparing teacher talk (indicating teacher-centred teaching) versus student talk (indicating a student-centred approach). I mainly observed two patterns: (1) Teacher work: Is the teacher lecturing to the whole class? and (2) Student work: Are students working chorally, in groups, or individually? (Fröhlich et al., 1985).

In the “Reading and Writing” component, the teachers’ speaking was mainly lecturing to the whole class. Teacher talk took up 70% of the class time and student talk 30% in Lily’s class. Likewise, teacher talk took up 85% and student talk 15% in Sally’s class. Students’ work in both teachers’ classes covered choral work such as answering teachers’ questions or checking multiple-choice exercises together, oral presentation, and individual seat work such as reading vocabulary and paragraphs aloud.

In the “Listening and Speaking” component, both Lily and Sally spoke less than they did during their “Reading and Writing” component. Both of them spent most of their class time engaging their students in listening practice, with Lily taking up 80% of the time and Sally 85%. Teacher talk only took up 8% in Lily’s class time and 3% in Sally’s when they explained new words in the listening passages in either English or Chinese. Although this course was designated as “Listening and Speaking,” students’ speaking
seemed scant. Lily conducted a speaking activity of “giving opinions” and asked students to give oral presentations to the whole class. Her students’ pair work preparation and oral presentations took up 10% of the class time. Sally, on the other hand, did not organize speaking activities in the class. Instead, she asked the whole class to repeat the listening passages chorally. She explained that the limited class time was so precious that only choral work (12%) would enable students to have more chances of practicing oral English.

Although the textbooks that Lily and Sally used advocated the “student-centred” approach, observations of their instruction revealed the lack of teachers’ fidelity to this practice. When asked why the expected model from the policymakers was not implemented in their classrooms, both Lily and Sally expressed helplessness and listed reasons for not being able to do so. The two teachers listed large class sizes (over 55 students in each class), students’ low language proficiency, insufficient teaching periods (five hours per week), heavy workloads each term (completing required teaching tasks), and Chinese students’ study habits (depending too much on teachers for instruction) as obstacles.

The above results demonstrated both teachers’ non-implementation of the intended curriculum in their actual classroom teaching. Instead of following what was expected by policymakers, namely the learner-centred approach, both teachers primarily adopted a teacher-centred approach with teacher talk taking up most of their class time. The interviews also indicated that it was not that these teachers did not want to change their focus to student-centred learning, but that the teaching reality constrained them from carrying
out activities centring on learners. Teachers’ implementation effort was in fact untenable in practice.

**The Use of English in Classroom Teaching**

The policymakers expected teachers to use English—the target language—as much as possible in classroom teaching. The rationale was the advocacy in the syllabus of creating a favourable language environment so that students would be immersed in an English-speaking context (College English Syllabus Revision Team, 1986, 1999). One policymaker even suggested using English entirely and using Chinese very little or not at all in teaching.

The classroom observations revealed that both Lily and Sally used the target language of English (i.e., foreign language or L2) and mother tongue of Chinese (i.e., first language or L1) in every teaching period of 50 minutes in “Reading and Writing” as well as in “Listening and Speaking.” Both teachers used over 80% of English when explaining the text in “Reading and Writing” and used 90% of English in “Listening and Speaking.” Both teachers used Chinese when checking multiple answers in students’ workbook, explaining students’ assignments, and translating some difficult sentences.

The observations revealed that both Lily and Sally had a lot in common in the use of L1 and L2. In the “Reading and Writing” class, both Lily and Sally used English (L2) when lecturing on the whole text, explaining the text structure, describing the organization of one unit, paraphrasing difficult sentences, and asking students comprehension questions. Both of them used Chinese (L1) when translating English sentences, analyzing grammatical sentences, and checking answers to multiple-choice exercises. Likewise, their
students used English when answering teachers’ questions and checking answers to multiple-choice exercises. Their students only used Chinese when they were asked to do translation exercises. In the “Listening and Speaking” class, both Lily and Sally used English to explain new words and conduct classroom teaching. They used Chinese when they felt a need to explain some words or sentences. Their students only used English when checking answers of true or false or multiple-choice exercises in addition to passage listening.

Although English was encouraged by policymakers to be maximally exposed to language learners, the observations revealed that Lily and Sally still used a large amount of Chinese in teaching EFL learners. In the interviews, both of them indicated that language teachers should use more English in their teaching. However, they admitted that they had to use a lot of Chinese. They listed the following reasons for their choice: saving time; for clarity in text explanation; and checking students’ understanding of the text.

**The Impact of Tests on Curriculum Implementation**

Although Lily and Sally were instructing freshmen who would attend the nationwide CET-4 the next year, the observations revealed that testing impact was still apparent in both teachers’ classroom instruction. The textbooks that Lily and Sally used in “Reading and Writing” and “Listening and Speaking,” particularly students’ practice books, contained a large proportion of multiple-choice exercises. Therefore, both Lily and Sally spent considerable classroom time checking comprehension questions about the reading, and doing grammar and vocabulary exercises and cloze tests.
The intended curriculum by the policymakers emphasized that the CET was voluntary for universities and students, that college English teachers should follow the syllabus, and that testing should bring forth positive effects on classroom teaching. However, in the interview, both Lily and Sally expressed strongly that classroom reality forced them not to implement what was intended by the policymakers.

Because the CET-4 was mandatory for Lily and Sally’s universities and their students, these two teachers concurred that the most powerful influence of the CET on their implementation endeavour was their teaching to the test. Rather than just following the syllabus, both Lily and Sally taught what was tested in the CET. Sally claimed, “There is no impact on my teaching whether there is a syllabus or not. My teaching is primarily influenced by the CET, this ‘magic rod.’ So testing is our magic rod” (TEIN01SU06). She further admitted,

What we are teaching is following the “magic rod” of the CET. It is definitely true. No matter what is required in the syllabus, and if there is no requirement in testing, nobody pays attention to it [the syllabus]. … If there is a gap between the syllabus and the test, we definitely follow the test. (TEIN01SU04)

They illustrated how they taught what was tested in the CET. One salient example, Lily cited, was that she paid special attention to students’ writing, because the CET-4 set the minimum requirement in writing. This meant that students would not pass the test if they failed to get six points out of 15 points on the writing part of CET-4. As a result, she assigned students paragraph or passage writing as homework, which was consonant to the writing format in the CET-4.
Another example was that after the original multiple-choice questions in listening comprehension were changed into dictation, Sally modified her teaching accordingly by adding dictation practice in helping her students to spell English words correctly. During the classroom teaching I observed, both Lily and Sally kept reminding their students what was tested in the CET. They would tell their students which language points were tested in a certain year. Sally explained,

Unconsciously, I am doing this all the time, which means that I’m attaching really great importance to this test. I’m telling you the truth. I’ve never told my students that our syllabus requires you to do this or that. I’ve never said that. I would tell my students, “name after,” this verbal phrase was tested in a certain year. I also tell my students that “available” is an important word because it was tested twice in the CET-4. (TEIN01SU05)

The interviews with Lily and Sally also revealed that the high stakes associated with the CET test undermined their effort in cultivating students’ communicative abilities, for the reason that speaking skill was not tested for most students, although advocated in the intended curriculum. These two teachers saw this inadequacy as “problematic” and “the worst thing of the test impact,” because “even when students can get high scores and good grades in the examinations, seldom do they write fluently or speak fluently” (TEIN02LU04). They criticized the short-sighted practice of teachers’ disregarding students’ communication skill but felt vulnerable at the same time. Lily explained, “while there is some conflict, I should say, I will place more emphasis on the language points which are associated with the examination [i.e., the CET]. It has something to do with the test for sure” (TEIN02LU03).
Lily conveyed that the CET exerted an indirect impact on her teaching through students’ evaluation. She received considerable complaints from her students because she organized too many speaking activities in class! Her belief of language teaching was “to create a classroom in which my students can practice the English language, or communicate or discuss in the language” (TEIN02LU05). However, this belief seemed impossible for her to realize. She said that each term students evaluated their teachers based on how teachers helped them pass the CET. Her department and university attached greater importance to such evaluation. In fact, everything, including promotion to a higher academic title and something very practical such as monetary reward, was associated with those students’ evaluations. Lily admitted that because of such pressure, she had to yield to students’ preference. Her compromise was to stop or lessen speaking activities in the “Listening and Speaking” class.

**Discussion and Implications**

**Disjunction between Policymakers and Implementers**

In this study, although policymakers encouraged teachers to follow the intended curriculum with, for example, a working knowledge of syllabus, learner-centred approach, and entire English instruction, the classroom reality often left teachers unable to do so. From classroom observations and interviews, I identified a discrepancy between policymakers’ intentions and teachers’ actual execution of the policies. The gap existed primarily in the following aspects: understanding of the syllabus, the learner-centred approach promoted
by the syllabus and textbooks, the use of English in teaching, and the impact of tests on implementation.

**Understanding of the syllabus**

Policymakers emphasized the importance of teachers’ working knowledge and thorough understanding of the syllabus in the expected implementation. However, the two interviewed teachers argued that the syllabus should have been more explicit, concrete, and specific. The results revealed that when policymakers fail to make their intentions clear, some dangers exist: either that teachers may have no clear idea of what was intended and then could ignore some aspects of the innovation or that teachers misunderstand the intentions and react with disfavour.

For example, the college English teaching syllabus failed to prescribe what teaching methods that language teachers should use. As was pointed out, the teaching methodology suggested in the syllabus document is flexible (Wang & Han, 2002), “eclectic” (Fan, 1999), and “composite” (Cowan et al., 1979). From the policymakers’ standpoint, the intention was to offer teachers enough freedom and space to explore or create Chinese ways of language teaching in classrooms. Policymakers preferred teachers absorbing from different approaches rather than blindly following one certain foreign teaching method. They also suggested that teachers employ flexible and practical methods according to different learners at different teaching stages.

However, from the teachers’ point of view, such eclecticism implied that they could adopt whatever methods they preferred. This absence of guidance, in fact, may have encouraged teachers to stick
to the teaching method they felt most comfortable with, albeit not necessarily effective or appropriate. When asked about the teaching methodology employed, the two teachers interviewed responded that they did not use any fixed teaching methods. My observations revealed that both teachers used mainly a grammar-translation method. For instance, one teacher in her “Listening and Speaking” class even asked her students to translate sentences from Chinese to English to ensure that students fully mastered the structure and its meaning. To a certain degree, the use of the grammar-translation method was counterproductive—not promoting students’ communicative skills, especially speaking skill, as prescribed in the syllabus.

**The learner-centred approach and the use of English**

Policymakers emphasized that to implement the textbook designers’ teaching principles, teachers must adopt a learner-centred approach and ought to use English entirely in instruction. In contrast, my classroom observations of the two teachers confirmed that college English teaching remained teacher-centred with more teacher talk and less student talk. These findings are consistent with researchers who also elaborated that tertiary teaching and learning in China was teacher-centred, grammar-focused, and test-oriented (Wang & Han, 2002), emphasizing structure, grammar and translation, text analysis, vocabulary, rote memorization, and reproduction of knowledge (Anderson, 1993; Campbell & Zhao, 1993; Cowan et al., 1979; Lee, 2000; Li, 1984; Penner, 1995; Wang, 1999; Zou, 1998).

Previous empirical studies in the EFL context also found that a mismatch existed between policymakers and implementers regarding
learner-centred approach. O’Sullivan’s (2002) longitudinal case study revealed that teachers in Namibian primary schools did not implement the learner-centred English teaching reform imported from Western communicative approaches and advocated by Namibian policymakers. Teachers’ non-implementation of the reform was caused by policymakers’ failure to take into consideration the classroom realities, where teachers’ professional and linguistic capacity, learner capacity, support services, and poor communication functioned as hindering elements. Similarly, Karavas-Doukas (1996) examined teachers’ attitudes towards the communicative learner-centred approach in Greek public secondary schools. She found that although most teachers held favourable attitudes towards such innovation, these teachers still conducted teaching in the teacher-fronted and grammar-oriented manner, an apparent discrepancy between policymakers’ intentions and teachers’ executions.

To further explain why such a discrepancy existed and how to bridge the gap, O’Sullivan (2002) and Karavas-Doukas (1996) said that policymakers need to bear in mind that teachers’ role in curriculum implementation cannot be undermined and their classroom realities need to be adequately considered. From my interviews with the two teachers, the implementation reality was found to be the reason for this discrepancy as well. They said that because Xi’an was situated in a less developed region and student origin was mainly from rural areas, English education was not as good as coastal cities such as Shanghai or Guangdong. For this reason, teachers felt that 100% use of English and no use of the mother tongue were neither feasible nor effective for English language teaching and learning in a context such as Xi’an.
Although policymakers contended that teachers’ change of perceptions was more important than their language proficiency, both teachers whom I interviewed and observed expressed their disagreement. They said that their classroom reality, especially their students’ language proficiency, was the biggest concern for them to decide how much English and Chinese could be used in teaching. One hundred percent use of English in instruction would probably result in students’ frustration based on their language ability. They argued that proper use of their first language was beneficial for their students: saving time, clearly conveying the course content, and more importantly, checking if students understand their instruction or not. Excluding Chinese in classrooms seemed neither realistic nor possible for them. In addition, these two teachers commented that teachers at top universities in Beijing or Shanghai undoubtedly had more of an advantage over average universities such as theirs, with top students who are more proficient on the national university entrance examinations in English. These students would have less difficulty in following teachers’ English instruction in multi-media classrooms and computer labs. Their students in Xi’an, in comparison, mainly from rural areas with lower language proficiency, struggled with instruction in English.

The impact of tests
The topic of greatest difference was the use of the standardized high-stakes college English test results in evaluating teachers’ performance. Policymakers reiterated that the CET was voluntary, that it should bring impact positively on classroom teaching, and that its sole purpose was to assess if the syllabus was properly
implemented. The teachers revealed not only that these tests were mandatory for their universities and students, but also that tests like CET impacted negatively on them, a phenomenon discussed by Alderson and Wall (1993) and Smith (1991b).

When I observed the classroom teaching, I found the CET washback effects obvious. Although my observations deliberately focused only on the two teachers teaching freshmen, I still saw the impact of the test. Instead of following the teaching syllabus, teachers instructed on what was tested in the CET. For example, one teacher continuously reminded her students to pay special attention to words or verbal phrases such as “access,” “classify,” “deprive of” that were frequently tested in the CET. The other teacher spent two teaching periods explaining how to write an application letter, because the CET had such a test format. Such “teaching to the test” behaviour, with an “undesirable narrowing of the curriculum” (Alderson & Wall, 1993, p.118) has been shown as having an impact on classroom teaching and learning (Alderson & Wall, 1993; Madaus & Kellaghan, 1992; Prodromou, 1995; Smith, 1991a).

Indeed, teachers in my study conducted test-related practices that included telling students test-taking tips, emphasizing exercises potentially to be tested, demonstrating marking procedures, and using various means to promote student motivation for the test, all types of practices that Madaus and Kellaghan (1992) described. Teachers also aligned instruction with test formats and adapted their teaching to remain consistent with test contents. Specifically, the classroom observations convincingly revealed the negative washback both overtly and covertly as Prodomou (1995) delineated. The two teachers were found using examples from textbooks that emphasized
the skills used in the CET. As a result, reading was given much more emphasis in the classroom than listening, writing, and speaking. The same teachers were also seen “teaching a textbook as if it were a testbook” (Prodomou, 1995, p. 15, original italics). Because of this, they focused on those points which would be tested, and helped students in completing multiple-choice exercises in students’ practice books. Smith (1991b) summarized that testing considerably reduces learning time, narrows the curriculum, and discourages teachers from attempting to meet goals or use materials that are not compatible with formats used by test makers. As she put it, “multiple choice testing leads to multiple choice teaching” (p. 10).

When asked in the interviews why they conducted teaching that way, both teachers expressed their quandary. On the one hand, they described such teaching as generating problematic consequences, in the fact that “even when students can get high scores and good grades in the examinations, seldom do they write fluently or speak fluently.” On the other hand, they were obliged to proceed with such practices, because students evaluated and complained about them if they failed to attach importance to the CET in their teaching. Their concerns resonated with what Madaus and Kellaghan (1992) asserted about the impact of high-stakes tests on teachers. These two authors stated that the influence of testing on teachers’ classroom practices is intensified when students, teachers, administrators, or the general public perceive the testing results to be linked to important decisions. These decisions include “graduation, promotion or placement of students, evaluation or rewarding of teachers or administrators, allocation of resources to schools or school districts, and school or school-system certification” (p. 139). As well, Alderson and Wall (1993) argued,
“for teachers, the fear of poor results, and the associated guilt, shame, or embarrassment, might lead to the desire for their pupil to achieve high scores in whatever way seems possible” (p.118). Therefore, given the importance of this high-stakes test, it can be assumed that teachers will be highly likely to continue with the test related instruction as long as the status quo exists.

**Implications for Implementers**

The findings of my study revealed a mismatch of intentions and executions between policymakers and implementers. Teachers as implementers did not carry out the intended curriculum. On the contrary, they conducted classroom instruction based on the context and reality where they were teaching. In Chinese college English teaching, teachers, being at the lower level of the hierarchical structure, seem to have little input into curriculum development. However, just as Connelly and Clandinin (1988) claimed, curriculum development is ultimately about teacher development, and it is teachers who decide whether implementation can be executed as it is intended by policymakers and further sustained. Therefore, Chinese EFL teachers need to take initiative to have their voices heard about issues of language teaching and learning through various channels: conferences, workshops, and staff meetings. They should not consider themselves as passive implementers of curriculum, whose responsibility it is to simply follow the rules. Rather, they should see themselves as the major players in putting the proposed curriculum into classroom practice by actively participating in the curriculum development. They should acknowledge that their perspectives are valuable, and should have more weight in determining what and how
curriculum can be implemented. Without their sincere participation, the continuity and sustainability of any innovative curriculum will be out of the question.

In addition, teachers need to be actively involved in teacher training and professional development programs such as expert seminars, academic conferences, and research undertakings. Teaching is an ongoing and life-long learning process. Teachers, therefore, should see curriculum innovation as an opportunity which facilitates them in upgrading their professional capacity. Only after they vigorously engage themselves in such ventures can they be able to actually perform ownership of the innovation. Teachers will see themselves as part of the innovation and the innovation as part of themselves as well. This ownership in turn creates more autonomous teaching instead of merely keeping to the designated textbooks. Moreover, teachers should also start seeking collaboration and collegial support from their peers. Such cooperation will eventually benefit teachers in information sharing, in conducting research, and in problem solving.

Conclusions
The findings revealed that between policymakers and implementers a gap seems to exist. National language policies exerted a certain impact on teachers’ classroom behaviour, but teachers followed more concrete regulations from their own universities. These rules had more impact on their teaching in that disobeying them might rule out teachers’ practical benefits such as monetary reward or academic promotions. In addition, the findings indicated that classroom teachers carried out instruction based on their classroom reality by
primarily following first the testing syllabus and then, the textbooks. They could be said to have only partially implemented the intended curriculum.

This study reinforces the point that implementation is a very complex matter (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Snyder, Bolin, & Zumwalt, 1992). Any coherent language curriculum will have to reconcile a tension between desirable policy and acceptable and possible practice in context (Johnson, 1989). During the process, teachers as implementers determine whether or not curriculum innovation is executed as it is intended by policymakers in the classroom (Carless, 1999; Clandinin & Connelly, 1992; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). Marsh (1986) said, “It cannot be expected that teachers will automatically implement a curriculum according to the intentions of the developer” (p. 19). Carless (1999) also asserted that “teachers are the individuals who implement, adapt, reject, or ignore curriculum innovation. It is thus something of a truism that they are the core of the innovation process” (p. 374). Therefore, teachers’ decisive role in the implementation of the curriculum cannot be underestimated. Without their support and sincere involvement in the innovation, any curriculum implementation will stay at a superficial level, with either semi-implementation or even non-implementation.

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Notes

1. To investigate such a complicated issue as the implementation of the English as a foreign language curriculum policies, the researcher explored the issue from three groups of stakeholders. Interviews with the national policymakers from the syllabus, textbook, and testing teams (referred to as policymakers in this paper) were conducted to examine the intended curriculum, interviews with the heads of the college English department were conducted to look at the administrators’ perceptions, and questionnaire surveys on EFL teachers were administered to scrutinize teachers’ perceptions. All the data collected from these sources were triangulated and analyzed to gain a more complete picture of the issue and findings were reported in different scholarly papers. The current study only focused on the classroom observations and interviews with the two teachers to see how they interpreted the national and institutional policies and how they implemented these policies in their classrooms.

2. This study examined the implementation of the 1999 version of the College English Teaching Syllabus and the data was collected in the summer of 2004. During the data collection, the latest version of the teaching syllabus called “College English Curriculum Requirements” (for trial implementation) was published officially by the Higher Education Department of the Ministry of Education. Since the implementation phase of this curricular document was too short, the researcher focused on the 1999 Syllabus for the exploration of the issue.

3. This abbreviation and others in this section means: TE for teacher; IN for interview; 01SU for first small university; 04 for page number in interview transcripts; 02LU for second large university.
**References**


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**Appendix A: Classroom Observation Guide**

General information:
Instructor:

__________________________________________________
Observer:

__________________________________________________
Date:

__________________________________________________
Time:

__________________________________________________
Classroom:

__________________________________________________
Focus of the observation:
1. Who is conducting most of the talking? Is it the teacher or the student?
2. How does the teacher teach generally? Using what methods?
3. How does the teacher interact with students? Is there any interaction between the teacher and students?
4. How does the teacher ask and respond to the students’ questions in class?
5. What language activities does the teacher organize in the classroom teaching?
6. Is there any group work or pair work in the classroom teaching and learning?
7. Is there any translation exercise in the classroom teaching?
8. Is there any oral English practice in the classroom teaching?
9. How is English used in Reading/Writing and Listening/Speaking classes?
10. How much is English used in Reading/Writing and Listening/Speaking classes?
11. How is Chinese used in Reading/Writing and Listening/Speaking classes?
12. How much is Chinese used in Reading/Writing and Listening/Speaking classes?

Appendix B: Interview Protocols for the Teachers

Before and during the classroom observation:
1. Can you tell me something about your language learning experience?
2. Can you say something about yourself, such as your educational background and teaching experience?

After the classroom observation:

3. How would you describe your experience following the College English Teaching Syllabus?

4. What do you think of the clarity of the national College English Teaching Syllabus? Is it clear and easy to follow? If not, why not?

5. What do you think of the practicality of the Syllabus in terms of your language teaching? Is it practical for you to use? If not, why not?

6. How appropriate is the College English Teaching Syllabus for your teaching context?

7. Why do you think that teachers should have a national College English Teaching Syllabus?

8. To what extent do you think the textbooks accurately represent the College English Teaching Syllabus? If not, where are they lacking?

9. What is the benefit of the College English Test from your perspective as a teacher?

10. What impact, if any, does the College English Test have on your classroom teaching?

11. What impact, if any, does the College English Test have on your students’ learning?

12. How do you actually conduct your classroom teaching to achieve the objectives stated in the official syllabus?

13. How much support do you receive from your department head regarding how you teach College English?
14. What kinds of support would you like to receive from your department head in your teaching of College English?

15. What are the most challenging aspects that you face regarding implementing the College English Curriculum?

16. What is the rationale for you to conduct your class in English / in Chinese?

17. Why do you organize your classroom activities that allow your students to work with their peers / to work alone?
Title
Testing Oral Language Proficiency of University EFL Students

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Abstract
The present study aimed at developing a series of objective criteria for measuring and scoring the oral proficiency of EFL students in moving toward a more objective mode for scoring the oral language proficiency. To achieve this purpose, eighty students from the University of Masjed Soleyman in Iran were selected based on their availability and their successful passing of conversations one, two, and three. Then, their oral proficiencies were rated against a validated and newly-developed checklist. The obtained scores were compared with the group’s performance in their previous conversation courses.
Result indicated a low correlation between the two groups of scores. It was also proved that the subjective measures were not reliable enough to indicate the students' abilities in terms of oral language proficiency.

**Key words:** Oral Language Proficiency, Objective Scores, Subjective Scores, Scoring Criteria.

**Introduction**

Many language tests follow a psychological rather than linguistic theoretical framework, evidenced by the use of a single modality (such as a paper-and-pencil test that ignores spoken and oral comprehension) (Pray, 2005). Most current tests of oral proficiency have the same deficiencies, and many of the measures used by the teachers share the problem of subjectivity. This status is sustained by factors such as large classes, teachers' inadequate command of English, and the lack of easy access to support materials and facilities (Ramanathan, 2008, Sook, 2003). Therefore, due to the complicated nature of this skill, testers and language teachers should make use of reliable analyses for the purpose of objectivity.

The focus of the present study is on the fact that in university conversation classes there exists no clear-cut checklist or a hard and fast set of criteria for measuring the oral proficiency of students majoring in English. Various types of tests designed and administered-mostly paper and pencil listening tests, student-student, and student-teacher interviews rated without using established criteria-are not suitable to the mode. Therefore, an objective and integrated checklist is needed to measure the students' competence on the basis of their performance. To do so, the researchers appropriately modified the existing checklists to include an important factor,
"communication" which is essential for the purpose of assessing levels of oral ability, to help the test designers move from subjective teacher-made tests towards a more standardized testing of oral/aural skills. This checklist was developed as comprehensively as possible so that the researchers were able to take into account most of the required criteria in the tests for measuring oral proficiency. Sample models for developing this checklist were extracted from Farhady, Jafarpur, and Birjandi (2001), Heaton (1990), Hughes (2003), IELTS Testing Center (2000), and Underhill (1987). The most significant criteria considered in the checklist included accent, speed of response, diction, listening comprehension, communication, and fluency to name but a few.

Until now, several studies have been conducted in developing measures for evaluating language learners' oral proficiency. Harris (1968) suggests a list of criteria for measuring oral skills, which is technically known as "Sample Oral English Rating Sheet". Harris's sample comprises five criteria to be rated: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, each of which includes 5 levels. The proficiency guidelines for speaking were developed in 1982 by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) with the purpose of creating a criterion that could be used to identify the foreign language proficiency of speakers ranging from "no knowledge" of EFL to "total mastery" gained through widespread application. The ACTFL guidelines include: superior, advanced (high, mid, low), intermediate (high, mid, low), and novice (high, mid, low) levels.

Also, Underhill (1987) has offered a rating scale for measuring speaking skills. A rating scale, as defined by Underhill includes 1)
very limited personal conversation, 2) personal and limited social conversation, 3) basic competence for social and travel use, 4) elementary professional competence, and 5) general proficiency of all familiar and common topics.

One area of decision-making in rating scales is scoring. Farhady, Jafarpur, and Birjandi (2001) state that depending on the objective of the test, scoring may be done holistically or discretely; the former refers to an overall impression according to which the interviewee either receives excellent, good, fair, or pass/fail scores. The latter, on the other hand, rates the interviewee's performance separately on scales that relate to accent, structure, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Another crucial work in this realm is a checklist developed by Hughes (2003). The checklist assigns the candidates (interviewees) to a level holistically and rates them on the six-point scale of each of: accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The test is both given and rated by the teacher with no student self-evaluation and self-judgment about their progress.

However, more recent studies, emphasizing the interactional aspect of language, have focused on learners' awareness of the test procedures. For example, a different view of language assessment, inspired by the idea of Task-Based Instruction (TBI) is casting light on the field of foreign language testing. In task-based language assessment (TBLA) language use is observed in settings that are more realistic and complex than in discrete skills assessments, and which typically require the integration of topical, social and/or pragmatic knowledge along with knowledge of the formal elements of language (Mislevy, Steinberg & Almond, 2002). In another case, Lambert (2003), giving the tests at the end of term to nine classes of between
26-31 first year Japanese university students majoring in electrical and mechanical engineering, predominantly male, upper elementary to pre-intermediate level, concludes that recordings of the student-student interviews would provide a clear justification for the marks awarded and it is also a good idea to give the students a chance to think about what they would say by putting the actual test roles on the Intranet. In the light of the above studies, it should be clearly noted that the current scoring methods applied in Iranian universities are mostly impressionistic, based on experience and lack validity and reliability; the checklist proposed can be utilized as an alternative method in order to obtain objective scores which are true representative of the students’ oral communicative ability. So, the current study could function as a prerequisite to interactional approaches to language testing since its main goal is to suggest a rather valid and reliable checklist as a measurement device for assessing oral proficiency. In other words, the same checklist could be used by both teachers and students in methods such as TBLA, student-student interviews, etc.

Questions of the Study
For the sake of arriving at an objective decision, this study pursued to provide answers to the following questions.
1. Which measure, subjective or objective, provides a more valid and reliable estimate of the oral proficiency of the EFL learners?
2. Is there a meaningful relationship between the subjective and objective sets of scores?

Methodology
Participants
Subjects in the present study were 80 students selected from the students of English Language Teaching at Islamic Azad University of Masjed Soleyman. The rationale for their selection was their availability and the fact that the participants had already passed three conversation courses successfully and they were also taking conversation four at the time of the study. Twenty five percent of the participants were male (n=20) and the rest were female (n=60), ranging from 20 to 27 years old.

Instrument
One instrument utilized in the process of the present study was the proposed checklist including a series of standards and criteria for measuring oral communicative abilities of EFL students on an academic level. Another instrument was the IELTS format of interview (a speaking test) in which the interviewees were asked to answer general and personal questions about their homes and families, jobs, studies, interests, and a range of similar topic areas in about five minutes. The other instrument utilized in the present study was a tape recorder for recording the interviews.

Procedure
In order to validate the newly designed checklist, that is, to determine the extent which the checklist measures what it is supposed to measure, a pilot study was conducted. Ten students were randomly selected and rated using both the new checklist and the one designed by Hughes (2003) to determine the criterion-related validity of the
new checklist. The correlation coefficient obtained between the two series was 0.968 indicating that the new checklist was valid.

By the end of the semester, the subjects were asked to speak for about two minutes on a particular topic for which they were given almost two minutes to think about. All of the selected subjects were interviewed and rated against the new checklist by two raters, first by one of the researchers and then by a bilingual (a native speaker of English who speaks Persian). Each interview session was held in the presence of one of the researchers, the classroom teacher (both as the interviewers) and one of the subjects (as the interviewee). Each interview commenced with a set of simple questions and then proceeded to more challenging ones, and before each session, the subjects were asked to explain and write down brief notes on the sources and textbooks which they had practiced in conversation courses and also the methods applied during the courses and the final examinations. This was done as a warm up activity to decrease the psychological stress and to ensure that the same mode and channel had been used to score the oral proficiency of the subjects in the previous courses. In order to enhance the reliability of the scores, rating activities were carried out first by one of the researchers and then by an inter-rater, and agreement was reached on each student's score.

All the subjects' scores in conversation courses were collected from the Educational Affairs Department of Masjed Soleyman University, and their average scores were calculated. After gathering the required data, the next step was to rate and score each interview based upon the developed checklist with the aim of attaining more reliable and
objective scores. The correlation coefficient determined whether or not there was a possible relationship amongst these series of scores.

**Data Analysis**

The interviews obtained during the study were assessed through listening to the recordings, and the performance of each interviewee was rated on the basis of the criteria indicated in the developed checklist first by the researchers and next by an inter-rater. After calculating the average of the scores given by two raters, two series of scores were attained—the average scores in interview and the average scores in conversation courses.

By using the Microsoft Excel software (2003 version) and calculating the variables, the correlation obtained was 0.0045 which indicated that the correlation between the two series of scores was substantially low. This proved the hypothesis of the study that the previous ratings were wholly implemented in a subjective manner compared to the ratings made against the newly developed checklist including the objective criteria.

Minimum and maximum values were higher for the subjective rating than for the objective ones which might indicate that instructors in conversation courses were more generous, and so these scores do not represent the true oral abilities of the subjects. Also the mean of the students' scores in conversation courses was 15.87 while the corresponding mean score in interview was 11.77. However, the difference between the standard deviation of both groups was not meaningful and indicated that the use of standard criteria for scoring oral proficiency caused the scores of the students to fall off in a similar manner, i.e. the subjects who received higher scores among
others by subjective scoring measures also received the higher range of scores by the objective measures although their range of scores lowered meaningfully in objective scoring. The median of the scores in conversation courses was 16 which showed that half of the scores were higher and half of them were lower than 16. The median of the objective scores was 12.

Table 1 illustrates the average scores of conversation courses assigned to students by their instructors through traditional subjective means of testing and scoring oral communicative abilities. 70 percent of the scores were in the range of 15 to 20, and the rest of the scores fluctuated between 12 and 15.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics on objective and subjective measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Evaluations</th>
<th>Subjective Scores</th>
<th>Objective Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
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<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min. Value</td>
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<td>8.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max. Value</td>
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<td>15.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>Range</td>
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<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>15.87</td>
<td>11.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard Error</td>
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<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>1,270.1</td>
<td>942.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum of Squares</td>
<td>20,395.27</td>
<td>11,331.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1 represents the average scores given by the two raters to the same groups of students based on the standard criteria listed in the designed checklist (See Appendix for a sample checklist). The distribution of these scores was lower than the course scores with 50
percent of the scores between 12 and 16 and the rest between 8 and 12.

Figure 1 *The average scores of subjects based on the standard checklist*

This distribution of scores indicating the variation in the students' oral abilities shows that the actual abilities of the students are far below that obtained by their EFL teachers.

In order to determine the contribution of each scale on the objective scores and the performance of the subjects, the scores in various scales were specified in terms of six scales. Although the general performance of the subjects was weak, the figure shows the strength and weaknesses of the subjects in different sub skills of the speaking skill.
The checklist contains 6 scales namely, fluency, comprehension, communication, vocabulary, structure and accent, each of which includes 5 levels of proficiency. The performance of the subjects on each scale was then independently calculated.

Figure 2 The percentages of scales of the checklist contributed to the total score

The performance of the subjects in the areas of comprehension, vocabulary, and structure was fairly better compared to that of fluency, communication, and accent (Figure 2).
Discussion

One point to discuss here is that teachers’ scoring the students’ oral proficiency subjectively is neither reliable nor valid, and so the given scores cannot present the true ability of the subjects in oral language proficiency. By analyzing oral language proficiency in terms of a number of scales and calculating the learners' ability in terms of their performance on the scales, the researchers could now validly judge the learners' oral language proficiency. The general performance of the subjects, however, was weak in the ratings carried out, but their performance in the individual scales of the checklist was varied. That is, in certain scales they performed successfully but in others they did not.

Results showed that the performance of the subjects in linguistic components was better than their performance in communicative aspects. Fluency is one of the key factors in assessing the oral language proficiency. Most of the subjects in the present study were hesitant and their oral performances were discontinuous. Another scale on the checklist was comprehension in which the subjects showed a better performance than in the other scales. In most cases they understood the question or the gist but were not able enough to manage the discussion. We suggest that the comprehension skill of the subjects should be assigned a higher priority in the development of the English teaching curricula.

On the scale of communication, the subjects had the weakest performance indicating the greater attention they need to pay to this aspect of their communicative competence. Although the performance of the subjects in vocabulary and grammar scales was better, there were other problems such as lack of complete accuracy
that should be considered by the EFL teachers. As for acceptable and intelligible accent, interviewees showed a weak performance in this scale which may be indicative of the EFL learners' ignorance of this part of language.

Analyses showed that the mean score of the subjects in objective scoring was approximately four points lower than the mean score in subjective scoring. It might be that subjective scoring was implemented based on personal judgments and also the scores were allotted to the overall speaking skill of the subjects, and therefore, the range of scores was high. On the other hand, in the objective scoring, in light of the standards and criteria, the communication skill as a whole was broken into six distinct sub-skills. The scores obtained for each sub-skill were summed up in order to represent the total score given to each subject in terms of their comprehension ability, and so, the range of scores was meaningfully lower. Through objective scoring, weak and strong sub-skills of the subjects' speaking skill can be assessed enabling TEFL teachers to remove the deficiencies and reinforce the stronger points.

Conclusions
In sum, the point to be taken into account is the lack of attention and application of specific standards to score learners' oral productive skill. In the EFL setting, there are many teachers who score the learners' speaking ability subjectively without applying any criteria and they often show generosity in scoring; consequently, the obtained results will be a series of unreliable and invalid scores which are not truly representative of the learners' actual ability. (However, there may be few language teachers who, after a long time of experience,
use their intuition to score the learners’ performances subjectively. They are an exception though.) Therefore, in order to obtain better results including more reliable and objective scores in testing speaking, it is essential to utilize a series of criteria to score oral language proficiency. As Pray (2005) mentions, "Oral-language assessments must measure the essential elements of knowing a language, not just lexical knowledge. This includes the ability to produce new utterances and recombine forms to represent ideas, events, and objects on an abstract level, to produce forms of the language they have never heard before, and to demonstrate mastery over the general functions of language such as syntax, morphology, semantics, and pragmatics" (p.405).

One concerns of teachers is how to prepare reliable tests for measuring oral proficiency of the students and score their performance. To have a more reliable estimate of the students' oral language ability, using a checklist will be very helpful. It will eliminate all those sources that threaten the stability of the test scores. The checklist can act as a blueprint to teachers who wish to assess their students' oral proficiency. It reminds them of the macro-skills as well as the specifications or micro-skills that should be included in testing oral proficiency.

**Delimitations**

Despite the promising results, this study suffered from a few problems. One shortcoming was related to our population which was predominantly female; the results of the present study, therefore, might not be generalizable to the male population. Moreover, speaking skills, though emphasized, are overshadowed by other skills
due to lack of environment to adequately practice or apply oral/aural skills. This results in a series of problems especially while conducting the interviews during the research.

References


**Appendix**

**The Sample Checklist for Measuring Communicative Abilities:**

Extracted from Farhady et al. (2001), Harris (1968), and Hughes (2003)

**Scale I- Fluency:**

☐ 5- Speaks fluently.

☐ 4- Speaks with near-native like fluency, pauses and hesitations do not interfere with comprehension

☐ 3- Speaks with occasional hesitations.

☐ 2- Speaks hesitantly and slowly because of rephrasing and searching for words.

☐ 1- Speaks in single word and short patterns, unable to make connected sentences.

**Scale II- Comprehension:**

☐ 5- Understands academic discourse without difficulty.

☐ 4- Understands most spoken language except for very colloquial speech.
☐ 3- Understands academic discourse with repetitions, rephrasing, and clarification.
☐ 2- Understands simple sentences, words; requires repetitions, slower than normal speech.
  1- Understands very little or no English.

**Scale III- Communication:**
☐ 5- Communicates competently in social academic settings.
☐ 4- Speaks fluently in a social academic setting, errors do not interfere with meaning.
☐ 3- Initiates and sustains conversation, exhibits self-confidence in social situations.
☐ 2- Begins to communicate for personal and survival needs.
☐ 1- Almost unable to communicate.

**Scale IV- Vocabulary:**
☐ 5- Uses extensive vocabulary in any domain appropriately.
☐ 4- Uses varied vocabulary to discuss general topics and in special interests.
☐ 3- Uses academic vocabulary, some word usage inappropriate, slightly damages the message.
☐ 2- Uses limited vocabulary, constant use of one word.
☐ 1- Inadequate basic vocabulary.

**Scale V- Structure:**
☐ 5- Masters a variety of grammatical structures, almost no error.
☐ 4- Occasional grammatical errors but no problem with understanding.
3- Uses some complex sentences but lacks control over irregular forms.
2- Uses predominantly present tense verbs, constant errors interfere with understanding.
1- Severe errors make understanding completely impossible.

**Scale VI- Accent:**
5- Acceptable pronunciation, with few traces of foreign accent.
4- Speaks with few phonemic errors, but almost intelligible pronunciation.
3- Occasional errors necessitate attentive listening.
2- Constant phonemic errors make understanding extremely hard.
1- Severe problems make understanding almost impossible.
Title

Catering for the Specific Needs of Elementary Level Korean Learners in the Australian ELICOS Sector – A Case Study of a School in Sydney

Author

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Bio Data:

Vicky Rusina is the Head Teacher at an EFL college for international students in Sydney, Australia. She has a DELTA, and obtained her Masters in Applied Linguistics from the University of New England in 2006. Prior to this, she taught EFL for 7 years in Indonesia. Her current areas of interests are teacher training and integrating interactive online learning curricula into the EFL classroom.

Abstract

Given the large numbers of Korean students in Australian ESL classrooms, many teachers have developed a broad knowledge of Korean culture and learning styles. However, the problem remains of how to incorporate this knowledge into everyday teaching practices in the multilingual classroom. This case study examines the tendency for many Korean learners in Australia to congregate in classes at pre-intermediate level and below due to inadequate speaking skills. Two successful advanced level Korean learners currently studying in Australia are interviewed in order to explore some of the underlying factors behind this phenomenon. Finally, some practical suggestions are offered to assist ESL teachers in dealing with some affective factors inside and outside the classroom which may be preventing Korean students from taking full advantage of living in an English speaking environment.

Keywords: Korean learners, ELICOS, Australia, learning styles
Introduction

English language teaching in Australia has been undergoing an expansion over the past few years, largely due to increasing numbers of international students enrolling in English Language Intensive Courses (ELICOS) at private colleges. Generally speaking, depending on the nationality mix at particular colleges, teachers typically face multi-lingual classes where students come from a wide variety of different cultural backgrounds. However, Korea is currently the number two source country after China for the ELICOS sector, with private colleges providing 76% of courses for Koreans (Australian Government, 2007). This can mean that Korean students are over-represented in the nationality mix in some classes.

Newly arrived Korean students, despite typically scoring quite well on tests of discrete grammatical points, tend to congregate in elementary level classes due to low level competencies in productive skills. Even in ELICOS colleges which comprise quite a wide range of students from different parts of the world, the Korean students can often miss out on a real multicultural experience in the classroom when their classes are overwhelmingly composed of other Korean students. It is also important to remember that some culturally specific affective factors also impact quite significantly on Korean learners’ ability to take full advantage of the benefits of living in an English speaking country. Many of them may need extra encouragement and assistance from their English teachers so that they can confidently take advantage of the extra opportunities for speaking English outside the classroom.

Korean culture is imbued with the Confucian tradition, which emphasizes the maintenance of social order and the strict structuring
of human relationships within society. Within this philosophy, the teacher’s role is to impart knowledge to her students, who do not question the teacher under any circumstances. Learners’ motivation is not driven from within, but is externally directed by parents, peers and the examination system (Han, 2003). Such learning preferences do not fit well within the communicative language teaching (CLT) tradition, and teachers in Australia can sometimes face resistance when trying to employ these methods in the classroom. It is also easy to assume that all adult learners will automatically be able to take advantage of the opportunities to practise their English outside the classroom. However, as we shall see, this may not necessarily be true for many Korean learners.

At official levels, CLT has already gained quite wide acceptance in Korea, where it was officially incorporated into the Ministry of Education’s 7th curriculum in 2001 (Yoon, 2005). Of course, CLT can be a catch-all phrase for quite a range of different methods in language teaching, and an analysis of this curriculum reveals that such techniques have only been applied in a very limited way at this stage (Yoon, 2005). Another important factor restricting the use of CLT in Korea is non-native speaker teachers’ general lack of communicative competence in English (Dash, 2002). Therefore, despite recent attempts to place a higher emphasis on communicative competence, the Korean syllabus is still quite heavily weighted in favour of grammatical outcomes (Dash, 2002). Indeed, Li (2001) reports that the grammar translation and audiolingual methods are still quite widely used by Korean teachers.

The Korean language itself is also so completely different from English, that the Korean learner may have special difficulties in
language acquisition that are not shared by learners from other backgrounds. For example, Korean is considered notoriously difficult to learn by English speakers, and the opposite applies for Korean learners of English (Dragut, 1998). The Confucian tradition also implies that a speaker should avoid the use of ‘no’ for the sake of living in harmony (Park, as cited in Dragut, 1998), a cross-cultural factor worthy of consideration by English teachers in Australia, especially at elementary levels where ‘yes/no’ question forms are usually taught. At the syntactic level, Koreans rely on the relative importance of information rather than grammatical function when constructing sentences (Dragut, 1998). Such differences obviously interfere with communicative competence in English, and a knowledge of these and cultural differences may assist the Australian teacher when teaching Koreans.

Another important phenomenon in the Korean education system which is bound to impact on students’ learning strategies is the overwhelming focus on teaching for exams. Students are groomed throughout their schooling to do well in the ‘College Scholastic Ability Test’ (CSAT), which determines university entrance. This leads Korean parents to spend large amounts of money on extra tutoring, including English ‘cram’ schools, where it is common to study past midnight. However, many of these schools are badly managed, claiming to focus on learning conversation whilst in fact teaching the rote memorisation essential for test preparation (Card, 2005). Nevertheless, Korean students tend to score quite low on an international scale on the ‘Test of English for International Competence’ (TOEIC). According to Card (2005), this is hardly
surprising given the amount of corruption and malfeasance in the Korean EFL industry.

**Method**

A case study approach was used in order to investigate the specific characteristics of Korean learners in the Australian context. This approach was selected in order to provide a basis for a subsequent action research project seeking to address the problems experienced by Korean learners in developing their speaking skills.

According to Nunan (1992) the case study is generally concerned with the specific features of an individual entity such as a class or a school. Hence, it is ideally suited to the in-depth investigation of a particular group, which may provide fertile ground to make further generalisations to the broader population of which the group is a member (Cohen & Manion, 1985, as cited in Nunan, 1992). The case study methodology is also particularly suited to the individual teacher, since it is easily accessible and its findings can be put to practical use in the classroom. Nunan (1992) also refers to the centrality of context in case studies, and this is a key reason why the method has been selected in this instance, since the context described is broadly reflected throughout most of the ELICOS sector in Australia. The case study also provides an ideal means for the individual practitioner to explore their own workplace, thereby lessening the importance of external validity (Nunan, 1992).

This study was inspired by the fact that in my own teaching experience over several years in the sector, Korean students tended to be over-represented at lower levels, and also to stay at those levels longer than students from other countries. Also, as a result of this
phenomenon, many teachers had felt pressured by Koreans to put them up to higher levels without the requisite communicative competency. This in turn created problems for pre-intermediate and intermediate level teachers, who often had to deal with classes which included Koreans with inadequate speaking skills who were unable to participate fully in communicative activities.

**Design**

Standard level test results of an elementary class including a brief five-minute speaking test were analysed. There were 12 students in the class, six of whom came from Korea. The level tests were conducted every five weeks in order to assess whether or not students were ready to advance to the next level.

Of the six Korean students who took the formal test, all scored 90% or more on the grammar component. The reading section represented the second strongest area for the group of Koreans. Two older female Koreans scored extremely well in the speaking test, but they were in quite a unique position compared with the rest of the Korean group. They were both about 40 years old and were living together with their eight-year-old sons who were enrolled for a year in an Australian primary school. Since their sons were learning English at the same time, they had a policy of speaking as much English as possible after school hours. The other Koreans in the class were much more typical of the average Korean at the school. They ranged in age from 21 to 28 and all were sharing accommodation in Sydney with other Koreans. When asked about when they spoke English outside the classroom, all claimed they hardly ever used it.
The students all did a short modified IELTS parts one and two speaking test. The speaking marks of the four younger Koreans ranged from 62% to 65%, reflecting a more typical profile for elementary level Korean learners at the school. Surprisingly, their weakest point was in grammar and vocabulary, demonstrating that their grammatical and vocabulary knowledge was not easily available to them for communicative purposes.

In addition to this, separate interviews were recorded with two higher level Koreans who were studying at the school. The interviews were semi-structured, and ranged in length from an hour to an hour and a half. Questions were designed to elicit specific cultural characteristics of Korean learners, as well as information on aspects of the Korean education system and lifestyles of Korean students in Sydney.

**Participants**

The two female interviewees were selected because they represented successful Korean learners who were studying at the college. One of them, ‘Sunny’, is a 33-year-old journalist who studied English literature at university in Korea. She has since graduated at advanced level from the college after completing a 10-week IELTS course. The other one, ‘Eve’, is a 25-year-old advanced level student who is an English teacher in a private English college in Korea, in effect a conversation cram school. She has a degree in English literature and education from a Korean university and was studying in Australia in order to improve her speaking skills. It was the second visit to Australia for both of them.
Eve taught alongside untrained native speaker teachers at the cram school in Korea, and only ever taught grammar and vocabulary since the native speakers were always assigned the conversation classes. She currently rates her speaking skills as superior to most Korean teachers of English in the state school system. However, when asked to assess her own strengths and weaknesses in English, she claimed grammar and listening to be her strengths, and felt least confident about her speaking skills.

Sunny comes from a small town in Korea, and excelled at English and Korean at high school. After commencing university, she obtained a scholarship to study English. She has travelled overseas before and enjoys learning about other cultures. Sunny doesn’t really consider herself to be a typical Korean learner, in that she likes to improve her English through reading English novels and newspapers. According to her, most Korean learners do not tend to focus on reading in English. She is able to support herself whilst studying in Australia by working as a freelance journalist for Korean newspapers.

Generally speaking, most Korean students stay at the school for quite extended periods, most enrolling for between 9 to 12 months. During this time, they usually study General English for 22.5 hours per week, with a small percentage opting for IELTS or Cambridge First Certificate classes if they make it to intermediate or upper-intermediate levels. The typical Korean student is female and in their early to mid-twenties, often in the middle of a university degree in Korea. A small minority elect to stay long term in a ‘homestay’ situation with an Australian family. However, the overwhelming majority of Korean students at the school end up sharing an
apartment in the centre of Sydney with other Koreans, just a few blocks walk away from the college.

**Interviews with Korean learners**

‘Sunny’ and ‘Eve’ both made similar comments about their experiences in learning English in Korea. Sunny had achieved top marks for English when graduating from her high school, but could not speak at all until she went to university and had conversation classes with a Canadian native speaker. They both commented that their high school teachers hardly used English in class, and in fact may not have been able to speak much English at all. They also both confirmed that in order to enter university in Korea, students must pass an English entrance exam, no matter what degree they intend to take.

Sunny talked about the intense pressure within the Korean education system, with students competing to gain entrance to the top, most prestigious universities. She also mentioned the social problems that this causes, with youth suicide in the age group 15 to 18 years having become an issue over the past 10 years. This is backed up by the Korean National Statistical Office, which calculated that more than 1000 students committed suicide between 2000 and 2003 (Card, 2005).

Eve corroborated this point of view, outlining the long hours that most Koreans are forced to spend studying in their high school years in particular. She went to a boarding school during high school, and in her final year classes ran from 6am to 5pm. After that, students were forced to undergo supervised self-study between 5pm and 10pm. Apparently, some private English colleges cater for such demanding
school schedules by running English classes from 11 p.m. onwards in the evenings. Eve also made the comment that considering the stress levels that university students also suffer, most Koreans studying English in Australia viewed it as a welcome year off from the pressures back home. She claimed that many would go straight from university to work after this, and their year in Australia would be most Koreans’ only opportunity to enjoy some levels of freedom.

Sunny and Eve are both atypical of most Korean students at the college, in that they have achieved high levels of oral proficiency in English. Both are quite confident and outgoing and eager to explore the opportunities that Sydney offers to get to know people from all over the world and to practise their English. They both agreed that they don’t see themselves as being typical of most Koreans in this regard. Eve made the point that on her first visit to Australia, living in a homestay environment was more important for improving her English skills than formal study. Both of them highlighted the general Korean uneasiness with making mistakes in speaking, and propensity to avoid speaking altogether, especially with European students. They confirmed a general Korean impression that European students have superior speaking skills. However, this also reflected an ambivalence amongst Korean learners at the school, since Sunny thought that many of them chose this college because their agents had informed them it attracted higher levels of Europeans than other Sydney colleges.

Sunny had made a point of going on as many school excursions on weekends as she could, because she wanted to exploit the opportunity to make friends with students from other countries. However, she discovered that hardly any Korean students took advantage of these
activities, commenting that they probably were not as adventurous as her and needed more encouragement to participate.

Eve claimed that Koreans often criticised each other for ‘showing off’ by speaking English to other Koreans or non-Koreans, especially those still at lower levels of proficiency. In her opinion, many Koreans felt that they should find out more about Australian culture before trying to communicate with native speakers, and that quite a few Korean students might not be highly motivated to improve their speaking skills at all. This is due to several factors, including the fact that the education system in Korea does not specifically test speaking skills. Also, many might simply need to enjoy their brief year of freedom in Australia before returning to the stresses of work and study in Korea.

**Implications for teaching**

Both interviewees’ comments clearly point to differences in learning styles as being a major contributor to Korean learners’ general lack of communicative competence in English. Although the vast majority would not have been exposed to CLT approaches before coming to Australia, it would seem that many were already aware of these, and had in fact chosen the school because of the range of different nationalities. Also, due to their respect for teachers, and their cultural tendency towards obedience in class, the use of CLT generally meets with cooperation from Korean students, although it sometimes takes a period of a few weeks before they begin to participate fully in communication activities. Given these factors, at least some of their difficulties in attaining competence in speaking would seem to stem from affective factors outside the classroom.
According to Brown (1994) a learner’s self-identity and world view can be challenged by the move from one culture to another, often leading to culture shock. Eve’s comment about the Korean need to get to know Australian culture better before attempting to converse with native speakers confirms this fear. However, given many Korean students’ tendencies to ghettoise within their own communities whilst living in Sydney, many may never go beyond the ‘second stage’ of such culture shock, instead seeking escape from the intrusion of cultural differences into their new lifestyles (Brown, 1994). Schumann’s hypothesis (as cited in Brown, 1994) reinforces this view by stating that learners who come from more socially distant cultures have proportionately greater difficulty in learning a second language. This would coincide with some previous points about the conservatism of the Confucian culture in Korean society. The ‘optimal distance model’ of second language acquisition states that real fluency only occurs at the third stage of acculturation (Brown, 1994), implying that many Korean learners’ lack of achievement in speaking skills may not be overcome until they more fully embrace aspects of Australian culture.

Brown (1994) also comments on the detrimental effects of inhibition and the tendency of some learners to view making mistakes as a threat to their egos, pointing to the importance of risk-taking as a counterbalance to these affective factors. In the case of Korean learners, these threats could be sidestepped through the use of risk avoidance strategies such as living with other Koreans, and not going out much to explore the new environment or interact with other nationalities.
Another factor which may hinder the development of speaking skills could be related to the focus on semantic meaning within the Korean education system. According to Ellis (2005), there is an important distinction between the teaching processes required to develop semantic and pragmatic meaning. The former defines language as an object and can therefore focus on discrete items such as grammatical structure and purpose, whereas pragmatic meaning is tied to actual language use in real situations and how it functions as a means of genuine communication. The negotiation of pragmatic meaning in a real communicative situation is where real language acquisition actually occurs. Ellis (2005) sees the creation of opportunities to foster the development of this aspect of meaning as one of the most important focuses in the language classroom. Whilst the focus on explicit knowledge such as grammar is definitely important, this knowledge needs to be put into practice in order for it to be converted into the implicit knowledge so vital for fluent communication.

In the case of Korean learners, much of their previous language learning has focused on the development of explicit knowledge such as grammar and vocabulary, precisely the type of knowledge that must be mastered in order to do well in tests such as the TOEIC. When they arrive in Australia, they are usually ill equipped in terms of pragmatic competence, and this is reflected in their poor speaking skills. In Australia, the onus is thus placed on the teacher to provide as many opportunities as possible for genuinely communicative activities inside the classroom, since, as this study has shown, some Korean students may not be accessing much English outside.
Another important factor in language acquisition is exposure to the target language, something which Krashen (1994, cited in Ellis, 2005) has argued at some length. His theory of ‘comprehensible input’ emphasises the significance of providing a level of input in the target language which has been modified by the instructor to an appropriate degree i.e. a level which learners can understand but also challenges them to acquire new language. Since many elementary level Koreans may not be exposing themselves to much English outside the classroom, Australian teachers need to keep this in mind. Accordingly, they should encourage Korean students to take advantage of the English-speaking environment with such activities as going to the movies, extensive reading programmes, and organising class excursions where learners are forced to interact with English speakers.

The nature of the multilingual classroom in the Australian ELICOS sector also requires teachers to recognise individual and cultural differences in learning styles. This requires a ‘flexible teaching approach’ (Ellis, 2005) which can cater for these different styles, as well as providing explicit learner training which highlights various learning strategies. According to Lee and Oxford (2008), many Korean learners are not explicitly aware of how developing learning strategies can assist them in improving their English. However, Chamot (1998, cited in Lee & Oxford, 2008) claims that the development of this very awareness is crucial in language learning, and that successful language learners generally consciously employ learning strategies. Given the unique opportunities that living in an English speaking environment can provide for language acquisition, teachers need to actively encourage Korean learners to
focus on new learning strategies that may not have been immediately available to them back home. For example, some of the memorisation strategies that may have been used effectively in Korea to pass exams like the TOEIC must now be superseded by other strategies. Korean learners in Australia must learn to recognise that it is necessary to take risks in order to learn another language and their teachers can encourage this type of behaviour by reinforcing a positive self-image in the classroom. Also, the use of learner diaries where students record all the instances of exposure to English outside the classroom can be a useful means of focusing learners on taking responsibility for their own learning. These diaries can include such events as conversations, functional exchanges, reading the newspaper and even watching television.

The Australian ELICOS teacher thus faces quite a few challenges in helping to acclimatise Korean students to their new environment. As previously stated, the classroom environment and teaching approaches may be quite readily accepted by Koreans after a relatively short period of study, but cultural factors outside the classroom may impact on their ability to acquire overall competence in English. In order to help them come to terms with their new environment, it is important that teachers find out about their students’ lifestyles in Australia. Do they live with other Koreans? How far from the school do they live? What do they do in their spare time? How do they study in their own time? How often do they use English outside the classroom?

When asking such questions, the teacher should encourage them to make any necessary changes, such as advertising in the newspaper for non-Koreans to share their apartment. Many Koreans are unaware at
the outset of the importance of becoming independent in their learning, as their education system tends to encourage dependence on the teacher. Australian teachers should not assume that, as adults, Korean students will necessarily be aware of what other students may take for granted in this regard. And above all, teachers need to offer lots of encouragement and reassurance to Korean students that making mistakes is a necessary part of the learning process and that they will not be judged harshly in this regard. Class communication activities should emphasise practical transactional routines to begin with, such as asking directions, buying a train ticket, or ordering in a restaurant. These should be followed up with the directive to perform these conversational rituals outside the classroom for ‘homework’, as many Koreans will be more likely to do so if explicitly told to by a teacher.

Conclusions
Given the increasing numbers of Korean students entering the ELICOS sector in Australia, teachers need to be more aware of their learning styles and of their living situations. They also need to acknowledge the fact that many low level Korean learners may hardly be using English at all outside the classroom. On the plus side, the high status of the teacher in the Korean Confucian tradition may mean that explicit teacher intervention in this area could be quite effective.

However, although teachers represent a pivotal connection between Korean learners and Australian culture, it is not only the job of teachers to make their stay in Australia more worthwhile. There needs to be more effort also from school administrators through their
agents to encourage Koreans to live in a homestay for a while on arrival. Individual schools could probably also do more to organise weekend excursions involving more Koreans so that they can overcome their fear of conversing with students from other countries. The ELICOS sector in Australia currently needs to be able to better accommodate the specific needs of large numbers of Korean learners.

References


Title
Building Formal Schemata with ESL Student Writers: Linking Schema Theory to Contrastive Rhetoric

Author
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Abstract
Much research has been done on content and formal schemata in reading with students of English as a Second Language (ESL), but the research into formal schemata in ESL writing is a more recent area of study. The concept of “formal schemata” has been neglected in the field of second language writing. By examining related theories and empirical studies, this reflective inquiry attempts to introduce schema theory to contrastive rhetoric research, which focuses on the ESL writers’ problems with rhetorical form and tries to explain this in reference to their first languages. Under the theoretical framework of constructivism, this paper draws insights from schema theory, reading research, reading-writing connections, current-traditional rhetoric, and contrastive rhetoric. A model of ESL writing emphasizing the interrelationship among context, cognition, and rhetorical form and a notion of “building formal schemata with ESL student writers” are proposed and the theoretical and pedagogical
implications are discussed. To illustrate the proposed writing mode, a sample instructional unit plan based on such a model is presented to show how the model links schema theory to contrastive rhetoric via an Asian student orientation.

**Key words:** Constructivism; formal schemata; ESL writing; contrastive rhetoric; rhetorical form.

1. **Introduction**

Much research has been done on content and formal schemata in reading with students of English as a Second Language (ESL). It has been found that when content and form are familiar, ESL readers are able to comprehend and memorize a text better; in contrast, unfamiliar content and form can cause trouble for the readers and affect reading speed and effectiveness (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983; Meyer, 1982; Carrell, 1981). Furthermore, content and formal knowledge may help the readers predict the organization and purpose of a text (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983; Meyer, 1982).

In her review of Meyer’s ESL reading research, Carrell (1987) suggested a positive connection between teaching textual structure and effective writing, that is: shared formal schemata were helpful for the reader and the writer to negotiate meaning of the text. The research into formal schemata in ESL writing, however, is still in its infancy and the concept of “formal schemata” has been neglected in the field of second language writing.

1.1 **Problem**

Many of the problems ESL writers encounter can be related to the form of English writing and the interference of the form of their first languages (see Flowerdew, 1999; Silva, 1997). Contrastive rhetoric
research focuses on the problems of the ESL writers and tries to explain them in reference to their first languages (Connor, 1996). Schema theory has been dealing with content and rhetorical form in reading; and genre analysis research focuses on rhetorical features of different writing tasks and contexts. However, though contrastive rhetoric researchers are paying increasing attention to genre analysis (Connor, 1996), there has not been much effort in relating schema theory to contrastive rhetoric research. There are very few empirical studies applying schema theory to examine ESL writers’ problems with rhetorical form, and a notion of “building formal schemata with ESL writers” is yet to be introduced to contrastive rhetoric and second language writing research.

1.2 Purpose

This paper aims to propose a model of ESL writing taking into account not only rhetorical form but also the context and the cognitive aspect of ESL writing as well as the interaction among the three. Based on such a model, the paper proposes a notion “building formal schemata with ESL student writers” and argues that this notion plays an important role in ESL writing research and pedagogy because it brings together context, cognition, and rhetorical form.

1.3 Research Questions

The practice of teaching rhetorical form has been pervasive in both first language (L1) and second language (L2) composition classes despite the fact that the product approach has been criticized by researchers and described as a prescribed and linear approach. Is there any practical reason behind the teachers’ zest in teaching rhetorical form? In ESL reading research, it has been found that
background knowledge of content and form enhances reading performance. Moreover, in ESL writing, the learners seem to have more problems with how to write (e.g. grammar, genre, organization) than with what to write (i.e. the content area). Can the concept of formal schemata be used to interpret and attack those problems? Contrastive rhetoric, as its name indicates, initially compares rhetorical forms across languages. Can the concept of formal schemata be introduced to contrastive rhetoric research? Contrastive rhetoric research is now expanding its investigation areas to context and cognition. Are context and cognition related to the concept of formal schemata?

Therefore, the following questions are applied to guide this paper: Are formal schemata related to ESL writers’ problems in ESL writing? Why do we focus on the form in writing? Are context, cognition, and rhetorical form related to and interact with one another? Are formal schemata applicable to contrastive rhetoric? What are the theoretical and pedagogical implications of formal schemata in ESL writing?

1.4 Significance

The introduction of schema theory into reading research was a notable advance. Contrastive rhetoric research has been dealing with ESL writers’ problem with form for years. If “formal schemata” can link schema theory with contrastive rhetoric, it will expand the knowledge base and clarify the focus of contrastive rhetoric research. More importantly, a notion of “building formal schemata” will have much pedagogical potential in ESL writing instruction as
demonstrated through the discussions in the later part of this paper on pedagogical implications and on an instructional unit.

1.5 Definitions of Terms

Some key terms are defined as follows for this paper:

- **Constructivism**: An epistemology that views knowledge as constructed and learning as an active process in which learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon their previous knowledge (Bruner, 1966)

- **Schema**: a mental framework for understanding and remembering information of the world (Bartlett, 1932); an organization of concepts and actions that can be revised by new information. (Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary, 1998).

- **Form**: conventional patterns of rhetorical and textual organization of written language, e.g., rhetorical conventions, genre, and textual structure.

- **Content schemata**: schematic background knowledge of topic.

- **Formal schemata**: schematic background knowledge of organizational patterns and rhetorical conventions of written texts.

2. Theoretical Framework:

In the following section of the paper, I begin with reviewing constructivism as the theoretical framework of schema theory and three prominent constructivist learning theories. I then discuss schema theory and its application in ESL reading research. After that,
I address reading-writing connections. It follows that the shared knowledge and process of reading and writing suggest that schema theory may also be applied in ESL writing research. After my justification of teaching form in ESL writing, I argue that the current-traditional rhetoric should be criticized not because it is wrong, but because it is insufficient and misleading. I maintain that a rhetorical pattern is conventional response to a recurrent context of writing. As a result, it is relatively stable and hence teachable. For individual writers, rhetorical conventions are acquired from the discourse community, that is the social context of writing, and stored in memory; while contextual response to a specific writing task relies on cognitive strategies of individual writers. Both memory and strategy have to do with cognition that comes into play with the social and specific contexts of writing. Therefore, the teaching of rhetorical form needs to consider the interaction among context, cognition and form, which provides a scaffold or starting point for novice writers.

On the above theoretical ground, I then propose a notion of formal schemata construction in ESL writing and contend that it could be an alternative to the current-traditional rhetoric due to its constructivist, contextual, and modifiable nature with both cognition and context taken into account. Contrastive rhetoric research studies form and culture. It would be enriched by cognitive and social-cultural perspectives, including a notion of “building formal schemata in writing”. That is how I will link schema theory to contrastive rhetoric. After that, I review some empirical studies on formal schemata in ESL writing, with a focus on form and cognition, to illustrate that formal schemata reveal the connections between form and cognition. Finally I call for future reflections and studies on “building formal
schemata in writing” by exploring the interrelationship among context, cognition and rhetorical form.

2.1 Constructivism

Constructivist epistemology and learning theories focus on the roles of the individual’s construction of meaning, prior knowledge and experiences as well as social context in the learning process. Constructivism (see definition) is closely related to schema theory and writing research. It is the theoretical framework of schema theory. Moreover, the paradigm of constructivism is applicable to writing research due to the meaning making, critical thinking, and epistemic nature of writing.

Epistemology deals with the nature of knowledge and knowing. Constructivism as an epistemology dates back to the times of Socrates (470-399 B.C.), who asserted, “knowledge is only perception”. Socrates may not be absolutely right about that, but his remarks revealed the subjectivity involved in human beings’ (both collective and individual) exploration and understanding of the world. The 20th century saw the educational paradigm shift from positivism (knowledge is transferred from the teacher to the students) to constructivism (knowledge is constructed by the students themselves through their individual interactions with the learning environment). If scholarly endeavors can be viewed as human beings’ collective pursuit of knowledge, then professional literature is the result of the temporary (because this is an on-going process) consensus of the researchers in a field. A discourse community constructs the content and topics of inquiries within the field, as well as the research methods and the ways of communication. For instance, in the field of
Second Language Writing research, there have been much efforts in shaping common topics (e.g. Silva, 1990; 1993; 1997; Leki, 1991; See also Matsuda, 1997b; Kapper, 2002) and methods of inquiries (e.g. the Third Symposium on Second Language Writing), but the lack of a comprehensive Second Language Writing theory suggests that professionals in the field have not yet reached consensus on a theoretical ground for the field.

2.2 Constructivist Learning Theories

Learning theories embracing constructivist epistemology were represented by cognitive constructivism, social constructivism and transformative learning theory. Although Piaget (1970) had not claimed himself a constructivist, his theory of cognitive development constituted the basis of lots of constructivist learning theories including social constructivism and transformative learning theory.

Piaget (1970) made the statement that “intelligence organizes the world by organizing itself”. In other words, in the first place, knowledge is the organized information of the world. Piaget’s theory of cognitive development maintained that knowledge could not be readily transmitted to a human mind. Rather, it had to be constructed by individuals through their own experiences which created mental patterns in their heads. Piaget (1970) further pointed out that as mental patterns underlying specific acts of intelligence, cognitive structures developed through assimilation and accommodation. When new information is identified by previous cognitive structures, it is incorporated into the structures; when new information is distinct from previous cognitive structures, it is either discarded or the cognitive structures will be modified to
accommodate new information. Another constructivist researcher Bruner (1966) further argued that cognitive structure (i.e., schema, mental model) provided meaning and organization to experiences and allowed the individual to "go beyond the information given". Educational practice derived from cognitive constructivism featured learner-centered approach in instruction.

Lev Vygotsky (1981), a social constructivist psychologist, emphasized the social context of learning and claimed that learning is situated and can be best achieved through social interaction. Educational practice inspired by social constructivism includes contextual, collaborative learning and workshop-like classroom.

Recently, Mezirow (1995) proposed a transformative learning theory, which is rooted in constructivism and focusing on the transformative nature of learning. Mezirow (1995) described learning as "the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or a revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience in order to guide future action". Because transformative learning theory emphasizes rational, cognitive processes related to critical reflection, it will be of great application potential in the field of composition studies in general and in L2 writing in particular.

2.3 Schema Theory

Bartlett (1932) was the first person to propose the concept of schema, although Piaget (1970) had referred to the similar concept as cognitive structure and mental model. Bartlett (1932) advocated that human memory takes the form of schema that provides a mental framework for understanding and remembering information. Rumelhart (1980) further developed the schema concept and
described schema theory as basically a theory of how knowledge is mentally represented in the mind and used. More recently, Anderson (1995) described “schema” as “an abstract knowledge structure that captures regularities of objects and events and should include all variation of the known cases in a flexible way”…and “the schema is generated by the repetition of the same occurrence in such a way that the brain will preserve the common features” (Anderson, 1995).

Based on above descriptions of schema, it can be inferred that schema has the following characteristics: it is organized - when we learn, information is classified into hierarchical categories; it is built on prior knowledge of the individual - the process of building schema is accumulative and individualized; it contains the salient features of the object or event - schema directs our attention to the most distinguishable aspects; it takes repeated encounters to build a schema - that is why practice is necessary; it is contextual - schema comes from various real contexts; and it is modifiable - schema can be modified to accommodate new information and contexts (For attributes of schema, see also Thorndyke & Yekovich, 1980).

According to Graesser (1981; see also Anderson, 1985), schema has mainly four kinds of functions. First, schema provides background knowledge to interpret a specific event. Second, schema provides background knowledge to infer beyond the information given. Third, schema generates predictions of events, actions, and information. Fourth, schema helps the individual identify regularities so that more attention can be allocated to accommodating new information.
In order to construct new schema, “cognitive hooks” need to be provided to hang new information (Hayes and Tierney, 1982). Measures for construction and activation of schema include analogies, conflicting information, advance organizers and relevant personal anecdotes. The bottom line is to build an association between old and new schemata.

2.4 Schema in ESL reading

In the field of TESOL, Carrell & Eisterhold (1983) divided schema into two categories: content schema and formal schema. They defined content schema as a reader's background or world knowledge of the topic, and formal schema as the background knowledge of organizational forms and rhetorical structures of written texts. Formal schema can include knowledge of different text types and genres, and also includes the understanding that different types of texts have different ways of using text organization, language structures, vocabulary, grammar, level of formality/register.

Carrell & Eisterhold’s (1983) studies found that familiar formal schema helped subjects enhance the quantity of recall in a story. When examining the combined effects of both content and formal schemata, Carrell & Eisterhold (1983) found that the more both content and form are familiar to the reader, the easier reading becomes. Based on these results, they suggested that ESL reading teachers should help students acquire appropriate content and formal schemata for better comprehension of text.

From a standpoint of text as interaction, Carrell (1987) reviewed the research on text analysis and reading, especially studies done by Meyer (1982), and suggested some implications for ESL composition.
In Meyer’s (1982) empirical reading research, as Carrell cited, it was found that the subjects’ recalls of text content were enhanced significantly when they utilized the structure of the text to organize ideas. Meyer (1982) also found that readers were affected differently by different textual structures that served the different goals of a writer. Implications for ESL composition included that ESL writers should be taught about the top-level organizational structures of expository text, about the way to achieve specific communication goals, and about the way to use markers (such as ‘because’, ‘therefore’, ‘likewise’, ‘however’) to signal textual organization.

In the review of research on text analysis and reading, Carrell (1987) brought to our knowledge that reading and writing are interactive meaning making processes, in which the writer utilizes his/her formal schemata to anticipate those of the readers’, while the readers’ formal schemata help them make sense of the text content. In my view, this article is closely related to ESL students’ academic writing, in which ESL writers seem to be lacking of appropriate formal schemata to meet the expectations of their readers of native speaker of English (NSE) and fail to accomplish specific communicative goals. For instance, an international graduate student may have difficulty fulfilling specific tasks in academic writing, e.g. citation and reference, Institutional Review Board proposal, project proposal and Master's thesis, etc., each of which can be further broken down into subtasks that demand more specific formal schemata. Therefore, as a remedy, the ESL students need to construct appropriate formal schemata in academic writing and one way to do it, as this article suggested, can be the learning of textual structure in ESL writing class.
2.5 Reading-writing Connections

The shared knowledge and process of reading and writing have been well documented. Kucer (1987) proposed four processing universals in reading and writing: readers and writers use their prior knowledge to construct text-world meaning; readers and writers share similar acts of schema location and activation, evaluation, and instantiation; readers and writers have a unified understanding of how written language operates, rather than separate sets of schemata, one for reading and the other for writing; and readers and writers possess common processing behavior patterns when generating meaning from texts. Johns (1986; 1997) also suggested that readers and writers share communicative purposes and knowledge of roles, context, formal text features, text content, register, cultural values and awareness of intertextuality. Furthermore, Johns (1997) maintained that literacy theories are evolving from traditional views (literacy as production of error-free sentences and texts) through learner-centered views (literacy as individual meaning making), to socioliterate views (literacy as socially constructed). And accordingly, the focus of literacy research moves from text through the learner to the social context.

Grabe’s (2001a) summary of newer research development in reading and writing relations suggests that knowledge of form, e.g. textual structure and genre, plays important role in reading performance and is useful for writing as well: when reading to write, students can learn genre information for writing from model texts. When writing to read, students’ practice with textual structure enhances reading performance. In the research on reading and writing instruction, there is a wealth of literature on summary writing, using
model texts, graphic organizers, note taking and outlining (Grabe, 2001a, p. 26). Leki and Carson (1994, cited in Grabe, 2001a, p. 33) also point out that L2 learners need practice of various tasks combining reading and writing skills, guidance in deconstructing tasks and model texts, and understanding teacher expectations.

Because reading and writing are closely related to each other with shared knowledge and process (Reid, 1992a), as both the readers and the writers negotiate meaning out of the textual form in light of individual prior experience and the context, it is logical to infer that research in reading and research in writing may share some insights and methods. That is to say, since schema theory has been introduced to reading research successfully, it may also be applicable to writing research. In fact, content schema has found its place in writing research and instruction. Students are provided the opportunity to read and discuss background materials of writing prompts to activate their content schemata to facilitate writing. However, there is not much research on formal schema in writing although much research has been dedicated to form related issues in writing.

2.5.1 Why Teach Form in ESL Writing

First, from the standpoint of rhetoric and communication, form (e.g. rhetorical conventions, genre, textual structure, perception of coherence, and even grammar) is socially constructed during the written communication process among the members in a society. A language per se is just an artificial symbolic system representing reality. That is to say, words, sentences, grammar, and textual structure are all shaped on the basis of the consensus of the people who use the language. Therefore, different cultures develop different
languages and rhetorical conventions over time. Moreover, in a discourse community, there are genres for different communication tasks. Because form is specifically embedded in a given society or discourse community, it is problematic for new comers to the discourse community.

Second, on the other hand, form is relatively stable (although not absolutely static), predictable and teachable. Since form is constructed by the discourse community over time, it will not change overnight, though it allows variations across individuals. Rhetorical knowledge may turn the seeming chaos of L2 literacy into controllable patterns for ESL learners.

Third, from the view of rhetoric and cognition, the form of textual structure serves as advanced organizer for ESL learners. For example, ESL students are told that there is a theme in an expository essay, and a topic sentence in each paragraph, that the whole essay consists of introduction, body, and conclusion. Though they do not necessarily apply to all expository essays, organizational hints like these help the novice writers make sense of the essays in a sea of words and help them put their own ideas in order when composing essays.

Finally, from the view of rhetoric and culture, many problems that ESL student writers encounter can be related to form (e.g. Silva, 1997; Flowerdew, 1999; 2002). Forms differ across cultures due to the different social contexts and cognitions of peoples. For instance, essays written by many Asian people in their L1 are reader-responsible, and the underlying cognitive style is inductive. The writers express their ideas in an implicit way, assuming the readers have enough background knowledge for accurate comprehension. In contrast, essays written by westerners are writer-responsible, and the
underlying cognitive style is deductive. The western writers express their ideas explicitly and provide details to illustrate their points. That is to say, the difference of textual form is the result of different cultures and their underlying cognitions.

2.6 Current-traditional Rhetoric and Its Criticism

As an instructional approach for native-speakers of English composition, the current-traditional rhetoric directs students’ attention to form and is also known as the “product approach”. As Silva (1990) observes, the current-traditional rhetoric deals with elements in a paragraph, i.e. topic sentence, support sentence, concluding sentence and transitions, various paragraph developments (e.g. illustration, exemplification, comparison, contrast, causal analysis), organizational entities (introduction, body, and conclusion), and organizational patterns (narration, exposition, and argumentation). The current-traditional rhetoric is also enriched by the recent attempts of Foley, Rose, Haswell to identify teachable organizational patterns as conventional response to tasks (see Robinson, 1994).

The current-traditional rhetoric has been applied in ESL writing too and is criticized of its “linear and prescriptive nature” (Silva, 1990; see also Leki, 1991). As Silva (1990) points out, the current-traditional rhetoric has turned writing into a skill of arrangement, of “fitting sentences and paragraphs into prescribed patterns”. Writing theories have evolved from product through process to post-process. Each of the theories has both limitations and values in terms of revealing the nature of writing. On the other hand, however, perhaps we need not discard the product approach completely simply because of its limitations. Teaching form in ESL writing may not be totally
wrong, but just inadequate. Product approach is not necessarily exclusive of process approach. Nor does the product approach have to be prescriptive and de-contextualized. The students may still need to be explicitly taught and actively practice the knowledge of rhetorical form in writing. The question is why we still need it and how to teach it. My answer is that we need a writing pedagogy addressing the product, process and context of writing at the same time.

2.7 Contrastive Rhetoric Research and Its Concern of Form
Contrastive rhetoric research was proposed by Kaplan (1966), who investigated the relations between rhetoric and culture. It initially focused on the rhetorical problems of the ESL student writers and tried to explain the problems in reference to the students’ first languages and cultures (Connor, 1996). Contrastive rhetoric research is influenced by such theories as applied linguistics, linguistic relativity, rhetoric, text linguistics, discourse types and genres, literacy, and translation (Connor, 1996). A common target of inquiry in those theories is the forms of languages and what contributes to the features of the forms. For instance, genre analysis views research articles, presentations, proposals as different genres and argues that the essential difference lie in their communicative purposes, which are recognized by the professionals in a discourse community and impact the schematic structures of academic genres (Connor, 1996; Swales, 1990; Golebiowski, 1999).

Connor (1996) suggests that contrastive rhetoric needs to expand its research horizon from pure linguistic analysis of textual structure to incorporating cognitive and social-cultural variables of writing. The awareness of the social construction of meaning in composition has
generated research on situations and tasks in cross-cultural writing. Reviewing previous research in contrastive rhetoric, Matsuda (1997a) identifies a static theory of L2 writing and argues that it is limited because it views the L2 writers’ previous linguistic, cultural and educational backgrounds as the only elements that shape the L2 textual organization. In contrast, Matsuda (1997a) proposes a dynamic model of L2 writing, in which both the L2 writers’ and the L1 readers’ previous backgrounds (which are complex and flexible) and the shared discourse community (which is local, historical, and interactive) affect the L2 textual organization. Moreover, the interrelationship among these elements is bi-directional (Matsuda, 1997a). Rhetorical form needs to be examined not only in context but also on account of cognitive factors. From the point of view of cognition in L1 writing, Flower and Hayes (1981) put forward a cognitive process model of writing that consists of four interactive components: task, environment, the writer’s long-term memory, and the composing process. In this model, composing is identified as a “problem-solving activity responding to a rhetorical situation in the form of a text” (Flower and Hayes, 1981, cited in Connor, 1996). Moreover, Leki (1992) points out that rhetorical logic is also socially constructed. That is to say, cognition of rhetoric is essentially contextual

2.8 Context, Cognition, and Text - Formal Schemata Construction

Based on above discussion, I would like to propose a model of writing comprising three components that are local, historical, and interactive. They are context, cognition, and text. The context of writing includes such elements as the reader, the writer, their roles in
the context, the purpose of the act of writing, the writing task, and the shared discourse community. The cognition component refers to the reader’s and the writer’s memory (schemata), the writer’s strategies of analyzing the context, and the writer’s strategies of responding to the context. The text is the product of the writer’s response to the context of writing. When composing the text, the writer needs to consider appropriate content and form. Rhetorical conventions are conventional response to contexts of writing. Therefore the teaching of rhetorical form needs to consider the interaction among context, cognition, and form.

Within the framework of constructivism, the perception of formal schemata construction in ESL writing emphasizes reading and writing connections, rhetoric and cognition relations, and social dimensions of rhetoric, literacy, and learning. Formal schemata construction may be an alternative for current traditional-rhetoric and may enrich contrastive rhetoric research, because it does not focus on textual form solely; instead, it also takes into account the factors of cognition and context in ESL writing. First, the idea of formal schemata construction reveals the important role that knowledge of rhetorical form plays in ESL writing. ESL students have not as many problems in what to write as in how to write. That is to say, ESL students have wonderful ideas; but the problem is how to present their ideas in English writing in a way that is accepted by the intended audience. When it comes to academic writing, this is also true with first language (L1) student writers, that is why genre analysis investigates rhetorical conventions in L1. Second, formal schemata refer to the cognitive aspect of learning. They are constructed in the mind of each individual, so they are modifiable to
accommodate new information, rather than transmitted or prescribed, as opposed to current traditional-rhetoric. Third, formal schemata are socially constructed hence contextual, associated with specific writing tasks, situations, and discourse communities.

2.9 Relevant Empirical Studies on Formal Schemata in ESL Writing

There are very few empirical studies on formal schemata in ESL writing. For one thing, maybe because cognition is not yet a well developed area of inquiry in ESL writing. There has not been a close connection between schema theory and ESL writing research. For another, the notion of formal schemata construction is yet to be applied to ESL writing research. Previous relevant studies use other similar terms to refer to formal schemata, such as knowledge of rhetorical structures, which differs from knowledge of formal schemata due to its exclusion of cognition and context.

Below is a review of two representative empirical studies exploring textual form and cognition in ESL writing. These two studies substantiate the need of proposing the notion of formal schemata construction in ESL writing, because it makes more sense when we look through similar studies with such a notion in mind.

Using the approach of contrastive rhetoric, Hinds (1990) illustrated the differences of rhetorical structures between English and East Asian Languages. By examining Asian students’ samples of ESL writing, Hinds (1990) noted that most of them could be classified as inductive writing, in which the thesis statement appeared at the end. On the other hand, Hinds (1990) argued, most of the English-speaking readers, favor deductive writing, in which the thesis statement appeared at the beginning. He also maintained that due to
the difference of inductive and deductive preference, Western readers might not understand competent writing of speakers of Asian languages appropriately. This study is an example connecting textual structure to cognition.

Drawing upon recent research on writing-reading connection, Reid (1996) suggested that ineffective ESL writing may partly due to the ESL writer’s contextual and rhetorical schemata that differ from those of native English speaker (NES). Reid (1996) conducted a study examining how well NES and ESL student readers and writers could predict and produce appropriate second sentences that followed the topic sentence in a paragraph of academic American English. Findings showed that by using their schemata, NESs were able to predict the second sentences twice as often as ESL writers, although inexperienced NES writers occasionally also produced inappropriate second sentences. Probably schemata help build a bridge between form and contexts, because formal schemata are constructed in specific contexts.

2.10 Summary

The arguments I have been making are as follows: knowledge is constructed, rather than transmitted. That is to say, when we learn, information is categorized on the basis of prior knowledge and experience. Moreover, schemata that organize those categories are generated from contextual knowledge and experience.

Schema theory derived from constructivist theories and epistemology. The application of schema theory in reading research reveals that content and formal schemata improve ESL reading competence. Furthermore, reading-writing connections suggest the
possibility of introducing schema theory, especially the term of formal schemata, into ESL writing research. Rhetorical form has been a central concern of both L1 and L2 writing pedagogy. As a result, I try to explore the rationale for teaching textual organization from rhetorical perspectives in light of communication, pedagogy, cognition, and culture. Current-traditional rhetoric has been criticized for its linear and prescriptive characteristics. I argue that current-traditional rhetoric is limiting due to its failure of considering the factors of cognition and context in writing activities.

Contrastive rhetoric research has been focusing on relations between form and culture. Its future development needs to address the cognitive and social aspects of rhetoric. In light of research in contrastive rhetoric and cognitive rhetoric, I propose a model of writing consisting of three key components, namely, context, cognition, and text, all of which are local, historical, and interactive. The notion of formal schemata construction embraces the above model on account of context, cognition, and textual organization. Consequently, we should build contextual formal schemata with ESL student writers in a meaningful way (with real tasks, audience and purpose) so that the students can better understand the interactions among context, cognition, and textual form.

2.11 Pedagogical implications: How to build formal schemata with ESL student writers?

Bruner (1966) points out “good methods for structuring knowledge should result in simplifying, generating new propositions, and increasing the manipulation of information.” Patterns and routines are simplified version of model texts. Highlighting the characteristics of
rhetorical forms in various contexts, formal schemata may bring writing activity under control for novice ESL writers.

Some general instructional guidelines can be: Model text deconstruction (tasks, purpose, reader, components and elements of texts) and practice; cognitive process demonstration and practice; and guidelines for practice: contextualizing writing with authentic tasks -real audience and purposes to foster meaningful formal schemata construction and activation, and dynamic interactions among writer, text, reader, and context.

To illustrate my writing model emphasizing the interrelationship among context, cognition, and text, here is a sample instructional unit plan based on such a model, which shows how the model links schema theory to contrastive rhetoric via an Asian student orientation.

3. An Instructional Unit Plan

3.1 Background Information

A. Target student population

This unit is designed for undergraduate ESL students from Asia with relatively low academic reading and writing proficiency on the basis of their performance on the placement test. There are 12 students in the class, 7 men and 5 women. The students originally come from different Asian countries: four Chinese, two Japanese, two Vietnamese, two Indians, and two Iranians. They major in various disciplines, such as business, music, French, computer, medicine, and math. Three students are in their 40s. Five students are about 18-20 years old. Four are in their 20s. All of the students possess at least a high school diploma. The three middle-age students even have a B.A.
degree from their home country. Everyone in the class needs to improve their academic reading and writing skills so that they can survive various assignments at the university; furthermore, they can move on to a higher level ESL class and eventually be able to take Freshmen English.

B. The classroom
Because this is an ESL academic reading and writing class and lots of writing needs to be done in class, the classroom is a computer lab with enough wired computers for each student. In addition, the classroom is equipped with a whiteboard, an overhead projector, a document projector and a screen. There is a long table in the middle of the classroom. The computers are sitting along the wall.

C. Prerequisite
Generally speaking, the students should have already been able to write at the sentence level and paragraph level. With a dictionary, they have been able to read most of the articles in daily life for general audience and purposes. They have had basic computer literacy (e.g., typing and basic functions of the keyboard) and experiences using email and the Internet.

3.2 Rationale for the Unit Plan
This instructional unit plan is designed to illustrate the pedagogical implications of the proposed writing model emphasizing context, cognition, and text, by applying the notion of “building formal schemata with ESL student writers”. In this unit, the students will be exposed to authentic articles and real communicative tasks. They will analyze the sample articles in light of the contexts and the cognitive
processes to build appropriate formal schemata and develop effective cognitive strategies for specific writing tasks and contexts. Through implementing the notion of “formal schemata construction”, this unit covers a variety of issues related to ESL writing, such as: context of writing, content and formal schemata, reading and writing connections, process and product, computer technology and composition, intensive reading (to analyze context and form) and extensive reading (to retrieve information for the content of writing), as well as collaborative and individual writing activities.

3.3 Goals of the Unit Plan

In this unit, the students will work in groups to write a research report project on a topic after collecting information via the Internet. First, students brainstorm topics of interest to them, then search the Internet for articles and information, after that each group discusses the outline of the project and allocation of labor; finally, each group writes up the project and presents it. By the end of the unit, the students will be able to acquire such writing skills as: context analysis and summary, on-line discussions, invention techniques, Internet research, outlining, documenting sources, peer review and revision, and organizing a portfolio. In addition, the students will be able to use such technologies to facilitate writing, discussion, and presentation: Microsoft Word, Blackboard class management, Internet, Email, overhead projector, and PowerPoint.
3.4 Outline of the Unit

_Lesson 1: Context and summary._

a. The students brainstorm a few topics of interest, then google [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com) or [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com) or VOA ([http://www.manythings.org/voa/scripts/](http://www.manythings.org/voa/scripts/)) for articles.


b. Read an article of choice, analyzing context (purpose, audience, role; see also Matsuda, 1997a), content (main ideas), and form (organization and language feature).

Types of essay (see Leki, 1995):

- Argumentation—to persuade the readers or show them a new way to look at something
- Exposition --- to inform the readers or to demonstrate your knowledge

_Rationale:_ Articles in real life are situated in real contexts. Thus the analysis of these contexts is meaningful. Also, the content of real life articles is usually more appealing to the students as opposed to
textbook articles. As far as rhetorical form is concerned, however, the latter might outdo the former because they are well chosen to be included in a textbook. Therefore, here the primary purpose of choosing articles from real life is to look at their context and content; their textual organization is only secondary concern.

c. Write a summary (with three components, i.e., introduction, body, and conclusion) of the article.
d. Play with MS Word, read the tutorial
http://www.ga.k12.pa.us/curtech/wordwork.htm

Rationale: Writing summary is an essential skill of academic writing. It is particularly useful when it comes to writing abstracts, annotations, critiques, and literature reviews…etc. Summarizing connects reading with writing. Only when the students have a good comprehension of the text can they write a summary for it.

Lesson 2: Online discussions

a. Teacher shows the students how to use Blackboard to participate in online discussions;
http://www.uwex.edu/disted/home.html
http://www.gradeworks.com/
b. Students post on Blackboard their summaries and the URL of their articles;
c. Students read and respond to the summaries;
d. Students form a few groups based on a shared topic, with 3 to 4 people in each group working collaboratively to write a report project on the topic.

**Rationale:** Blackboard class management creates a mini discourse community in which students write for a real audience (their peers and teachers). Furthermore, by responding to discussion threads and the works of their peers, the writers and the readers can closely interact with one another to increase their awareness of the relations between contexts and texts, and develop their cognitive strategies for analyzing and responding to contexts and texts.

**Lesson 3: Invention techniques**

First each student, then each group discuss the context and develop a thesis for their group project through brainstorming, free writing, cubing (thinking from different aspects), clustering (classifying the ideas), and looping (summarizing those ideas).

**Rationale:** Invention techniques deal with developing appropriate content (ideas) for appropriate context. On the other hand, invention techniques reveal the recursive aspect of the composing process which involves cognitive factors (e.g. content schemata) in writing.

**Lesson 4: Internet research**

a. How to evaluate sources on the Internet?

   Audience, Author/producer (credibility), Content (Accuracy, Currency)

http://library.albany.edu/internet/
b. Conduct research via Internet (for more advanced students: library, interview, survey, experiment… etc.)

http://library.albany.edu/internet/research.html

*Rationale:* The Internet has become an increasingly powerful and convenient tool to locate information for research. One of the students’ challenges is to do extensive but fast reading with the writing purpose in mind. In other words, they need to search materials to use in writing. Another concern is to evaluate the sources on the Internet to determine their suitability to be included in writing.

**Lesson 5: Outlining**

a. Deconstruct a sample article; analyze context, content, and form (for textual analysis, see also Silva, 1990)

b. Discuss and write the outline of the group project, post it on Blackboard;

c. Provide feedback to the outlines.

*Rationale:* Poor writers only focus on grammar and mechanics; experienced writers pay more attention to macro level concerns such as organization. Aiming at developing the students’ outlining skills, this lesson combines the product approach with the process approach. Students construct their formal schemata by analyzing model text in terms of context, content, and form. On the other hand, students develop their outlines on account of context.
Lesson 6: Documenting sources

a. Sample article analysis (see Leki, 1995): Citation (Quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, synthesizing) and references (APA, MLA)
b. Each group assigns parts of the project to the members;
c. Each student writes up his/her own part.

Rationale: Documenting sources is essential for writing research paper. It is a relatively challenging skill for even graduate students. This lesson exposes the students to writing from multiple texts and avoiding plagiarism by citing appropriately. As for APA or MLA style, they are only required to have a general idea of it. A secondary aim in this class is to foster collaborative writing among group members.

Lesson 7: Peer review

a. Criteria: clear, concrete, concise
c. Paragraphs: Topic sentence, appeals, conjunctions
d. Proofreading: spelling, punctuation and grammar
e. Grammar error checklist (see also Xiao, 2002): at the sentence, paragraph and essay levels
f. Polishing (word choice, sentence variation)
g. Revision

Rationale: This lesson aims to improve the students’ control over their own writing meanwhile become a critical reader of the peers’ work through reviewing their own and one another’s essays against
the rubric and checklists. The students will be able to read as a writer and write as a reader. Furthermore, they will learn how to provide constructive feedback to their peers and incorporate feedback from their peers.

**Lesson 8: Portfolio evaluation**

a. PowerPoint presentation of the group project.
b. Submit personal portfolio for evaluation
c. Analysis of the context (purpose, audience, role) and strengths of each of the following items: A summary, online discussion threads or email messages, invention process, outlines, first draft, final draft (with revised part highlighted), peer review comments.

**Rationale:** With PowerPoint, the students present the product of their group project; with portfolio, the students review individual progresses over time. In addition, the students develop metacognition for writing by context analysis and reflection on the strengths of each representative piece of their work.

3.5 A Sample Lesson Plan

**Lesson 1: Context and Summary**

**Rationale:** Articles in real life are situated in real contexts. Thus the analysis of these contexts is meaningful. Also, the content of real life articles is usually more appealing to the students as opposed to textbook articles. As far as rhetorical form is concerned, however, the latter might outdo the former because they are well chosen to be included in a textbook. Therefore, the primary purpose of choosing
articles from real life is to look at their context and content; their textual organization is only secondary concern.

Writing summary is an essential skill of academic writing. It is particularly useful when it comes to writing abstracts, annotations, critiques, and literature reviews…etc. Summarizing connects reading with writing. Only when the students have a good comprehension of the text, can they write a summary for it.

Objectives of the lesson:

- Upon completing the lesson, the students will be able:
  - To search the Internet for information
  - To analyze the context, content, and form of an article
  - To identify types of essay
  - To write a summary for an article
  - To write with Microsoft Word

Materials/ Resources:

A wired computer for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, an overhead projector, a document projector and a screen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time in Minutes</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The students brainstorm a topic of interest, then search cnn.com or VOA for articles through key words, quotation marks, and +, -. (<a href="http://www.manythings.org/voa/scripts/">http://www.manythings.org/voa/scripts/</a>).</td>
<td>To learn how to search the Internet for information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mini lecture on most common types of essay in</td>
<td>To identify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>academic writing (see Leki, 1995): Argumentation, exposition and narrative.</td>
<td>the purpose of the essays: to persuade, to inform, and entertain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Each student chooses an article from his or her search results. Discuss in pairs the type of essay it belongs to.</td>
<td>To practice what they have just learned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Mini lecture on analyzing context (purpose, audience, role; see also Matsuda, 1997a), content (main ideas), and form (organization and language feature). Demonstrate it with a sample article.</td>
<td>To increase the students’ awareness of context, content, and form. To build formal schemata for specific writing tasks and contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Break for 10 minutes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each student reads the article of choice,</td>
<td>To practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity Description</td>
<td>Objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Analyzes the context, content, and form, and takes notes for the analysis.</td>
<td>Reinforce the schemata for content and form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mini lecture on how to write a summary (with 3 components, i.e., introduction, body, and conclusion) for an article. Demonstrate it with a sample article.</td>
<td>To build formal schemata for Summary writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Each student reads the article of choice again and writes a summary.</td>
<td>Practice summary writing and reinforce formal schemata for summary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Play with Microsoft Word, learn how to open, save, and print a new document, cut &amp; paste, check grammar and spelling. Read the tutorial: <a href="http://www.ga.k12.pa.us/curtech/wordwork.htm">http://www.ga.k12.pa.us/curtech/wordwork.htm</a></td>
<td>To learn how to use Microsoft Word to write.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assignments and evaluation:
In a Microsoft Word document, students electronically submit their analysis of context, content, and form of the article they choose, along with a summary of the article. Students will be evaluated on the basis of the quality of their own context analysis, summary, and Word document.

4. Future Research
Here is a possible research agenda with research foci and methods to employ for future research on the theme “Building formal schemata with ESL writers”: A. a literature review on interactions among context, cognition, and textual form across disciplines (a reflective inquiry); B. a qualitative study to examine how the ESL writers construct and activate L2 formal schemata during reading and composing processes (using think-aloud protocols); C. pedagogy (syllabus design); D. a quantitative study to examine the effectiveness of the pedagogy (experimental design).

Specifically, in-depth research is needed to examine the proposed writing model by investigating the interactions among context, cognition, and textual organization across disciplines. Such studies may explore answers to the following questions: How does a writer identify, analyze, and respond to a given context of writing? On the other hand, what textual features embody the impact of cognition and context? What are the differences and similarities across languages, disciplines, and individuals?

Further research also needs to be done on the ESL student writers’ processes of formal schemata construction and activation.
ESL students build their formal schemata through reading and analyzing model texts and through the composing process, how are context, cognition, and textual organization come into play? Studies of this nature may examine the kind of decisions the ESL student writers make in their composing process as they informed by their formal schemata. What kind of decisions do the ESL student writers make in their composing process as they informed by their formal schemata? Probably think-aloud protocols can be used to solicit information on ESL students’ strategy of building and activating formal schemata in L2.

On the basis of research findings, syllabi can be designed to address the needs of students of ESL writing class by helping them construct their formal schemata for L2. The syllabi should be contextualized too, targeting at specific learner populations. Finally, a quantitative research can be conducted to investigate the effectiveness of various pedagogies embracing the notion of formal schemata construction. For instance, two comparable groups of international graduate students may receive two types of teaching methods - one focuses on formal schemata construction, the other is current-traditional rhetoric paragraph writing. Holistic scoring and primary-trait scoring for the subjects’ timed essays can be applied to assess their writing performance after treatment. The results can be compared across groups and analyzed.

5. Conclusion

“Constructivism does not claim to have made earth-shaking inventions in the area of education; it merely claims to provide a solid
conceptual basis for some of the things that, until now, inspired teachers had to do without theoretical foundation” (Von Glasersfeld, 1995). It is hoped that the proposed writing model of context, cognition, and text can bring insights into writing research and that the perception of “building formal schemata with ESL writers” can be a conceptual addition to the field of second language writing. Rhetorical form has been an actual central concern in ESL writing research and teaching but lacking a theoretical foundation. Under the framework of constructivism, schema theory with cognitive and social perspectives on acquiring rhetorical knowledge may help enrich the theoretical foundation of second language writing research in general and of contrastive rhetoric research in particular.

References


analysis of L2 text (pp. 47-56). New York: Addison Wesley.


Title
An Evaluation of an Internet-Based Learning Model from EFL Perspectives

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Abstract
World Wide Web emerges as a potential language learning resource, which has received much attention over the past decade. Among numerous technology-enhanced applications, WebQuest has become one of the popular learning models which makes use of Internet resources by engaging students in authentic and collaborative tasks. WebQuests are believed to be theoretically and pedagogically sound for language learning; however, there have not been any studies, which explore the usefulness of WebQuests in EFL contexts. While
the use of WebQuests has been widely promoted, a question remained: “Are these tools really applicable for EFL learners?” In this study, we explored characteristics of WebQuests and created a working rubric to critically evaluate WebQuests based on five factors: level of vocabulary and grammar, content/prior knowledge, interestingness, assistance/scaffolding and task demand. Based on the rubric, we have assessed fifteen of the most popular WebQuests and found a 100% interrater agreement. The results indicated that only 26% of the selected WebQuests could easily be adopted for EFL instruction while most of them needed to be modified. A number of WebQuests were found to be culturally or socially irrelevant to EFL learners. To conclude, we discuss several aspects of WebQuests, which can benefit EFL learners if they are used in EFL classes.

1. Introduction

WebQuests are activities and lessons that involve the use of Internet technology. WebQuests were first created in early 1995 by Bernie Dodge of San Diego State University, who defines WebQuests as “an inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the Internet” (Dodge, 1997). Since then WebQuests have gained popularity as a potential tool that incorporates Internet resources into lessons organized around a particular topic or theme. WebQuests were originally created for learning a variety of different subject matter through the effective use of Internet resources. WebQuests offer prepackaged, classroom-based lessons for teachers using information readily available on the web. For language learning, WebQuests offer an ideal social constructivist CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning) environment (Simina & Hamel, 2005) which emphasizes authentic learning, scaffolding, inquiry and group work processes. WebQuests provide a potential resource for English language learning because of the authenticity of the resources. Students can
learn English based on a theme or subject, and in this way, students can learn the language in a more meaningful way. In sum, the characteristics of WebQuest lessons that are claimed to be beneficial to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction include 1) the exposure to authentic materials 2) meaningful content and 3) possibilities for real communication in the target language (Stoks, 2002). Because of the above rationale, WebQuests present an opportunity for language teachers who wish to implement Internet-supported language learning in their classes.

It is possible to say that WebQuests are theoretically and pedagogically sound for language learning. Still, there have not been any studies that explore the usefulness of WebQuests for language learning in EFL contexts. If an EFL teacher plans to adopt a WebQuest for his/her EFL class, what should be taken into consideration for selecting an appropriate WebQuest?

We started off with the question of whether or not the existing WebQuests are appropriate for EFL learners? What are the chances of finding an appropriate WebQuest to be used in an EFL classroom? In this study, we took on the role of a teacher who wanted to adopt a WebQuest for an EFL classroom. We developed a rubric based on a general framework for ESL/EFL material selection. Based on the rubric and pre-selection criteria, we selected and co-coded fifteen high-rated WebQuests to find out how many of them can be used in an EFL classroom situation.

The aim of this project is to examine the appropriateness of WebQuests for EFL learners in Thailand and other countries. This project has two goals:
1. To create a rubric to evaluate appropriate WebQuests for EFL learners

2. To find out how many WebQuests are appropriate for EFL learners using the rubric we created.

2. Literature Review

In order to explore the factors that affect the appropriateness of WebQuests for EFL learners, studies in second/foreign language reading comprehension and material selection are found to offer a general conceptual framework for what contributes to the readability and accessibility of texts. According to Richard et al (as cited in Mehrpour, 2004), readability refers to how easily the text can be read and understood. The factors that affect the readability are 1) the average length of sentences in a passage 2) a number of new words a passage contains 3) and the grammatical complexity of the language used.

Traditional approaches to assessing text difficulty usually consider words and syntactic complexity as the two factors contributing most to the difficulty of the text (Fortus, Coriat, & Fund, 1998; Klare, 1984). Readability formulas such as Flesch Reading Ease and Flesh-Kincaid Grade Level formulas can be used to calculate the readability of texts by taking into account the number of words per sentence and number of sentences per paragraph. The higher number of words per sentence and the more complex the sentence the more difficult the text is considered to be. It should be noted that the use of the readability formulas based on word and sentence length has been questioned in terms of its validity because these factors cannot completely measure the comprehensibility of a text and are not in
themselves the only factors that contribute to text difficulty; they are just predictors (Fulcher, 1997).

Researchers have attempted to establish criteria that will indicate the level of text difficulty for second language learners by counting the numbers words unknown by the students. Research found that learners need to know 95% of the words in a text in order to allow for reasonable comprehension of a text (Laufer, 1989; Liu & Nation, 1985). Our experience with EFL students’ reading abilities suggests that this research finding is reasonable. When students are engaged in independent reading, as in Internet activities, they rely less on teacher guidance and more on their own ability or help from their peers. The level of vocabulary and grammar should be seriously considered when students take on a more autonomous mode of learning. However, there is still no practical way to tell in advance which words are unknown to learners. Factors such as students’ educational background and exposure to the target language through a variety of media make this more difficult to determine. Therefore, it is not uncommon in some cases for teachers to use their intuition and teaching experience to judge which words are too difficult for students when selecting materials.

One thing to keep in mind is that a text with a suitable level of difficulty is one that contains vocabulary that is not so difficult that it would overwhelm learners; instead, a text should be difficult enough to leave room for reading growth. According to Krashen’s input+ 1 hypothesis (1982), readers can acquire meaning if what they read is one level above their present level of proficiency. On the other hand, even if a text is proven to be easy, this does not mean that the reading is not useful. For example, children’s books can be considered good
for some adult learners even if written primarily for young learners because they provide contextual and comprehensible input that promotes English literacy development among adult learners as well.

The lexical aspect of text is known to be associated with grammatical complexity in terms of text difficulty. Grammatical complexity includes factors such as clarity of syntax, sentence length, and number of complex clauses, passive voice, and punctuation. Research shows that both syntax and lexicon share equal importance for L1 readers in terms of interpreting text meaning (Barnett, 1986) and both skills interact with each other. If the grammar structures are known to learners, then it is easier for them to understand the meaning of the text. Also, the number of average words per sentence is one of the considerations that set the syntactical level of difficulty.

The length of the text has been widely discussed in terms of the role it plays in reading comprehension. Many researchers argue that several pages of foreign language material can be overwhelming for second language learners (Yang, 2001). One of the main factors that makes online materials look more difficult than printed ones could be the collection of hyperlinks, non-linear style text that students need to follow to get more information. The information from the hyperlinks can add up to the lengthy articles on the page and cause cognitive overload from navigational requirements of hypertext.

It can be questioned, however, whether the length of the text has any connection with difficulty level. Some research findings on reading general texts do not support the notion of the relationship between text length and difficulty level. People may intuitively believe that the longer text, the more difficult it is; however, there is no strong evidence to support it. For example, Mehrpour (2004)
studied the impact of text length on reading comprehension. The results are in line with previous research which concludes that the length of text does not demonstrate any statistical significance in terms of students’ performance on reading tests. More studies should be done before this result can be considered conclusive. Nevertheless, whether text length influences comprehension or not, it can still be argued that the length of the reading on a website has a major effect on the time students need to spend on reading tasks.

Teachers should focus on the issues of the length of text and the time allocation of using a particular material in the classroom. ‘Time on task’ has been shown to be a highly significant factor in learning (Nunan, 1988). Limited class time determines the extent of students’ search, reading and information exploration. WebQuest resources demand much more reading than traditional materials such as textbooks. Students may be required to read at least 3-4 web pages which contain more than 3000 words each in a single WebQuest. This amount of reading is far beyond what they usually do in a regular classroom. Decisions need to be made about how long the activities will take, especially when taking into consideration that students will need extra time when reading long and difficult texts. Therefore, when making lesson plans, we should take into account the time allocation each WebQuest requires and the time a teacher needs to spend on class discussion and explanation.

Difficulty level, though it is the main consideration, is not the only thing that determines the appropriateness of materials. Several studies suggest that factors such as content/topic (whether they are relevant to EFL curricula, interest and background knowledge) can influence foreign language reading comprehension (Graves, Juel, & Graves,
Students’ prior or background knowledge plays a major part in their comprehension of the text. It determines what students have known to understand texts and stories. It can be concluded that “greater level of background knowledge and expertise in a subject matter contribute to efficiency of attentional allocation to input during reading, enabling richer analyses and textual interpretations” (Pulido, 2004, p. 476). Lee (1986) studied the role of background knowledge associated with L2 reading. The study found that even advanced learners of a foreign language need to rely on three factors, (1) the context (which tells the readers in advance what the reading is about such as title, picture page, etc.), (2) topic familiarity and (3) transparency (specific concrete lexical items) in interpreting a text. Moreover, content can be difficult when the reader lacks adequate cultural, world or domain knowledge contained in the reading (Drum & Konopak, 1987). Most authentic materials, including WebQuests, may be created based on the assumption that students already have some knowledge about the topic. For EFL learners, though they may already have general cultural knowledge of the target culture, may not understand or be familiar with some specific cultural situations, events, persons or places that appear in the topic, and this may hinder their comprehension and accomplishment of tasks. Since content mastery is generally less a priority in foreign language class than is language mastery, the selection of content should be based on what facilitates students’ understanding and activates their background knowledge.
Students’ prior knowledge of the topic alone, however, does not necessarily make the material good for learners. The selection of topic/theme for language learners often involves students’ interest. Interestingness of materials or tasks refers to the extent that the reading is relevant and meaningful to learners (Nunan, 1988). Students’ interest also needs to play an important role in determining a / the teacher’s judgment of materials. Interestingness of materials links to learners’ motivation. Even though the content may be good for students, if the students are not interested in that particular topic, the topic may be perceived as too difficult. Sercu (2004) contends that we should take into consideration whether the learners can relate to and understand the information presented to them. While we realize that interestingness plays an important part in selecting materials, one person’s interest may not be the same as others. For the purposes of this research, we relied on the current materials used by students and our own experience as EFL teachers to make a judgment on what interests students.

In addition, the degree to which a WebQuest provides assistance and scaffolding should also be seen as an important factor in selecting materials. Assistance and scaffolding refer to the amount of help available to learners, tools that help language learners move along in the process of learning and accomplish an assigned task. The term ‘scaffolding’ is defined broadly as help, assistance that aids the process of building students’ learning to complete a task independently (Gibsons, 2002). Since the levels of WebQuests as originally suggested by the creators may be too challenging for EFL learners, it would be useful to have built-in scaffolding features that facilitate students’ language learning. Benz (2005), for example,
recommends that scaffolding may include peripheral tools such as vocabulary lists, guiding questions, grammar lessons, active stories, direct assistance, etc. Regular WebQuests do not always incorporate those features because they are not designed specifically for language learning. However, they can include graphics, multimedia functions, samples, and research notes/templates. WebQuests that incorporate these types of scaffolding will facilitate learners’ comprehension and help them to complete their tasks.

The last factor that must be explored in selecting WebQuest materials or any other materials for EFL learners is the task requirement. Tasks are considered to be the salient feature of WebQuests because WebQuests are constructed around activities. Task demand designates the complexity of the task, e.g. the steps involved in the task and the cognitive demands the task makes on the learners (Nunan, 1988). A learning task in WebQuests indicates what is being required of students’ output, both in terms of process and product. If the output required is at a level that is far beyond students’ linguistic level, the task is considered too difficult for them. For example, some WebQuests evaluate students’ persuasive essay writing, which is considered too difficult for most EFL students by the researchers since it requires advanced language competency or training in writing persuasive essays. Not only do we need to consider language demand, we also need to consider students’ prior experience and familiarity with the task. WebQuests that are good for language learning should focus on the opportunity for practicing all four skills (i.e. speaking, listening, reading and writing) through doable tasks, and they should not require too many expert or
specialized skills (e.g. computer search skills, drawing, writing a play) to complete the task.

In sum, several factors that are associated with the selection of reading materials have been identified and discussed. These factors include vocabulary and grammar, prior knowledge of content, interestingness, assistance/scaffolding and task demand.

3. Methodology

3.1 Setting

It is not feasible to create a guideline to cover a wide range of EFL learners’ proficiency level, background, and interest. Therefore, the rubric we created was targeted at EFL learners at the college level in Thailand. The target population that we examined the WebQuests for includes second-year college-level students in Thailand. The students major in several disciplines and they have to enroll in a mandatory English course to fulfill the English language requirement for their undergraduate degrees. Students are in the range of 18-20 years of age. Their English levels are considered intermediate or upper intermediate (TOEFL score between 400-450).

3.2 Instrumentation

There were three stages involved in constructing the rubric. The first stage was to examine the current materials used by second year college students at an urban university in Thailand to set up a baseline for the current level of students’ reading proficiency. The second stage was to construct the criteria and scoring rubric based on the current level of proficiency and the review of the literature. The third stage was to select the existing WebQuests for coding.
3.2.1 Textbook analysis

In EFL contexts, the English language proficiency levels required of students need to be considered a priority because most WebQuests are written for first language learners. There may be gaps between the difficulty level of L1 WebQuests and L2 students’ English language proficiency. In order to estimate the students’ level of proficiency, we examined the current textbook as a unit of analysis to determine what level of difficulty students can usually handle. The textbook called ‘Reading for Information’ (Ratchatanan, 1999) was developed by an instructor in the Faculty of Liberal Arts and has been used for all course sections for several years.

We first analyzed the textbook and the reading materials used by instructors for a freshmen English course. Our approach was to use the textbook as current reading material to establish a level of reading difficulty that matches the students’ level of proficiency. We also analyzed the textbook to examine quantitatively the vocabulary and complexity of the reading passages. The textbook analysis also revealed the factors affecting difficulty and appropriateness.

After obtaining the materials currently used in the classes at the university, we ran the first three passages from the textbook on Microsoft Word for Flesch Reading Ease and Flesh-Kincaid Grade level formulas. These two statistics are calculated by averaging sentence length (the number of words divided by the number of sentences) with the number of syllables per word (the number of syllables divided by the number of words). The Reading Ease Score rates text on a 100-point scale; the higher the score, the easier it is to understand the document. For most standard documents, the score is
aimed at approximately 60 to 70. The following analysis reveals surface characteristics of the text and an overall picture of the length and structure of the text. Table 1 shows the quantitative analysis of the current English reading passages used for the freshmen English class.

### Table 1 The Reading Grade Level Analysis of the Current Reading Material

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Passage</th>
<th>Second Passage</th>
<th>Third Passage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Words</td>
<td>1296</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>1037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentences per paragraph</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words per sentences</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of passive voice</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Ease</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Grade level</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 1, it can be concluded that the average length of the text currently used for EFL college learners is approximately 1000 words per lesson unit. The average reading grade level is at 11. From the analysis, we arrived at a rough picture of the grade level and length of each reading unit. The textbook analysis also revealed the topics that the students were familiar with, which we discuss in the next section.

### 3.2.2 Constructing a rubric
Drawing from the literature, we identified five categories important for materials assessment rubrics: vocabulary and grammar, content knowledge, interestingness, assistance (scaffolding) and task demand. The criteria for each category were based on the literature and the results from our textbook analysis. We used five randomly selected WebQuests to test and revise the rubrics. After refining our rubric several times, we finally agreed on the final version of the rubric. A WebQuest would be given a score of two if its characteristics fit our desired criteria in each category, a score of one if it needs modification and zero if it did not meet the certain criteria (See Appendix I). We set the criteria for vocabulary level according to the study done by Liu and Nation (1985) and Laufer (1989), which states that 90-95% of the vocabulary should be known to the learners. Furthermore, the content should be associated with students’ prior knowledge. The overall theme or the topic of WebQuests should be relevant to students’ lives, culturally and socially. The topics may cover a wide range of interests for most students. According to the current reading materials used in the course, topics include social issues, diet, ecology, health, technology and education. Scaffolding tools such as an online dictionary, guiding questions, and graphics, were provided. The task should be doable for EFL learners and it should not require expertise in areas that the students may not be familiar with, such as computer search skills, drawing, or writing a play, to complete a task. The WebQuests that did not meet the above criteria would receive lower scores, as indicated in the rubric.

3.2.3 Selecting WebQuests and Coding
In the process of selecting WebQuests for coding, we followed Brown’s (1995) suggestion concerning how to adopt materials by setting up some form of evaluation process to pare the list of materials down to only those that should be seriously considered. We took the three steps below to select WebQuests for coding.

Though there are several WebQuest collections available, the ones we selected were from the WebQuest page of San Diego State University (SDSU), which is the original WebQuest database and currently includes over 2000 WebQuests (Dodge, 2006). Not all of these WebQuests have been evaluated and rated based on the WebQuest evaluation rubric (Dodge, 2001). The evaluation rubric covered the evaluation of six dimensions: overall aesthetics, introduction, task, process, resource and evaluation. Approximately 17% of these WebQuests (approximately 350) have already been rated, which means that these WebQuests have been selected, looked at and evaluated by some teachers or educators. The WebQuests from the SDSU page were rated highest (50 points) based on the WebQuest evaluation rubric. A high rating on a WebQuest ensures that at least some people believed that each component (e.g. introduction, task, process, etc.) of the WebQuest met the characteristics of a good WebQuest; for example, the WebQuest rubrics demand good visual design, clarity of the process, doable tasks, etc. Therefore they were, in a sense, pre-screened for us.

We narrowed down the list to 34 WebQuests that were rated highest (50/50 points). However, these WebQuests covered all ranges of grade levels (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12). Our selection of WebQuests from the SDSU page should be based on the current level of the college students. We obtained the information about the current grade
level from the textbook analysis (Table 1) which showed that reading level could be between 9th and 12th grade. However, as we examined the list of other possible WebQuests, we found that some them that were intended for use for the 6th-8th grade level had readability levels and topics comparable to the 9th-12th grade ones. We therefore decided to include them in our list. The total number of WebQuests at this stage was 25.

We found that we needed to eliminate a number of WebQuests from our list when taking into consideration the topics that would be suitable for students. First, we did not need WebQuest topics that were too technical or that require special knowledge, such as advanced mathematics and sciences. Since content mastery is not of primary intention for an English class, we wanted to select WebQuests whose content is comfortable enough for English teachers to handle alone, assuming that no collaborative help from other content area teachers is available. WebQuests that involved technical subjects as such did not meet this criterion. At the same time, we wanted to ensure that the selected WebQuests had elements that would facilitate English language learning; that is, opportunities for practicing the four skills, including reading, writing, and oral interaction during group work.

We finally narrowed our list to only fifteen WebQuest (Appendix II) that were eligible for coding. A score of 0-2 was given to each of the five categories: vocabulary and grammar, content knowledge, interestingness, assistance/scaffolding and task demand. A single score of 0-2 was given for each category; the criteria for each score are described in the rubric. After several times of calibrating, revising and attempting to understand the rubric, we made sure that both
authors agreed on how to code it. Then each coder separately coded the WebQuests according to the agreed rubric.

Cohen’s kappa was used to calculate the inter-rater agreement for each category (vocabulary, content, interestingness, assistance, and task demand). Cohen’s kappa yields a more robust result than simple percent agreement because it takes into account the agreement of the raters occurring by chance. The equation for kappa is below:

\[
\kappa = \frac{Pr(a) - Pr(e)}{1 - Pr(e)},
\]

Pr (a) = number of the observed agreement between raters
Pr (e) = number of agreement that is due to chance

We established a range for the scores received for each WebQuest to determine which WebQuests were acceptable. For a WebQuest to be considered a good one for EFL, we required high scores on at least four categories. WebQuests that received the lowest score (0) on more than two categories were considered not appropriate for EFL learners. So the WebQuests would be ranked as follows: the WebQuests that were scored between 0-3 are considered inappropriate for EFL learners; WebQuests that scored between 4-7 may be adopted with some adaptation; WebQuests that scored between 8-10 were appropriate and could be adopted for use with an EFL population. The scores received in each category were summed up and compared with the above criteria.

4. Results

After coding, the interrater reliability was calculated for each category, as shown in Table 2 below:
Based on the criteria we set earlier as a cutting point for an appropriate WebQuest, we found that we had a 100% agreement on which WebQuests can be used and cannot be used with EFL learners. Four out of fifteen WebQuests (26.6%) were possible to use with EFL students without any modification needed. Two WebQuests (13.3%) were unlikely to produce good results when implemented in EFL classrooms. The rest of the WebQuests (N=9, 60%) may be used but some modification is recommended. In order to find out which aspects of the WebQuests need modification, the scores from each category were analyzed.

The interrater indices for vocabulary and grammar, content knowledge, interestingness, assistance/scaffolding and task demand are 0.9, 0.7, 0.9, 0.8, 0.7 consecutively. The overall interrater reliability was 0.9 computed by averaging agreement from all categories. The discrepancies in our coding largely came from differences in our judgment concerning the students’ prior knowledge on the topic and task demand, which in many cases, are difficult to predict.
It should be noted that even though we agreed on the total rating scores, we did not necessarily score the same for every category. For example, when coding the WebQuests about Samurai’s tale, even though we both agreed on the overall range of scores and the categories that the WebQuest should fall into, there were some scoring discrepancies in certain categories, such as task demand, which produced a score of 1 and 2 respectively between the two raters.

Table 2 shows the rating scores of the fifteen WebQuests as well as the scores of each category of a particular WebQuest. The low ratings for some WebQuests were due to a zero score in more than two categories. The majority of the selected WebQuests (N=9) were rated medium, which means that they can be used with some adaptations. The scores in each category identified which aspect of the particular WebQuest can be adapted; for example, WebQuests that were rated low in content knowledge can be modified by providing more pre-lesson activities to prepare students with some knowledge on the topic before starting the WebQuest tasks.

5. Discussion

We found that the difficulty level of vocabulary and grammar is not the most problematic factor in selecting WebQuests. The content and topic of the WebQuests, in fact, have more effect on whether a WebQuest will be appropriate for EFL students. As pointed out by (Graves, Juel, & Graves, 2004), the background knowledge that the ESL/EFL students bring to the text could be inconsistent with the knowledge assumed by the text. WebQuests that require a lot of background knowledge of a specific event demand specific prior
knowledge and familiarity beyond ESL/EFL students’ understanding. For example, the WebQuest about the Alamo battle requires students to have at least some background understanding of the historical conflicts between Texas settlers and the Mexican government and some familiarity with the geographical areas of Texas in order to understand the story and take on the roles of people in the historical event in order to complete the task. This prior knowledge may be beyond what EFL students possess. It can be explained that some WebQuest topics that are culturally specific and closely tied to the local contexts or events in the U.S. do not translate well into other contexts. More general topics, such as obesity, crime, and environment, along with sufficient scaffolding, could be more appropriate and beneficial for language learners. For example, the WebQuest about obesity in the U.S. is an example of a good problem-solving lesson for an EFL class. Students are asked to find out about the obesity epidemic in the U.S. and offer a solution to the problem. The topic, though based on the U.S. context, contains content that EFL students can easily relate to. The WebQuest also provides step-by-step guidelines on how to accomplish the task. The scaffolding found in this particular WebQuest include samples, guiding questions, vocabulary assistance, and detailed slide organizers which make the task possible for students to complete by themselves.

Another important point that should be brought into the discussion is the issue of the text length of the Internet resources. We previously established that web pages that contained several pages of reading could easily overwhelm learners, even though the level of vocabulary and syntax were not too advanced for them. This observation was
based on the fact that students in this particular context are not familiar with such long readings in class; therefore, it may appear too challenging for students when they see several pages of full text written in a foreign language. As we closely examined this issue, we concluded that most resources provided in the WebQuests were not meant to be read by students in every single detail. Most of the links were merely suggested resources. Students needed to learn to locate information by skimming and scanning and to come up with the necessary information to complete the task. It is crucial, however, for teachers to explicitly guide students in reading and locating information. Teachers may start with a pre-Internet Internet lesson that includes an overview of how to search for information, vocabulary preparation, group work process and role clarification. Teachers also need to find an efficient way to manage the amount of class time that should be devoted to in-class or out-of-class assignments. The decision usually depends on various factors, such as task demands and the time available for each specific context.

It should be noted that even though the rubric we created was targeted at EFL college students in Thailand, we believe that it could also be used as a guideline for comparable contexts as well.

6. Conclusion
WebQuests have gained much popularity among language teachers in recent years. However, not much research has been done to show how they can benefit language students in EFL contexts. The results of our study indicate that most of the WebQuests investigated required modifications and adjustments before being used with EFL students. Only a few existing WebQuests can be used instantly, while
the rest are not appropriate for EFL learners. Therefore, we can conclude that WebQuests have a potential to enhance English language learning provided that they are appropriate for EFL learners in terms of learners’ levels of proficiency, task demands, interests, and background knowledge. Since most WebQuests were created with American students’ interests and their required curricula, some WebQuests may have content that is difficult for EFL students to understand. We suggest that teachers in EFL contexts modify WebQuests to suit their specific learners’ needs before applying them in classrooms.

References


**Acknowledgments**

We would like to thank Dr. Larry Mikulecky for his guidance and valuable feedback on this paper.

**Appendix 1 - Rubric for evaluating WebQuests for EFL learners**
Overall Score ranking:

0-3  Not applicable
4-7  Adaptable
8-10  Adoptable

Appendix II - List of the Fifteen Selected WebQuests and their URLs
### Good WebQuests for EFL

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Fat Facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://teacherweb.com/MD/Oxo%5CnHillMS/FatFacts/h2.stm">http://teacherweb.com/MD/Oxo\nHillMS/FatFacts/h2.stm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Food Chain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Solve it with logic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.msu.edu/~reethskr/myweb/gwq/cover_page.htm">http://www.msu.edu/~reethskr/myweb/gwq/cover_page.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ancient Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Chocolate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.btcs.org/tutorials/WebQuests/chocolate/">http://www.btcs.org/tutorials/WebQuests/chocolate/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### WebQuests that need modification

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<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Impact of September 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://homepage.mac.com/suecolli%5Cnns/school/stocks/stocks.htm">http://homepage.mac.com/suecolli\nns/school/stocks/stocks.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Media Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://homepage.mac.com/suecolli%5Cnns/school/media/media.html">http://homepage.mac.com/suecolli\nns/school/media/media.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Who was the real Shakespeare?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://garnet.acns.fsu.edu/~srl03e/eleven.htm">http://garnet.acns.fsu.edu/~srl03e/eleven.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>The Truth ... and Nothing but the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUTH!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**WebQuests that are not appropriate for EFL**

| 15. A personal journal | [http://www.pls.uni.edu/nielsen/Getysburg/gettysburg.html](http://www.pls.uni.edu/nielsen/Getysburg/gettysburg.html) |
Title
Learning to Use the Articles, A and The, in One Lesson

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Soka Women’s University, Japan

Bio Data:
Nic Farrow (Nicholas K. Farrow) has an MS in TESOL from Anaheim University (2003). He is teaching English composition, reading and comparative cultures at Soka Women’s College and University in Japan. His current research focus is on applying the consciousness-raising approach to a range of grammatical forms which appear to be obstacles in students' acquisition of the language, and to evaluate its effectiveness in the learning process.

Abstract
To deal effectively with an area of language which some consider unteachable, this report proposes a single lesson based on consciousness-raising to teach some general principles which govern the use of the articles. The lesson content and rationale are explained fully, followed by a discussion of preliminary investigations into its effectiveness with Japanese university students, using dairy observations, a cloze test and an oral production test. The initial results are very promising.

Keywords: articles, consciousness-raising, lesson plan, pre and post-testing, grammar
Introduction and Background

A frequent and persistent grammatical problem many EFL teachers encounter in Japanese schools, colleges and universities is the misuse or omission of the articles *a* and *the* in both written and spoken language. This is a serious linguistic problem for several reasons:
- Articles occur frequently … The American Heritage Word Frequency Book (Carroll et al, 1971) lists *the* as the most commonly used word in the English language, and *a* as the fourth.
- Misuse of articles can lead to serious errors because of resulting meaning variations, since ‘the distinction they mark is obligatory’ (Matthews, 1997, p.26). Master (1994, p.230) notes that the need for accurate use of articles increases with writing, since readers do not have the luxury of extralinguistic clues to help understanding.
- The problem is persistent, even to higher-level learners. Claire and Greenwood, (1988, cover page) state that… (Articles) “are often the last grammatical item that distinguishes the native-speaker of English from the foreign-born speaker”.

Clearly the problem is not limited to Japan. Sattayatham and Honsa (2007) found errors in article use by Thai medical students to be the second most common error type in their opinion paragraph writing.

There exist at least three textbooks focusing exclusively on the use of articles, evidence of the weight of the problem they present to second language learners. Offering a very straight explanation-plus-practice approach is *The Article Book: Practice Towards Mastery of a, an, and the*. (Cole, 2000) However, it offers no samples of extended text, nor samples of spoken discourse for analysis and explanation. Similarly, *Three Little Words, A, An, and The* (Claire and Greenwood, 1988), covers a wide range of rules, with practice
exercises. This book does include a few extended texts, devoted to contrasting the uses of a and the. Three Little Words, A, An, The (Brender, 1989), is very thorough and highly systematic, and was clearly written with the Japanese in mind. However, it relies on a very traditional program of tabular explanations and exercises, working point by point across the spectrum of rules.

Why then, do the articles present students and teachers with such a bewildering challenge? Article use tops Celce-Murcia’s (2002) list of grammatical problems which are ‘not context free but are clearly functionally motivated.’ (p.121) That is, they are not subject to a simple rule, isolated from context. In fact, correct choice of the in cases of anaphoric reference almost always depends upon context beyond the sentence level. Halliday (1994) puts it this way: ‘..the is usually accompanied by some other element which supplies the information required…’ (p.182)

The literature investigating this aspect of language is vast, with a number of theories proposed to explain the nature of the problems. The main controversy seems to be between the theories of uniqueness (There’s only one, so it is particular.) and familiarity (Your interlocutor knows what you are referring to, so it is particular).

A report by Master (1994, pp. 259-252) details a quasi-experiment on the effects of direct instruction of article usage. Master’s investigation differs from this one in that the subjects were ESL students, their level was far higher than that of the students in this report, and instruction was over a nine-week period. Further, the instruction and testing also covered the ‘entire range of article use in English’, in great depth and detail.
A lesson plan for article use has been detailed by a junior college teacher in Japan (Norris, 1992). This is comparable to the present study in that the lesson was designed for a similar population of students and that the focus was on *a* and *the*, not zero article. However, the approach is rather different. Norris used a mix of Total Physical Response (TPR), cuisenaire rods and picture description techniques. While he found results to be encouraging, the linguistic aims were not explicitly defined, and specific results not published.

Of the many books on the market specializing in correction of errors in English language use few dare deal with this problem at all. Neither so traditional a writer as Witherspoon’s (1943) nor Burt and Kiparsky’s (1972) books on common errors even mentions this problem. Turton (1995), however, explains various points regarding use and omission of each article, but stops short of dealing with errors between them. Likewise, the ESL/EFL textbooks using the communicative approach, widely used in university English classes in Japan, seem unwilling to address this problem.

Some grammar–oriented textbooks do include articles among their study topics. A traditional approach can be found in *A Basic English Grammar with Exercises* (Eastwood & Mackin, 1998) which very briefly explains a wider range of article-related grammar points, followed directly by practice exercises. Swan and Walter (1997, 2001) look at articles in some detail, clearly differentiate between the uses of zero article, *a* and *the*, and offer traditional exercises to practice the concepts explained. Addressing the problem with a more interactive style, *Impact Grammar* (Ellis & Gaies, 1999) applies a CR approach in two units, one focusing on *a* and one on *the*. These are highly simplified, however, and each one deals with only one aspect
of their usage. Despite efforts by some authors, there seems to remain a large gap in ideas and material to help students grapple with this major topic. The lesson plan outlined below is an attempt to help to fill that gap.

The Participants

The research was conducted in two separate stages. The first was a pre-experiment, involving a single intact class of first-year university writing students. There was neither a control group nor any random assignment of participants. The data collected were in the form of personal journals written by students both before and after the lesson. The second stage involved two similar intact university classes, one acting as a control, studying communicative English. These classes were given both written and speaking tests before and after the lesson. The teacher, a native speaker of English, was also the researcher, collecting data from his own classes.

Aim and Method

A lesson plan was conceived to see if it is possible for students to actually learn correct use of *the* and *a* as a result of explicit teaching. In addition, it was hoped to teach the main points in just one lesson, although some follow-up activities are thought likely to help students to integrate the concepts into their interlanguage.

This lesson plan was based on the Consciousness Raising (CR) approach, encouraging students to ‘notice’ how the language is used under certain conditions by providing ‘enhanced input’, followed by
exercises for them to put their ideas into action. Language discovery is a major element in this kind of lesson. The lesson did not demand production per se, but rather required students to consider the linguistic evidence and develop a framework of understanding.

CR is a relatively new approach to second language teaching and, according to Ellis (1994, p.645) ‘… provides a logical way of avoiding many of the pedagogical problems that arise from the teachability hypothesis.’ It seemed to be a technique worth investigating when applied to one of the more challenging aspects of the English language.

There is a wide range of complications in tackling a language target of this sort. The question of use of a and the, far from being an isolated point of language, is intimately tied into a variety of closely-linked language questions, such as pronoun use, plurals, countable and uncountable nouns, zero article, language ‘chunks’ which include articles, and those ‘rules’ which seem to be clear cut, such as naming hotels and rivers. In addition, there seem to be numerous anomalies, or sub-rules which complicate the issue for both student and teacher. We go to the bathroom, but not to the bed. We also go to work, but not to office. Students are likely to be baffled when British people say that someone is ‘in hospital’, meaning they have been admitted, but someone went to ‘the hospital’ to visit a sick person.

Instead of focusing on just one isolated aspect, or trying to cover the entire spectrum of article usage, this lesson takes a middle road by highlighting principles which govern the major problem areas which students repeatedly encounter. The use of the rather than a, is presented for the following:
- universally unique items (the sun)
- items unique to a situation (the floor, the grass, the kitchen)
- diectically obvious items (the guy over there)
- items of anaphoric reference (the guy we just referred to)
- items defined by a relative clause (the guy I met yesterday)
- superlatives (the nicest guy I ever met)

The reasoning for this is twofold. First, this covers a wide range of the problems students encounter, and arguably, the more difficult to teach and understand. Second, there is an underlying common thread to all of these, the definiteness of the items under scrutiny. If this can be established in the mind of the student, then the difficulty of understanding and even producing the target language may be controlled. Although questions about related aspects may well arise during the lesson, they should not become the main focus of study at this point.

In order to provide understanding with minimal confusion in just the one 90 – minute period, this lesson avoids directly dealing with the related (and relevant) questions of:
- zero article
- countable and uncountable nouns, singular and plural uses
- the occurrence of cataphoric pronouns
- such rules as the common occurrence of the before musical instruments, hotel names etc.

Some of these remaining ‘rules’ are relatively simple, and within clear boundaries (e.g. names of rivers), and can even be learned by students without the intervention of a teacher. Some are covered in the popular textbooks, but still could become the target language for a follow-up CR lesson.
Testing Procedures

Testing was conducted in two phases, with the two different groups of students. Three types of pre- and post-test were conducted, one to measure students’ understanding of the correct use of the target language, and two to measure their productive ability. The single CR articles lesson was conducted between tests, as detailed below. All students had been informed that they were participating in a research project, and had agreed to be involved. Notably, the control group of university students (who received no articles lesson) requested to study the lesson after the experiment was concluded.

College Students

The first phase was a pre-experiment (No attempt was made to provide a control group.) on a single group of first-year college English students in a writing class. Their weekly English diaries were analyzed both one week before and two weeks after the lesson for examples of correct and incorrect use of the articles, along with a range of connected items such as use of all determiners. Students had been told to write their diaries freely as a normal part of their study course, and told not to pay excessive attention to perfect grammar and spelling. These diaries were handed in monthly, for comment (not grammatical correction) by the teacher. This then, was a non-interventionist observation of students’ productive abilities, as the students were not told to make any effort to use correct forms of the target language. This group was tested only to look for any change in their productive ability as a result of the lesson.
University Students

The second experiment consisted of two stages, investigating the effectiveness of the lesson on first-year university English students, with one class acting as a control. The two classes had been graded as equal in level in the university placement tests, and a review of their TOEIC scores showed a close similarity in their scores, with means of 134.7 (S.D. 11.0) and 132.5 (S.D. 8.3) respectively for the control group and the experimental group. Both classes were in the middle of studying the same English course run by the researcher/teacher, using a communicative-style textbook, Fifty-Fifty, Book One (Wilson and Barnard, 1998).

The students were first given a simple cloze test to examine their understanding of the language being investigated. The test was specifically designed to highlight the target language, aiming only at the points on which the lesson focused. Students had to fill in 69 blanks with either *a* or *the*, with a ten-minute time limit, which proved to be ample for most students. There was no testing of zero article or other determiners. Likewise, expressions such as *a lot of* were not used since students might remember them as familiar language chunks. However, the common expression *there was a*, which was included in the lesson, also appeared in the test. An additional test was employed to measure any change of students’ oral productive ability in correct use of the articles before and after the lesson. Students were asked to explain a series of 24 pictures in their own words, in the space of ten minutes. The pictures conveyed a short sequence of events such as a man leaving his office desk and going to a meeting room. Difficult vocabulary words were supplied alongside the pictures to minimize distraction. Students recorded their
narratives individually using audiocassette recorders without intervention from the teacher. Ample time was allowed for students to describe what they saw. The students’ narrations were then analyzed for correct and erroneous use of the articles.

Students were aware of the target language under investigation from the very beginning. This was both inevitable, considering the explicit focus of the cloze test, and desirable, since they would surely be aware of the focus during the post-lesson test, and would therefore be expected to perform differently, contaminating the data.

**Considerations in defining correct and incorrect usage:**
In both experiments, various factors needed to be carefully considered before analyzing the results:
- Set expressions/language chunks: It was considered that students’ possible familiarity with expressions such as ‘a lot of’ might contaminate the data, so in the cloze test, they were eliminated. The few incidental occurrences in the college writing class diaries and university spoken tests were also ignored for the same reason.
- Determiner omissions: When it was impossible from the context to decide what sort of determiner was omitted, this was classified as *determiner omitted*.
- Compound errors: Some errors were difficult to determine simply as *a/the* type errors, or even omission of a determiner. In the example, ‘I bought book and magazine.’ did the student omit *a* twice, or forget to pluralize the nouns? With no way to
decide what kind of error was made, this becomes listed as a compound error.

- Indeterminable: ‘I had spaghetti.’ / ‘I had a spaghetti.’ Since both are correct in normal modern English, such instances were not recorded as correct or incorrect and were consequently not included in the results.

- Misused singulars: ‘We played all evening with a firework.’ These were omitted, since, although the grammar was correct, the student had clearly used an *a* inappropriately, thus making it unclassifiable either as correct use or overuse.

- Omission of noun entire phrases: Some sentences were clearly incomplete, such as ‘I went shopping and I bought.’ An object phrase, possibly requiring an article has been omitted. These were not categorized.

- Article overuse: Occurrence of the overuse of articles or other determiners, such as in ‘It was a waste of the time.’ became particularly significant in the post-lesson data, where possible examples of hyper-correction were observed.

**Problems Encountered**

A number of problems arose, some hard to anticipate and some due to poorly designed aspects of the experiments.

**College Class Diaries**

In the first experiment, many of the diaries actually contained a surprisingly low count of any kind of determiner, not only by
omission, but also by the fact that the topics and writing style did not require them. For example, a diary might read (all errors included):

Today, I get up at seven o’clock, get dressed and went to Shinjuku with Mai. We went shopping and then had lunch. We ate noodles and beef. At six o’clock, we enjoyed played bowling and then went home and sang songs. It was very fun.

The sample contains 45 words, with no determiners and no errors in the language under observation. In addition, the wordage from each student proved to be very low, and it became clear that with such low numbers, analysis of individual students’ language would be difficult and virtually meaningless. For this reason and for the sake of brevity in presenting the results, it was decided to gather all the analyzed results together for observation in a single table.

The initial results were analyzed according to a broad range of observations related to various determiner-related problems, but this proved far too complex to present, and a simplified table was decided upon, with more general divisions tabulated for observation. The actual number of words produced in the pre and post-test diaries was, of course, not identical. It was, however, very close, and the tabulated results were adjusted to compensate for the difference in number.

University Classes

Plural and non-count nouns were not intended to be targeted, since they should not have an a before them, which should eliminate the choice. However, in error, three instances were included in the cloze
test. Notably, several students still incorrectly used a in these cases, too. Therefore these data were included as part of the study.

As with the results of the college students’ diaries, the results of the university students’ oral test proved extremely complicated, requiring a very wide range of categorizations to accurately represent the error types. Along with the fact that the quantity of data available could not justify either a highly detailed analysis, nor the individualization of results, it was decided to present the data as a whole group, in tables focusing on the main target-language categories only.

**Reliability**

The analysis of the college class diaries proved complex and demanding. From the beginning, it became clear that there would appear numerous cases of ambiguity, as described above. Decisions had to be made and lines drawn, in order to create a reference rubric to determine as accurately as possible the correct use of the target language. It proved extremely unrealistic simply to decide the correct use of the articles, without looking at the related uses of other determiners. These were then included in the analysis, providing some interesting additional results. At this stage a second rater’s evaluation was not sought, leaving all the decisions in the hands of the researcher, alone.

With the university group, as the same cloze test was used both before and after the lesson, there may arise the question as to whether data became contaminated as a result of simple learning occurring from doing the same test twice. As a precaution, this test was piloted with another class which had not received the articles lesson, conducting the ‘pre’ and ‘post’ tests three weeks apart. The results of
the total number of errors from testing of 13 students was identical, 179 in both cases, though the numbers of errors of *a* and *the* varied slightly. In contrast, in an earlier pilot test employing different, but similar ‘pre’ and ‘post’ cloze tests, despite attempts to counterbalance effects of any disparity in the tests, there appeared a very substantial unforeseen difference between the linguistic demands of the two, such that results became extremely skewed and reliability was undermined.

As a precaution against any ambiguity in the possible choices for the students, the cloze test was taken by three native-speaker teachers. This revealed some unforeseen problems which were then eliminated before the test was given to the students.

For practical reasons, it was impossible to conduct any pilot testing for the oral productivity test. On the basis of the results of the cloze test pilot, it was assumed that the same approach (using the same material for pre and post tests) would be preferable to changing the material for the posttest. However, since the test conditions were quite different from those of the cloze test, the reliability of the data from this stage could be open to question. Further, due to a large variation in the amount of spoken discourse produced by individual students, the making of individual error comparisons proved impractical. It was then decided to present the data as a whole, with figures provided as means of the whole groups.
The Lesson Plan - Overview

While the full lesson plan can be viewed in APPENDIX 2, below is a brief explanation of the stages of the lesson, totally approximately 85 minutes:

1. Noticing/Discovery Section (35 minutes)
Teacher provides a range of examples (singular entities, deictic reference, superlatives, anaphoric reference) for students to determine why *the* is the article of choice, in contrast to *a*.

2. Explicit Review and Discussion (15 minutes)
Teacher and class discuss the noticing/discovery section to clarify the points, preferably through elicitation.

3. Grammaticality Judgment (15 minutes)
Students are required to find errors in the target language in a short written passage.

4. Further Noticing - Enhanced Input Text - Progression Towards Definite from Indefinite (20 minutes)
Students are presented with texts, possible authentic materials, with a view to noticing the progression of item from indefinite forms to definite forms. This section often entails discussion of the concomitant occurrence of pronouns.

Results and Discussion

The College Class – Diary Observations
As explained above, at this stage the numbers provided are for the entire class, with no isolation of individual students’ results.
Wordage: 5020

Table 1. Pre-lesson Results (adjusted to match word count of post-lesson results)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>omissions</th>
<th>overuse</th>
<th>exchange</th>
<th>compound error</th>
<th>correct use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘the’</td>
<td>‘a’</td>
<td>determiner</td>
<td>‘the’</td>
<td>‘a’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Post-lesson Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>omissions</th>
<th>overuse</th>
<th>exchange</th>
<th>compound error</th>
<th>correct use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘the’</td>
<td>‘a’</td>
<td>determiner</td>
<td>‘the’</td>
<td>‘a’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 1 and 2 reveal a range of distinct and significant changes in the dairies. An obvious change is in the drop in the number of omissions of the from 60 to 20, a drop of 66.6%. On the other hand, we see an increase in the overuse of the, which might be thought to undermine any claim of improvement, since it could be interpreted as simply an increase in the overall use of the. While overall instances of correct use of both articles has increased, again, the with an increase of 46.5% is the one of note.
In a notable and unanticipated side benefit, there appears to be a very significant decrease in the omission of other determiners (69%), and a drop in the number of compound errors (30%), neither of which was the target of the lesson.

A question which commonly arises in such an experiment is whether outside influences in the time between the tests could account for such a change. In the absence data from a control group, this is difficult to ascertain. Simple writing experience and exposure to correct forms from reading and conversation classes may account for some of this change, and it is very difficult to argue to what extent these will have influenced the results. However, it would be questionable to claim that, after six years of study of English, a mere three weeks of additional study is likely to have had a very significant effect.

The University Classes – Direct Testing of Target Forms

Results of the experimental and control groups for the cloze and oral tests are explained below. As mentioned previously, for practical reasons, only the cloze tests shows individualized results, while the oral tests are recorded in less detail and as a whole group.

Cloze Test

It was decided to use the number of errors in relation to the number of choices as a measure of the participants’ ability to correctly select \textit{a} or \textit{the} in the text. The results were first tabulated to show these numbers and the percentage of errors for each student, both in pre and post-lesson tests for both experimental and control groups.
Table 3 shows the results for each student in terms of numbers of errors and their corresponding percentages from a total of 69 spaces on the cloze test for the experimental group. The means are displayed at the bottom of the columns. The figures can be compared with the control group results shown in Table 4. The pre-lesson tests in both groups show similar numbers, 19.7% and 18.4%.

However, while the means show a drop from 18.4% to 17.1% in the post-lesson test for the control group, we can see a far greater drop for the experimental group, from 19.7% errors before the lesson to just 11.1% after the lesson. This is equal to a drop in errors of 43.7%, a figure which includes those showing negative improvement.

Table 3. Results of Cloze Tests for Experimental Group (n=17)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Number of errors</th>
<th>% of total (69)</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Number of errors</th>
<th>% of total (69)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Looking at individual results, there appear three students who actually got lower scores after the lesson. For the rest of the class, there exists a range from as little as a drop of one error (Student 3), to as many as 16 (Student 16). Students 2, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 13, 15 and 16 all showed improvements where the number of errors was cut by half or more, some by over two-thirds.

Table 4 shows a sharp contrast in results for the control group. Seven students’ results showed negative improvement (highlighted), and two had identical scores. Of the remaining eight students, just two (Students 11 and 13) showed an improvement where the number of errors was cut by half or more.

Table 4. Results of Cloze Tests for Control Group (n=17)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control group – Pre test</th>
<th>Control group – Post test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Number of errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A paired-samples $t$ test was conducted to evaluate the differences in mean scores between the pre-test and the post-test for each group. The results (Table 5) show a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores for the experimental group, but no significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores for the control group.

Table 5. Results of Paired-sample $t$ test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test mean</th>
<th>Post-test mean</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>Degrees of freedom</th>
<th>Significance (two-tailed)</th>
<th>$r$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>experimental group:</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>4.160</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre and post tests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>control group:</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>.870</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.397</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre and post tests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The $t$ test confirms that there is, indeed, a significant difference in the pre and post-test results of the experimental group while also showing that the difference in the control group results is not significant. The fact that there exist some results quite inconsistent with the general trend in both experimental and control groups, makes it clear that further experimentation with a larger number of participants would be required to confirm the claims of this report.

**Speaking Test**
Tables 6 and 7 show the results only of the main target language, presented as means of all the students’ spoken language during each test. A ‘spoken unit’ is defined as any comprehensible utterance of clause length or greater as part of the students’ description of the pictures. Unlike the cloze test, which allowed comparison of the numbers of errors with a fixed number of items being tested, this was not possible with the oral test. Therefore the figures chosen for observation became the number of instances of correct article use.

Table 6. Results of Speaking Test for Experimental Group: (n=17)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experimental group – Pre test</th>
<th>Experimental group – Post test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>units spoken</td>
<td>correct use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘the’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 6, the experimental group shows an increase in the means of correct use of *the* from 8.6 to 13.4, an increase of 55.8%, while the numbers for *a* change from 2.6 to 5.8, that is, 123%. Table 7, for the control group, shows far smaller increases, that is 8% for *the*, and 23% for *a*. Again, while the amount of data are very limited, the difference from this initial investigation seems very encouraging.

Table 7. Results of Speaking Test for Control Group: (n=17)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control group – Pre test</th>
<th>Control group – Post test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>units spoken</td>
<td>correct use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘the’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

This investigation was conducted with only small numbers representing just two (very similar) population groups, college and university women. Circumstantial restraints did not allow a thoroughgoing investigation of the college students’ writing before and after the lessons, and there remain some questions of reliability regarding in both experiments. Therefore, the results need to be verified by further, more comprehensive study with a variety of populations. Furthermore, the pre and post-tests themselves are not an integral part of the lesson plan, and yet they will inevitably have influenced the students’ thinking and awareness of the topic. We cannot, therefore, claim that the results were entirely uncontaminated by the research process.

That said, the results as they stand do look very encouraging. Significant improvement in use of the target structures has occurred both experimental groups, seen both in immediate post testing and in testing some weeks later, suggestive of an improvement of the students’ overall production of correct forms. If one lesson can make such a difference, it could be a valuable addition to a syllabus, particularly when the importance of this grammatical point. Further, if it can be shown to work for other populations, this approach may prove to have a wider positive impact on the understanding of many EFL and ESL students.

One major emphasis of this report is that the lesson, as just one lesson, is able to have a significant impact on students' subsequent performance. This means that for many classes, it may be quite practicable to insert it at some point into the syllabus. However, that does not mean that it needs to be restricted to one lesson. Parts 5 and
6 of the lesson plan (Appendix 2) are, in fact, recommended additional reading and grammar dictation exercises (not a part of the plan studied here), which could be introduced in subsequent lessons to enhance and supplement the points learned in the main lesson. They also need not take up much time from the syllabus, perhaps thirty minutes each, and future research may show that they, too, improve performance still further. Perhaps with a combination of refinements in the present lesson plan and the development of appropriate follow-up exercises, this approach to the teaching of the articles could prove to be yet more effective.

**Further Research**

One major advantage to observing the effects of this particular lesson is that the target language will naturally occur in the participants’ work both before and after the lesson. This offers the possibility of collecting large amounts of additional data without interfering with the students’ normal syllabus or learning behavior, and in ways quite different, perhaps, from the ones used in this study.

Studies could be done on a larger scale to verify the findings of this study as is, both in similar populations to those studied here, and to others, such as high school students. Additionally, it could be of great value, as suggested above, to discover if the suggested supplements to the lesson, or others, would produce even better results.
APPENDIX 1. Cloze Pretest and Posttest for University Groups

It was .......... warm evening, and CIA agents Smith and Jones were sitting in .......... back seat of their car. Jones had bought .......... hamburger from .......... nearest convenience store, and was eating it. His soda can was on .......... driver’s seat. Smith was smoking .......... cigar. .......... car smelled really bad.

.......... agents were watching .......... house, waiting for .......... foreign spy to arrive from Europe. .......... sky was clear, and .......... moon was shining. .......... house was large and old, and it had .......... large balcony over .......... front door. They looked at .......... house carefully. There was .......... light on in .......... living room, but .......... front door was dark. .......... agents had seen no one for two or three hours, but they had seen .......... man go into .......... house earlier in .......... day.

Jones said, ‘I think there’s .......... secret radio in .......... box. Maybe they are using .......... radio to contact their agents!’

Smith and Jones got out of .......... car very quickly, leaving .......... car key on .......... driver’s seat. They went to .......... blue car and released .......... air from .......... tires to stop .......... spy from escaping. Then, they went to .......... back of .......... house. ‘Let’s look for .......... window we can open. They found one, and climbed quietly inside. It was dark, but they soon knew that they were in .......... kitchen. ‘Oh. Good!’ said Jones, ‘Maybe I can find .......... can of cold beer in .......... fridge.’ ‘Shut up!’ hissed Smith, ‘He will hear you!’ Then, they heard .......... noise upstairs, so they crept silently up .......... stairs to see where .......... man was. There were three doors on .......... second floor. They headed for .......... nearest door and opened it slowly. Suddenly .......... bright light flashed on in their faces and they heard .......... loud voice! ‘Freeze! I have .......... gun!’ They could not see behind .......... light. ‘Stand still!’ said .......... voice, ‘and be quiet!’ There was silence for five seconds. Then they heard .......... small sound from behind .......... light, and again, ‘Freeze! I have - - - - ’ ‘HUH?’ said Jones. ‘It’s .......... tape recorder!’ said Smith, ‘Let’s go!’ But they were too late. .......... spy had disappeared. They heard .......... car engine start outside, and they rushed to .......... front door. .......... blue car was still outside, but their car was gone!

APPENDIX 2. The Full Lesson Plan
C.R. ACTIVITIES FOR ‘A’ AND ‘THE’
Note: Sections 1-4 will likely take 80 ~ 90 minutes.

1. Noticing/Discovery Section

a) Singular entities
CLASS: Provide the following examples:
- The world is round.
- The sun is hot.
- “Look at the sky.”
- In the future we shall all have robots in our homes.

ELICIT FOR CLASS DISCUSSION - Explain why they all use the particle ‘the’.
Teacher can help by asking:
If you used these expressions, who would understand what you are talking about?
Anyone, because everyone knows what you are talking about.

b) Deictic Reference and Superlatives
GROUP OR CLASS DISCUSSION: Provide the following examples:
Verbal interactions -
- A: “Be careful! The floor is wet.” B: “Thanks.”
- A: “Please close the door.” B: “OK.”
- A: “I’ll meet you at the station.” B: “OK. See you there.”
- A: “Where’s Wendy?” B: “She’s in the kitchen.”
- A: “Pass me the kettle, please.” B: “Sure!”
A: “What time is the last bus?”  B: “Ten forty-five.”
A: “The guy standing by the door is watching us!”

Teacher can help by asking:
In these cases, who knows precisely what or who is being discussed?
(BOTH, and the key is in the shared information IN THE SITUATION
deictic reference)

Possible samples of written discourse –
- John was in his garden, sitting on the grass.
- Stan parked his car in front of his house, and crossed the road.
- There are gift shops and restaurants on the first floor. (On a hotel’s web site.)

Teacher can help by asking:
Why is ‘the’ definite in these cases? Because the reader can readily imagine the one item referred to, since there would likely only be one in each situation.

GROUP OR CLASS DISCUSSION: Provide the following examples:
- Mt. Fuji is the highest mountain in Japan.
- A: “I need the cheapest film you sell.”  B: “Here you are, Sir.”
- A: “The guy who was standing by the door is following us.”

Teacher can help by asking:
What makes these definite? The superlative defines each one for both interlocutors, and the defining relative clause limits the man to one for both interlocutors.

c) Anaphoric Reference - Noticing

GROUP OR CLASS DISCUSSION: Look at the passage below, and explain the reasons for using ‘a’ and ‘the’ with each noun or noun phrase.

Teacher may elicit how, in addition to examples similar to those studied above, some of the ‘the’ noun phrases refer to previously occurring ‘a’ noun phrases.

(Potentially difficult vocabulary is italicized.)

HANDOUT –

*Detectives* Black and White had a big problem. There was a gangster … with a gun *pointed* at them! They were in a bar in downtown Chicago. The bar was almost empty, although the street outside was full of people. Black was reading a newspaper and White had a beer. The gangster was standing at the front door, and he did not look friendly. ‘Am I the guy you were looking for, officers?’ said the gangster. Joey Stun was the most dangerous gangster in the city. White slowly put the glass on the table, watching the man with the gun. Meanwhile, behind the newspaper, Black quietly switched on his radio to get help. ‘Uh, Hi, Joey! It’s a nice day, isn’t it?’ said White, nervously. ‘Shaddup! I don’t care about the weather! We are going for a nice little trip to the ocean! I’m going to give you a swimming lesson, with concrete boots!’ said
the gangster, ‘Hurry up! Get up and go through the kitchen!’ ‘Can we get a drink before we go?’ said Black. ‘No way!’ shouted Joey. Suddenly, they heard a siren. The noise was getting louder. The detectives looked out of the nearest window. There was a patrol car about one block away. Joey pushed the detectives out the back door of the bar and into his car. White sat behind the steering wheel. He hit the gas, and the car was gone.

2. Explicit Review and Discussion

CLASS DISCUSSION: Teacher needs to clarify these questions with the class, hopefully by elicitation.

‘The’ is for…?
‘A’ is for…?

The point to be established when we are writing or talking is ‘WHAT DO WE WANT TO TELL OUR LISTENER /READER WHEN WE CHOOSE ‘A’ OR ‘THE’? DO WE WANT TO SAY THAT HE/ SHE ALREADY KNOWS ABOUT THIS - IS IT OBVIOUS, OR ARE WE INTRODUCING NEW INFORMATION?

When writing or speaking we can add information indirectly with our use of ‘a’ or ‘the’. For example, if in our writing or speaking, we say ‘Mike went to the park and sat under the tree,’ it indicates that it is a very small park! Why?

3. Noticing - Grammaticality Judgment - Find the errors.
INDIVIDUAL, PAIR, OR GROUP TASK: (This is a contrived, simplified text with limited pronoun use to minimize interference with the target point.)

HANDOUT –
Underline the errors, and circle the correct uses of the and a.

Kelly was a secretary in the small town in America. She was at home and she was having the bad day. She had a headache because she had been to the party the night before. She sat in a kitchen, and she drank the cup of coffee. She turned on the TV and began to watch. There was a program about the man who was eating a big, fat hamburger. Kelly felt ill, so she found a remote control and changed to a new channel. On the new channel there was the aerobics program. Kelly picked up a phone and called her boss, but he was not in an office.

4. Further Noticing - Enhanced Input Text - Progression Towards Definite from Indefinite

Students are to read a text and look out for examples of this progression.

Since students will also be exposed to the use of pronouns, ‘it, one, they, them, some’, this complication needs to be noted. Then students can observe collocation of pronouns with their antecedents. This is further to the ‘detectives passage, but observation, rather than discovery.
A real joke from the internet: -

In Las Vegas, a young woman walked up to a Coke machine and put in a coin. A Coke came out of the machine. The woman looked amazed and ran away to get some more coins. She returned and started putting lots of coins in, and of course the machine continued popping out the soda cans.

Another customer walked up behind the woman. He watched her for a few minutes before stopping her and asking if he could use the machine.

The woman shouted in his face: "Go away! Can't you see I'm winning?"

A true story from the internet: -

There is a real story from a small American town, like the hit movie "Home Alone."

In this story, while 13-year-old Ryan Hendrickson was home alone, a guy tried to break into his house. Ryan was watching a TV program, when he heard a noise. It was not loud, but he knew something was happening.

"I ran to the closet and got a baseball bat," Ryan said. "I went into the dining room with the bat, and I saw a guy cutting one of the windows with a knife. He put his left hand in first, and I was waiting for his right hand to come in. When he came through, I took the bat and I hit him as hard as I could. He dropped the knife and ran away. Then I called 911."
The lesson will probably take close to ninety minutes until this point. However, it is recommended that a little post-CR review/reinforcement take place in a following lesson by augmenting with exercises such as the ones below.

5. Optional Extended Reading Exercise
PAIRS/INDIVIDUALS: Students identify and justify instances of articles in various selected reading passages. (‘An’ can be included here without much comment.)

Three possible samples with simple examples of anaphoric reference can be found in:
- Reading Keys, Bronze, Book A, p. 52. (Craven, 2003)

6. Optional Production Exercise - Grammar Dictation (Dictogloss)
In a Dictogloss, the T reads the passage TWICE ONLY at a fair speed, with some pauses (faster than a dictation, slower than natural). This allows Ss to get the gist and write down substantial parts of the text, but not enough to be clear. Then Ss work in groups to recreate the story with good lexis, grammar, etc. Even if their final work is not word for word the same, this is not important. The purpose is to have them use their linguistic knowledge and common sense to reproduce the story. We hope they will get the articles right, especially.

Vocabulary: approach clerk arrest
A man with a shotgun and a supermarket shopping cart walked into a bank. He shouted at the customers to lie down on the floor, and then he approached a window. The robber told the clerk at the window to give him all the money in her drawer. She handed him the money, but then she pushed him. He fell back into the cart, and the cart rolled across the bank and out the front door! A police car arrived and the officer arrested the man.

n.b. The above passage was taken from Grammar Dictation (Wajnryb, 1990), and modified for the purpose of this lesson with the permission of the author.

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References


Title
Factors Affecting the Integration of Information and Communications Technology in Teaching English in Taiwan

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Abstract
As language and technology are two major focuses of educational reform in Taiwanese higher education, Taiwanese teachers of English as a foreign language have to cope with the challenge of technological and pedagogical shifts occurring in the teaching profession. A basic interpretative qualitative study was employed to understand how and why teachers implemented the information and communications technology into their language instruction and to explore the issues and barriers that teachers encountered when trying to incorporate modern technology into their instructional practice. The findings imply that continuous professional development involving technology integration, specifically for language teachers, should be thoroughly planned. New policies regarding vision and goals of implementation should be made clear to teachers.

Key words: Information and communications technology; computer-assisted language learning; continuous professional development; Internet use
1. Introduction

With the new economic order and advances in computer technology, modern communication has greatly increased international contact. This increasing global contact has also affected the academic and business communities. It has also undoubtedly affected language teaching and learning (Warschauer, 2000), especially English. English has become a global language for international communication (Crystal, 2003). Particularly because of Internet use growth, many more people can now read, write, speak, and listen to English via the computer. Accordingly, the Internet has become a tool for language teaching and learning (Fotos, 2004).

The use of modern technology in teaching languages has been dramatically increasing worldwide over the past decade (e.g., Chen, Belkada, & Okamoto, 2004; O’Dowd, 2003; Pennington, 1999; Toyoda & Harrison, 2002). With the creation of the World Wide Web, it has become possible and feasible for language teachers to make effective use of instructional materials, especially in teaching language and culture (e.g., Belz, 2003; O’Dowd, 2003; Thorne, 2003). Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) programs provide multimedia with video, sound, graphics, and text, which allow learners to be exposed to the target language and the culture. Learners explore the simulated environment with meaningful multimodal forms such as audio and visual input, which facilitates comprehension in listening and reading (Chun & Plass, 1997; Verdugo & Belmonte, 2007). One benefit of using Internet resources is that teachers can easily retrieve the most recent and pertinent information for their students (Moore, Morales, & Carel, 1998). The development of hypertext and hypermedia within the context of the
World Wide Web offers a vast array of resources for both teachers and students to search and access authentic materials.

For the past decade, CALL has drawn the attention of Taiwanese language professionals and many have sought out innovative and alternative ways of using computer technology to enhance students’ learning and to improve students’ English proficiency. The level of increase in numbers of English as foreign language (EFL) teachers involved in CALL can be evidenced by the number of published papers in the proceedings of international symposiums on English teaching held by the English Teachers’ Association, the Republic of China (e.g., Lin, 2003; Shih, 2003).

Teachers are the key persons to implement innovation (Fritz, Miller-Heyl, Kreutzer, & MacPhee, 2001) for educational enhancement (Ghaith & Yaghi, 1997). Teachers, however, need to develop technological literacy as well as pedagogical knowledge when applying technology. For successful implementation of the information and communications technology (ICT) into language instruction, it is important to understand how and why teachers use ICT and to explore the issues and barriers that teachers encounter when trying to incorporate ICT into their instruction.

2. Theoretical foundation

In acknowledging the trend toward using the computer technology in language instruction, language teachers will realize that they will soon likely need to undertake various new job responsibilities (Fotos and Browne, 2004) such as putting their courses online, evaluating CALL materials and web sites (Reeder, Heift, Roche, Tabyanian, Schlickau, & Golz, 2004; Susser & Robb, 2004), taking part in
campus-wide CALL projects/inter-institutional partnership (O’Conner & Gatton, 2004; Opp-Beckman & Kieffer, 2004), and incorporating and managing multimedia language laboratories (Browne & Gerrity, 2004; Liddel & Garrett, 2004). Teachers, however, vary to a large degree in their experience with and knowledge and skills of computer technology.

Research reports indicate that factors influencing technology integration by faculty are diverse (Brown, 2000; Sugar, 2002). Ertmer (1999) states that the barriers include organizational and pedagogical concerns, technical and logistical issues, and personal problems such as fear. Rogers’ theory of innovation adoption (1995) consists of five attributes: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. He found that 49 to 87 percent of the variance in the adoption rate of innovation could be explained by these five attributes. Other variables are types of innovation decisions, communication channels, nature of social system, and the extent of change agents’ promotion efforts.

Park (2003) incorporated seven variables from three perspectives in his study. The results showed that computer experience, subjective norm, self-efficacy, relative advantage, and complexity are important predictors of the level of Web-assisted instruction. Time and support, however, indicated no significant effect, which contradicts Park’s qualitative findings. When teachers feel seriously uncertain about performing tasks or have doubts about their performance achievement, they are unlikely to try innovation and they are unwilling to put much time and effort into it (Park, 2003). Limited time and heavy workload may inhibit teachers from implementation.
Teachers want to know if they can integrate the computer technology with education in ways that effectively link with the content of curriculum as well as the different components and stages of the learning process. In one study, teachers expressed a need for understanding the potential of technologies and the appropriate pedagogy for technology integration with regard to the fit of each with their personal philosophies of teaching and learning (Weasenforth, Biesenbach-Lucas, & Meloni, 2002).

Moreover, with the rapid growth of innovative technologies, teachers need to keep abreast of technological innovation so that they can know where to retrieve information and obtain resources and tools (Browne, Maeers, & Cooper, 2000). Modern technologies are not as easy to grasp as traditional technologies were, many of which only required ‘push the button’ skills to operate (Bates, 2001). Therefore, teachers may feel tremendous pressure about mastering the use of computer technologies in the first place and then later may find it difficult to keep abreast of technological changes (Davies, 2003).

Teachers need opportunities to expand their knowledge, to try out innovative methods, to exchange ideas with experts and their peers, and to refine their skills so they may more quickly respond to the new developments in their fields (Browne, Maeers, & Cooper, 2000). Interdisciplinary teams can solve problems together, allow team members to benefit from their colleagues’ ideas and foster the sharing of materials (Johnson & Johnson, 2004).

Teachers are not only concerned about where to retrieve information and resources and how to obtain knowledge and skills about technological innovation. They are also concerned about how
to integrate new technology into instruction and how to take the most advantage of it (Chen, 2003). Most one-time workshops just teach teachers skills using a specific software program without demonstrating good and appropriate teaching strategies and without changing teachers’ behavior (Buckley, 2002; Koehler, Mishra, Hershey, & Peruski, 2004). Therefore, teachers are likely to feel inadequate and incompetent with respect to technology integration, and they may feel uncertain about whether it will enhance student learning.

Research reveals that there are a variety of administrative challenges and complicated problems facing teachers in all areas including language instruction in computer technology application. Understanding organizational culture is crucial for institutional change (Finley & Hartman, 2004). Three barriers that keep college leaders from establishing an environment that allows teachers to take advantage of technology resources include the needs for appropriate 1) planning and budgeting for instructional technology, 2) organizational structures and communication, and 3) faculty rewards and incentives (Epper, 2001, p.9).

Epper (2001) pointed out trends and issues underlying the need for faculty instructional development. These include increased technology use due to social and economic influence, flexible approaches to teaching and learning on-demand, a new and different picture of competition in higher education (Flowers, Pascarella, & Pierson, 2000; Kuh & Vesper, 1999; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998), and the potential of technology use to improve teaching and learning (Epper, 2001). As higher education is preparing students for future markets, teachers should be equipped with the necessary knowledge
and skills to meet the needs of the students in the millennium (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998; Smith, 2002) and to follow along with the trends of a global knowledge-economics society.

Recent studies have highlighted many benefits of continuous professional development, including the following:

- Guiding teachers’ understanding of technologies and the potentiality of technology for meaningful instruction (Bullock & Schomberg, 2000; Cavanaugh & Cavanaugh, 2000; Galloway, 2000; Terwindt, 2000)
- Facilitating teachers’ acquisition of technological literacy and skills (Browne et al., 2000; Childress & Braswell, 2000; Slobodina, 2000)
- Assisting teachers’ know-how for retrieving information and garnering resources and tools (Repman, Carlson, Downs, & Clark, 2000)
- Improving teachers’ abilities for monitoring student progress (Hargrave, Foegen, & Schmidt, 2000)

The purpose of the study is to understand how and why teachers implement the information and communications technology into their language instruction and to explore the issues and barriers that teachers encounter when trying to incorporate modern technology into their instruction. A basic interpretive qualitative method was employed to address the following three basic research questions:

1. How do EFL teachers in northern Taiwanese higher education institutions use ICT in their instructional practices?
2. What are their purposes for using ICT in teaching English?
3. What are the factors that influence these Taiwanese EFL teachers in the use of ICT and what are the issues and barriers that these
EFL teachers encounter when trying to incorporate modern technology into their instruction?

3. Method

3.1. The research design

To understand how and why EFL teachers integrate ICT into instruction, basic interpretative qualitative study design (Merriam, 2002) was employed. The process, strategies, and data analysis of this qualitative research are all inductive. The qualitative results can provide rich, contextual understanding of certain findings and strengthen a detailed/in-depth understanding of a certain problem. According to Merriam (2002), the qualitative study is designed to “uncover or discover the meaning people have constructed about a particular phenomenon. The researcher wants to obtain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, an individual, a situation. …They want to know how people do things” (p.19).

Qualitative data collection via interviews serves several purposes: These teachers’ replies allow insight into different levels of ICT and allow the researcher to understand how these teachers have applied ICT, and whether the results corroborate the findings from previous studies. Their replies also allow the researcher to explore whether there are other factors that influence teachers’ use of ICT (than those included in the literature) and to determine teachers’ purposes for using ICT. The purpose of the qualitative study is to explore “what” factors influence these teachers’ use of modern technologies and to explain “how” and “why” they use these technologies. The researcher conducted interviews to obtain information that is more complete and
to gain an in-depth understanding of the issues (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003).

3.2. Participants
Non–random samples were selected purposefully in this qualitative study. Participants were located through the researcher’s professional networks. Twenty-two teachers were interviewed. Most of the teachers interviewed were referred to the author by other teachers based on their use of computer technologies as a teaching tool and two were known personally to the researcher. These 22 teachers, 11 male and 11 female teachers, were from 16 northern different universities and colleges. Six were from national universities whereas the rest are from private ones (70% of Taiwanese higher education institutions are private). Teachers who extensively use computer technology include those who have taught CALL courses in their institutions or who have publications on the use of computer technology. These teachers may also have their own Web sites or may have received grants for conducting national projects or institutional research related to technology application into instruction.

3.3. Research instrument
The interview protocol. An interview protocol was prepared for the interviews with selected teachers. That is, specific questions (e.g., What is your purpose of integrating the information and communications technology into your instruction?) for the interview were prepared prior to the interviews. The interview protocol was developed based on reviewing literature and on the research questions.
The researcher consulted experts in the fields of both language and technology to revise the interview protocol (see Appendix).

3.4. Data collection and analysis

The interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed verbatim, and then translated into English for data analysis. All teachers except one were interviewed in person. The interviews lasted from an hour to an hour and a half. Due to a time conflict, one teacher was interviewed by telephone during a call lasting forty-five minutes.

As the study intends to discover and understand the meaning that the use of information and communications technology has for the participants, data were gathered to build concepts and theories instead of being tested in a positivist study. According to Merriam (2002), “Typically, findings inductively derived from the data in a qualitative study are in the form of themes, categories, typologies, concepts, tentative hypotheses, and even substantive theory” (p.5). Therefore, the data are analyzed to identify whether there are recurring patterns or common themes among these participants. An initial analysis was done after each interview. By using a constant comparative method, data were coded and recoded until themes emerged (Yin, 2003).

4. Findings

A number of themes and patterns emerged from these 22 interviews. These themes/patterns include how teachers use ICT, their purposes for using ICT; the parameters influencing their use of ICT; and the issues and barriers aiding or detracting from their integration of ICT into their instructional practices. Pseudonyms are given to them for confidentiality purposes and to ensure privacy of these teachers.
4.1. Research question 1: How do EFL teachers in northern Taiwanese higher education institutions use ICT in their instructional practices?

4.1.1. Online materials and Internet resources supplement classroom instruction and expand students’ learning opportunities outside the classroom.

Most teachers only use Internet resources as a source of supplementary materials. These teachers think class time is limited and they feel they do not teach enough during the class period. They want students to have more opportunities to learn and obtain more knowledge and skills and they expect students to practice more after class, especially for skills such as pronunciation learning. As classes at Taiwanese higher education institutions generally are very large, large class size can hamper language instruction, and these teachers agree that the Internet provides a good tool for teachers to expand students’ learning outside their classroom. This flexibility not only applies to expanding where the students can learn but also provides the flexibility for engaging a broader spectrum of students such as different proficiency levels and students who are away from class because of extended illness.

Sue-chin said, “My online learning materials are mainly supplementary. I wanted to use the Internet to provide more opportunities for my students to learn. I use PowerPoint to present materials and interactive exercises making tool, Hot Potatoes to create exercises and activities. I put all my handouts and notes online for my conversation class students to preview and review.”
Tsun-hsiang thinks that modern technology provides good practice for students’ listening comprehension. As a bonus, students like to use the Internet because they get to discuss things with it. Chung-hsiang noted that, “By using the Internet, the teacher provides many opportunities for students to learn beyond the classroom and after class. It is self-directed learning for students, unlimited by time and space. In addition, the fixed time in the classroom may not be suitable for those who don’t feel well or who are physically tired.

Hsin-Yin sometimes makes use of online discussion board. She stated, “I spent additional time explaining theories and more clearly expositing writing strategies. By putting my materials on the Web, I provide my students more opportunities to review after class. Information and communications technology also provides chances for those who don’t feel well and did not come to class to learn.”

4.1.2. Internet resources are applied to the listening aspects of the language instruction curriculum.

These teachers use the Internet resources most to develop their students’ listening skills. While many teachers would agree that language learning usually starts from listening, in the past they often had to rely on reading as an instructional method due to large class sizes. As a result, students often did not get many chances to listen and speak. Many online listening materials allow students to practice listening. Most teachers take advantage of online broadcasts as listening materials. Free recording software is also available for teachers to edit audio files.

Yu-Chu, who earned a degree in Instructional Systems Technology in the US described her classes as follows: “I bring my students in
my listening class to the world by using ICT. In the beginning, I guided my students to resources links. I showed them how to find an online feature with the famous Taiwanese film Director Li Ann’s complimentary remarks when he received an award. This feature was not available on domestic broadcasting stations. After a few such demonstrations, my students began exploring the Internet by themselves. I asked them to bring two news items for discussion, each time when class met. I asked my students to share what they have heard along with their opinions, with their classmates. Students can listen to the news they chose as many times as needed, based on their learning pace. I encouraged students to listen to CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System) news, which is free. Before listening to CBS news, students are introduced to an online listening resource called ‘Randall’s ESL Cyber Listening Lab,’ which features three listening comprehension levels. They gradually are able to listen to CBS, which requires a higher level of listening comprehension.”

Jung-shan, an active Web-user said, “In my listening course, I built a self-learning virtual environment for my students for these reasons. First, class-time is limited; students only meet once a week for two hours. Second, classroom instruction is less interactive. Third, my class-size is large and fourth, there is a broad variation in students’ proficiency levels. Students need a lot of time doing self-learning to improve themselves. So, I have taken advantage of the instructional platform that my university provided and put all my materials on it. Students can learn anytime and at their own pace. They can listen as many times as they want to a session that I might have time to play only once in class.”
4.1.3. **ICT-based instruction is primarily in the experimental phase.**
The teachers I interviewed also incorporate ICT into curricular areas other than listening. Most teachers classify their current instructional phase as experimental. For example, Tsun-hsiang uses a voice board for his students to record their speech which he then posts on the Web to share with the other classmates. Another teacher, Chung-cheng, uses a discussion board to teach translation. He asks his students to exchange ideas via this board before they do translation assignments. Still another teacher, Wan-ju, applies online analytical tools in a graduate course in which students analyze journals and do corpus analysis. These teachers are interested in incorporating the available Internet tools and resources to create online learning activities on their own. While they have not evaluated the effectiveness of students’ learning outcomes, these teachers are implementing strategies to actively engage their students in learning.

4.1.4. **Blended teaching is a trend.**
Language teachers are increasingly experimenting with English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses with blended teaching, to see if this is an effective method for teaching foreign languages.

For one model in blended teaching, every other week students alternately complete online lessons or attend classes. A few teachers have already begun using blended teaching in their institutions for the convenience of evening and weekend students. These students are nontraditional students who have a full-time job in addition to attending classes. Therefore, blended teaching meets the need of these students. Chia-chin said that she has done this for two years and so far students are quite satisfied. Her students highly value the
convenience of this type of teaching. However, Chia-chin does not think blended teaching is necessary for daytime students because they are full-time students, so she prefers to see them face-to-face, and often.

Wan-ju said that he was, “…teaching an English for Academic Purposes course, which is a blended teaching for writing course offered for pre-service English majors of the graduate school. Students analyze journals and do corpus analysis. Both online and textual materials are used for the course. They alternately learn in different settings – mostly in a regular classroom and sometimes in the computer lab. While staying in the computer lab, students do some online activities.”

4.2. Research question 2: What are their purposes for using the ICT in teaching English?

Just as the teachers interviewed use the information and communications technology differently, they also use modern technologies for different purposes.

4.2.1. Enhance students’ motivation and interest

Most teachers try innovative teaching to increase students’ interest in learning and enhance their motivation. Tsun-hsiang and Chung-cheng are two good examples. In Chung-cheng’s translation course, he asks students to discuss their assignments via a discussion board, whereas in Tsun-hsiang’s listening & speaking course, he asks students to record their speech on different topics via a voice board each week.

For Chung-cheng’s translation class, he posts assignments and sets up a discussion area online each week. Chung-cheng feels the
increased interaction of the discussion board breaks with tradition and makes his translation course more interesting. He said, “My major motivation of using online tools was that most students did not enjoy translation at all in the past. Teachers would often hear that translation is a boring course. My students love discussing their ideas before they do translations on their own.”

Chia-hsiang noted that, “It is excellent that students feel at home with digital resources and that using these resources motivate them in learning…They are also motivated because they can help me with hardware and software. They are often very expert. They help me make proper choices in popup windows and they help me adjust displays. They also find and download helpful software support often during lessons. When they can help with technical support, it builds classroom affiliation.”

4.2.2. Provide variety for instruction and commitment to continuous innovation

Innovative teachers would use any strategies, try any methods, and apply any media to be creative in their instruction. So, most teachers stated that they use ICT to provide variety. Yu-Chu said, “I view the computer technology as a tool to provide variety for my students.” In addition, Tsun-hsiang noted that, “I continually look for innovative ways to use ICT in my instruction.”

Ting-fung stated, “Teaching is art and vivid instruction is necessary.” However, one senior teacher recognized the trend in using modern technology in instructional practices but still doubted whether such innovations would affect students’ learning.
4.2.3. **Provide authentic, updated, and multimedia instructional materials**

Audio-visual aids are important for language teaching and learning. Hyperlinks allow the integration of graphic, audio, visual, and text materials, which facilitates teaching culture and has brought convenience for language teaching and learning such as listening and reading. Teachers can easily take advantage of many authentic materials offered on the World Wide Web. Tsung-hsiang feels the Internet provides good resources for listening and speaking teachers. He stated, “While traditional textbooks may be out of date after only a year or so and getting an update may be slow, Internet broadcasts are current, authentic, and multimedia.”

Chia-hsiang realizes the benefits of ICT use: autonomous learning, real, comprehensible, easy to use, and providing cultural understanding. Therefore, he thinks ready-made teaching materials to accompany online materials might be good. He also expressed the need for more knowledge about ICT use and more training about copyright laws and sharing online.

4.2.4. **Develop students’ autonomous learning and lifelong learning**

Autonomous learning has been an issue in education in Taiwan for a long time, and has caused heated debate. This is because in the past keen competition for higher education kept Taiwanese students under pressure to study. When students only value learning as a means to an end, gaining access to higher education, they may be less likely to pursue any type of self-directed learning on their own. Also the long history of this “examination system” society has resulted in test-oriented instruction and many students study solely for placement.
Because the Internet allows ubiquitous instant access to information and communication, many teachers look forward to its use in promoting students’ autonomous learning.

Ming-jen integrates ICT into his instruction because of his teaching philosophy. Ming-jen said, “Cultivating students’ interest in learning and improving their skills in self-learning are extremely important. As class time is always limited, teachers may have difficulty promoting students’ habits of self-learning, especially when there are many students in each class. How much effort students put into learning outside the class and how much time they spend practicing are my main concerns. Therefore, I use ICT as a tool for indicating students’ self-learning habits after class. I hope by providing various links for resources on the Internet, students can construct their own knowledge by self-exploring and self-discovering.”

Lifelong learning has been another long-term goal in Taiwanese higher education. Currently, many institutions encourage teachers to put their courses online so that more adults can return to colleges for further education. Therefore, institutions either purchased course management software or created their own instructional platforms to prepare for these curriculum changes. So, most interviewed teachers got a head start integrating online learning into their current instructional practices. The information and communications technology should allow continuing education goals to be easily reached in the near future.

4.3. Research question 3: What are the factors that influence these Taiwanese EFL teachers in the use of ICT and what are the
issues and barriers that these EFL teachers encounter when trying to incorporate ICT into their instruction?

4.3.1. Teacher training

Teacher training is crucial for technology integration into language instruction. Those who obtained a technology-related degree felt that it is much easier for them to know where the resources are and to know how to use them, compared to other EFL teachers. Yu-chu said, “I don’t think the creation of online activities and online materials is time consuming, partly because my educational background has prepared me and partly because I did not ask everything to be perfect.”

Ming-jen believes that most teachers in his university would like to take advantage of computer technology to assist with their instruction, but the barriers are education and resources. He doesn’t like the word “barriers.” He prefers “thresholds.” He explained, “I believe that to be able to use and understand technology is the learning threshold, whereas to obtain the technology is the money and energy threshold. As long as they can pass these thresholds, I feel teachers will use technology for teaching. This is also a process of education for teachers.”

Currently, most institutions regularly offer workshops for teachers to familiarize with the course management software they purchase or design. Teachers can use these tools for editing their materials and publishing them online. They encourage teachers to put their materials online to prepare for the long-term goal of institutional development. These innovative teachers are able to make use of these facilities and integrate ICT into their current instructional practices in
various curricular areas. Only recently a course titled ‘Computer-assisted Language Learning’ was contained in the pre-service teacher-training program at most universities and colleges. Accordingly, CALL is new to most EFL teachers. Most in-service teachers did not receive IT/CALL training while they were in their college pre-service training program. These teachers should rely on handy resources to create their technology lessons.

4.3.2. Preparation for long-term goals of their institution

Digitalization of courses seems to be a common long-term goal for higher education institutional development in Taiwan. In the short term, funds are available in the institutions because administrators see online learning as a way to boost their enrollments. However, there is lack of long-term planning and goal setting for technology integration into classrooms. Teachers try to match up their instructional methods with school policies; however, they are unsure whether modern technology implementation is effective or whether it enhances student learning.

Wan-ju stated, “I feel that resources are adequate in my university. However, I wonder about the long-term planning for technology integration. In my view, the school IT personnel have little sense of systematic management when they purchased a new piece of technology. Their response has been to demonstrate the new items to the teachers even though the teachers receive help from their assistants. I have seen many hardware types and platforms come and go and I become reluctant to keep abreast with the changes. Now I just keep up with the materials I use.”
4.3.3. Teachers recognizing the trend in integrating ICT into instruction

All interviewed teachers, including a senior teacher who does not use the computer, recognize the trend toward the use of computer technology in instruction. From a practical standpoint, in dealing with today’s students, most teachers said that they should try to keep abreast of modern technologies. In doing so, they will realize the virtual world facing today’s students and they will understand more about that world even though teachers themselves may not use ICT in their instruction.

Yu-chu agrees that using technology is a trend and feels that future classrooms will be all equipped with modern technological equipment and Internet access. She stated, “Most students today have grown up online and are quite comfortable in using ICT. I did not believe the myth that ICT-based instruction would absolutely improve students’ learning outcomes. I just think it is natural for students to learn this way.”

Chih-hung’s experience in the contemporary world has shown him that technology is a catalyst for change. He has sensed the changes information and communications technology have brought to language teaching and expects the requirements for teachers to increase more and more. He stated, “In case universities require language teachers to take on more responsibilities in the future, I will be more prepared.”

4.3.4. Availability
The idea that there are abundant resources and tools on the Internet, so there is no reason why teachers should not take advantage of them, influences teachers’ use of information and communications technology. Once these teachers discovered that ICT can provide resources and tools for them to enrich their instruction, they immediately started applying them.

Tsun-hsiang took several technology-related courses and found them to be quite useful, he noted, “Teachers should take advantage of various types of resources and tools to assist their instruction and enhance students learning since we are not native speakers of English. ICT provides good resources for teachers teaching listening and speaking.”

Ming-jen also thinks teachers should absolutely take advantage of ICT. He asserted, “With the Internet, I can upload multimedia materials to my website for my students to retrieve. It’s simple, fast, convenient, and provides the best materials. Suppose I found a good book or an article that is free, I definitely would want to share such a resource with my students. With a pdf file, I might only spend three minutes uploading such a book.”

4.3.5. Relative advantage and environmental concerns.
Class sizes are usually large in Taiwanese educational settings, so the use of hard-copy documents has long been a burden for institutions, teachers, and the environment. The advantages of electronic documents concluded from the interviews are: 1) Teachers can save paper for notes and handouts; 2) Teachers can share good materials without having to make lots of copies; 3) Providing links to some materials rather than supplying the materials themselves may
circumvent possible copyright infringement. Chih-hung, a part-time teacher, stated, “I find using ICT for instruction is good for the environment because it saves paper. It’s also good for teachers because it saves us the work and expense of preparing handouts for large classes.”

4.3.6. Time and workload

Most teachers said that it was really time-consuming to create online learning materials and activities except the two teachers who used materials created by publishers. One teacher said that anything related to computer use takes time. Most interviewed teachers don’t mind taking time creating materials or learning new tools, yet teaching load, service, and research take their time. Accordingly, they are hesitant to invest more time on online instructional aids if they are not sure that the activities and materials are effective.

Tsun-hisang spent many hours creating online learning activities. He said, “I believe that there must be a voice board when there is a message board. So, I spent considerable time searching for such a tool. The first one I found was so expensive that I couldn’t afford it. So, I kept on searching. Finally, I found a voice board that was free and allowed 10 gigabytes of storage. Then I spent much more time evaluating it and uncovering its advantages and disadvantages. Overall, it works fine for my students.”

Hsin-yin stated, “I have a great foundation for using technology in teaching, and it may be easier for me than for other teachers who lack my background. I still think preparing the materials is time consuming, especially for a new course. For example, converting materials to html files and getting permission to upload my materials.
While textbooks generally provide some activities and exercises for teachers, when I use the computer, I have to design my own worksheets and get them into digital form.”

Sue-ching has a positive attitude toward using information and communications technologies and intends to create materials for each of her courses and to develop more online materials. However, she has dropped back on attending workshops during the past two years. She stated, “I don’t have time to practice the skills I learn. If I don’t immediately apply the skills I learned in the workshop, I will easily forget. In addition, I am not sure of the software taught in the workshop is related and applicable to language teaching. I do not have time to invest on unnecessary training.”

Chih-hung believes most teachers have good intentions and would have better capabilities if their colleges offered some courses for teaching the faculty. However, he stated, “I know creating online materials takes a lot of time from my personal trials. Once I created a course but had to abandon it in the middle because the time required for typing the materials and converting the audio files was prohibitive. So developing quicker ways to create online materials and reducing teachers’ work loads are both issues.”

Chia-hsiang stated, “I’ve been using a lot of materials from the Internet lately and I really want to use it more, but the problem is time and information. If I had more access to training and convenient facilities, I would probably use it every day, whether in writing or listening/speaking class.”

*4.3.7. Feelings of uncertainty*
Teachers’ feelings of uncertainty will hinder them from using technology. For example, the unforeseen difficulties from technologies have been a concern for most teachers. Sue-chin stated, “My university is trying hard to meet the needs of its teachers. However, there are still limitations and we have problems with hardware and hackers that are difficult to control. The server doesn’t have enough capacity for teachers to put their language learning materials online, and the network often goes down unexpectedly. The network also tends to crash when many students try to turn in assignments at a due date. Teachers can’t rely on the university network too much, because the stability of it is sometimes beyond their control.” Other feelings of uncertainty include worthiness of time and money investment and efforts.

4.3.8. Institutional support
Institutional support in the form of commitment to funding is crucial for curricular reform. Availability and maintenance of infrastructure are only one aspect. The online courses still need to be developed and published. Most institutions have provided minimal financial support so far, providing incentives and grants to teachers for developing e-learning courses. The teachers developing these courses are doing so in addition to their regular course-loads.

Chia-hsiang has found no inherent limitations in using ICT at his university, but barriers exist in good equipment availability in some classrooms. He also needs technical backup, more software and hardware. Above all, he would like to know more about the many technologies such as “Moodle.” When he was asked about the need for workshops, materials, encouragement, colleague discussion, and
so on, he said, “The technology is great in Taiwan. I feel like I am living in a desert when it comes to support. I’m very, very thirsty.”

Ming-jen’s university has incentives for faculty who are interested in creating online learning materials in addition to their regular courses. Faculty who do not already use ICTs as part of their instruction can’t afford to create online learning materials. He stated, “Compared to the effort and time language teachers spend, the funding is insufficient and only a few teachers apply for it. While there are assistants to help edit files and create Web pages for faculty, in reality, the amount of support these assistants provide is dependent on their individual knowledge and skills. Unless the assistants are fairly knowledgeable, language teachers who do not understand how to use the Internet or its tools may have difficulty getting the necessary steps accomplished. For example, getting a tape converted into an .mvw (movie) file.”

4.3.9. Cooperation or team-work

The design of ICT-based language instruction in most institutions is a solitary activity. Only 3 of the 16 universities and colleges that the interviewees are from have cooperative projects. Tsun-hsiang said, “Teachers at my university do not cooperate on projects, so I just worked on his own.” At Chung-cheng’s university, no one incorporated ICT into his or her instruction. Chia-hsiang stated, “Sharing things with others is a good idea. Yet, currently there is little interaction among teachers at my university.”

In contrast, two leading teachers in Sue-chin’s department have embraced integrating technology into their instruction. She said, “These two have initiated several cooperative projects such as the
University Excellence Project sponsored by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and have gotten the other teachers involved. These cooperative projects have motivated the other teachers and gotten them familiar with the basic concepts and skills behind ICT instructional techniques. Those teachers who were influenced by the tech-savvy teachers in their cooperative projects continued to create online materials for their courses later on. The sharing of solutions and breakthroughs during the process is supportive. Therefore, almost half of their teachers engage in Web-based instruction.”

4.3.10. Compatibility
Teachers would like to know if ICT use is applicable to certain course content or what teaching methodologies they can use; this is an area in which additional dialogue would be particularly helpful. Ting-fang figured out her own ways of computer integration, but she pointed out that “To learn technological skills is not enough. I need to have pedagogical knowledge for ICT-integration instruction. I need to know the teaching methodologies and I am curious about which portion of the content is appropriate for incorporation. I think teachers should learn more about the content aspects of teaching for using the computer.”

4.3.11. Workshops focused on technology application in language teaching
Language teachers would like not only to improve their technological literacy but also to empower their pedagogical strategies in application of modern technologies. Ting-fang said that teachers like her who lack technological literacy and knowledge prefer a teacher
development program like one held by the Language Teaching and Testing Center and the Ministry of Education in 2002 and 2003, which mainly focused on technology integration in language instruction. She found a course like this she had taken to be quite beneficial and motivational. She would prefer similar programs to be continued and to be held every half a year or every year at least.

She further said, “By gaining information on technology in frequently held programs or workshops, teachers could keep abreast of modern technology upgrades, and they could learn from other teachers in the field. Such programs could offer opportunities to exchange ideas with other teachers who have similar interests, and could offer opportunities for teachers to work together.”

Chung-hsiang’s’s university provides workshops for teachers to learn some online tools. He made such remarks as, “I think those tools are generally for teachers in all disciplines, not specifically for language teachers. They provide Breeze using PowerPoint. I feel PowerPoint is not suitable for language teaching because there is no real interaction. I would prefer training for convenient, easy-to-use software that is suitable for language instruction and suitable for teachers with limited computer knowledge like many teachers in my university. If such software is unavailable, software developers and language teachers should work together to create software for language instruction.”

5. Conclusion

In summary, ICT integration instruction is primarily in the experimental phase and half of these interviewed teachers use ICT to try out innovative methods in their instruction. Most use Internet
resources as a source of supplementary materials and several have started trying blended teaching for a change of curriculum. While these teachers have unique strategies for different curricular areas, most use online resources to develop their students’ listening skills. They take advantage of the Internet to provide authentic, updated, and multimedia instructional materials. Their ICT integration instruction aims to enhance students’ motivation and interest and to assist students in developing autonomous and lifelong learning.

Nevertheless, there are various issues, barriers, and challenges facing these interviewed teachers, or even today’s language teachers. Therefore, most teachers expressed the need for support, particularly continuing professional development, to confront and accept the challenges ahead.

This study clearly shows that only when we begin to provide effective continuing professional development, will we be able to expect fruitful realization of the potential of ICT to improve the quality of learning at higher education institutions. Accordingly, Taiwanese educational leaders and policy makers should develop long-term and adequate funding for ICT integration instruction, including ongoing professional development for teachers. Higher education institutions in Taiwan should place emphasis more on technology integration in the classroom than in distance learning. Administrators should try to understand and meet the needs of language teachers so that they can provide necessary and appropriate support for language instruction. They need to efficiently and carefully consider budget for essential expenditure on hardware and software. While Taiwanese higher education institutions place great emphasis on the language proficiency of college students and
language education, they should also attend to the need of language teachers for knowledge, skills, and instructional strategies using modern technology and for enhancing student learning. Ongoing professional programs or workshops should not be techno-centric only. Pedagogical content technological knowledge (Zhao, 2003) is crucial for the effectiveness of teacher education.

The limitations of the study were the fact that data collection was confined to the teachers referred by other teachers or two of the researcher’s acquaintances. The researcher was also not able to reach some of the active-users in several institutions.

Future research should focus on how teachers evaluate the learning outcomes of their students in using information and communications technology, and should try to gauge how ICT use assists students’ development of autonomous learning.

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Appendix

The Interview Protocol

1. What kind of Web teaching activities do you use? Please describe your instructional use of the Internet?
2. What is your purpose of integrating the Internet into your instruction?
3. What motivates you in using the Internet in your instructional practices?
4. How do you see your role in the use of the Internet?
5. What are your feelings, views about using technology in your existing courses?
6. What are some limitations or barriers for integrating the Internet into instruction at the university? What are the barriers to implementation?
7. What kinds of support do you need or are you interested in? What types of assistance do teachers’ need in order to begin implementation?
8. How do you view today’s students relative to their comfort with and skills in using the Internet?
9. How do you incorporate students’ skills in using technology in your instructional use of the Internet?
10. Please describe how you interact with other teachers in your unit regarding their use of the Internet in instructional uses?
Title
Unplanned Vocabulary Instruction in the Adult EFL Classroom

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Abstract
A large proportion of the direct vocabulary instruction an adult learner will receive in the EFL classroom will be unplanned (McDonald, 2006). Although unplanned vocabulary instruction can provide many of the conditions learning theorists recognise as being necessary for learning to take place, its spontaneous nature means it has certain limitations. The approach that guides such teaching will need to consider these limitations. As unplanned vocabulary instruction can mean diverting time away from the lesson aims, teachers must make difficult ad hoc decisions on how and when to dedicate time to such instances. This article aims to provide teachers with a loose framework to inform such decisions.
Keywords: Vocabulary, methodology, unplanned, instruction, framework

Introduction
Adults EFL learners often remark that they find the sheer volume of unknown vocabulary daunting. Many say that they consider this vocabulary to be the largest barrier to communicating effectively in English. Despite teaching my learners independent vocabulary study strategies, many still wish to receive more direct vocabulary instruction, in a classroom context. Although the limitations of direct vocabulary instruction are recognised (Nation, 2005) in an age of learner centred teaching it may be unwise for the teacher to ignore such requests. Furthermore these requests present opportunities to address genuine gaps in learner knowledge.

Although direct vocabulary instruction is often based on sound methodological principles, these principles are usually designed for planned vocabulary instruction. However the majority of vocabulary instruction in the class will be spontaneous and unplanned. Therefore to address the unique blend of idiosyncrasies and challenges that this type of instruction offers, the methodology employed will need adapting.

To teach unplanned vocabulary effectively the teacher may have to divert valuable time away from the main lesson aims. As this is not ideal, the teacher (or learners) should decide how much time to dedicate to each instance of unplanned vocabulary instruction based on criteria such as the utility and frequency of the word. Furthermore, due to the large degree of word knowledge necessary for productive use of a word, the appropriate level of word knowledge or ‘intra-
lexical factors’ must be offered. How much time and how many factors required could be determined by how new the word is to the learner, or whether the vocabulary is destined for a productive or a receptive use.

Although ‘unplanned vocabulary instruction’ addresses many of the conditions learning theorists recognise as necessary for learning to take place, it is not without its limitations. These limitations should be recognised in order to appeal to a wide range of learning styles. Further measures will also be necessary to ensure recycling and to plan tests. By discussing the aforementioned issues this article attempts to construct a loose methodological framework, which can be used by teachers to guide their practices when giving unplanned vocabulary instruction in the adult EFL classroom.

Planned and unplanned vocabulary instruction

**Recommendation 1: Recognise that UVI in the classroom is important and treat it accordingly.**

Seal (as cited in Wei-Wei, 2003) has divided vocabulary instruction into two main approaches. These he describes as ‘planned’ and ‘unplanned vocabulary instruction’ (PVI and UVI respectively). PVI is understood as vocabulary the teacher knows will be taught before the class or before it is encountered. Conversely, UVI is the rest of the vocabulary the learner encounters within the class. This can be:

- Incidentally or accidentally learned vocabulary
- Words requested by the learners for explanation or expansion of meaning
• Words that the teacher becomes aware may need learner’s attention drawn to

Most of the direct vocabulary instruction in the UK EFL classroom is unplanned (Brown, 1992; McDonald, 2006). No matter how much I plan my vocabulary instruction, I find requests for UVI are frequent occurrences in most classes. Often the success of an activity, or a grammar point, can depend on comprehension of key vocabulary. As The source of UVI and its spontaneity means it is distinct from PVI therefore it needs to be addressed differently by teachers. It is by recognising these differences that we can understand how to effectively teach UVI and adapt our methodology accordingly. Such considerations will better serve the learners’ needs and increase the overall efficacy of direct vocabulary instruction in the classroom.

**How to deal with UVI**

*Recommendation 2: Some vocabulary items will require longer than others to successfully convey meaning. This is especially true if L1 is unavailable. In such instances, and when time allows, consolidate new vocabulary with a productive activity.*

Recognising the improvised nature of these impromptu teaching moments, Seal’s (1991) ‘3C’ method of dealing with UVI is very useful. The three Cs refer to activities the teacher should conduct in order to facilitate learning. These are:

**C1** Conveying of meaning (synonyms, anecdotes, mime, realia, explanation etc)
C2 Checking of meaning to confirm that learners have understood

C3 Consolidating meaning (practice activities in context)

Seal (as cited in Hatch and Brown, 1995) illustrates the 3C method by explaining the word ‘boring’:

C1 — Convey meaning
Teacher: When you go to the movies sometimes the movie is not very interesting, it makes you want to go to sleep. (T puts hand to mouth and yawns.) The movie is very boring. Or sometimes you have a teacher who speaks very slowly and who never makes you laugh and whose lessons make you go to sleep. The teacher is so boring.

C2 — Check meaning
Teacher: (To S1) Do you like boring teachers?
(To S2) Is this lesson boring?
(To S3) Is this book boring?
(To S4) Are you a boring person?
(To S5) Am I a boring teacher?

C3 — Consolidating meaning
Teacher: Turn to the person next to you and ask them if they had a boring weekend. If they say “yes,” Find out why. (General hubbub) Now ask the person next to you what television shows they think are boring. (p.197)
Although useful, this is a very time consuming process. UVI can be impractical and unnecessary as some words simply require less teaching than others. Often a request for UVI may simply represent difficulty of retrieval, and not lack of understanding. During such instances consolidation may be unnecessary. Furthermore, in monolingual classes, if L1 is available, often a simple translation may suffice as conveyance. However, even with the aid of L1, checking of understanding and consolidation may still be necessary. This is especially true for new vocabulary, when such activities may aid memory and promote deeper processing of target language.

However, L1 may not always be available to teachers, i.e. multilingual classes or monolingual teachers. Here other methods of ‘conveyance’ such as flashcards, or realia, will be invaluable, but these may be tricky to produce without planning. Nevertheless, if sufficient IT is provided (internet, Clipart, interactive white board, online dictionaries), simple vocabulary such as concrete nouns can be conveyed by the many images this technology provides. For more complex and abstract vocabulary such as: jealous, society, empathy; or for culturally bound concepts (democracy, toff, a lock in), images alone may not suffice. Here ‘checking’ and ‘consolidation’ become indispensable stages of teaching. Dictionary use, a practice I advocate strongly, can also dispense with the conveyance stage. However, focus on pronunciation and (depending on the word) consolidation may still be necessary for lower level classes.

**Which words to focus on**
**Recommendation 3:** When deciding how much time to allocate to each word, consider how useful it will be to the learner: prioritise words with greater learner utility.

Obviously, word frequency is an important factor when considering how much time to dedicate to UVI. If a lexical item like ‘Kith and Kin’ is requested for clarification, the teacher may rightly consider that due to the low occurrence of such an archaic phrase it does not merit much class time. Word lists like the General Service List or, depending on the teaching context, the Academic Word List, may provide the teacher with accurate frequency information on which to base such decisions. Indeed, with the advent of corpus linguistics, lists can be further divided into spoken and written English. However, consulting such lists may not be practical for the often impromptu situations that UVI presents; here the teacher should rely on intuition.

Moreover, frequency may not be the only factor to consider. A ‘valuable’ word should belong to one of four main categories, adapted from Schmitt (2000, p.142):

1. Frequency – (prioritise high frequency over low frequency words)
2. Technical words – (often low frequency but specific in use)
3. Learner selected words – (UVI)
4. Classroom words – (board rubber, exam, corrections, etc)

The value of a piece of vocabulary may be determined by its membership of one of these categories. Obviously the more
categories a word belongs to the more useful it will be for the learner (Schmitt, 2000). Such information may assist teachers when deciding how much class time to dedicate to UVI.

**Important information to convey in UVI**

*Recommendation 4:* Always offer both oral presentation and written record of new vocabulary, as well as examples of use. If possible identify problem sounds that may aid pronunciation and word recognition.

All words contain intrinsic properties that affect their learnability. These properties, which are related to a word’s form and meaning, are defined by Laufer (1997) as ‘intra-lexical factors’. It is generally agreed that in order to truly ‘own’ a word the learner must have knowledge of the following ‘intra-lexical factors’:

1. **Form** - spoken and written: that is pronunciation and spelling
2. **Word structure** - the basic free morpheme (or bound root morpheme) and the common derivations of the word and its inflections
3. **Syntactic pattern** of the word in a phrase or sentence
4. **Meaning** - referential (including multiplicity of meaning and metaphorical extensions of meaning); affective (the connotations of the word); and pragmatic (the situation of the word in a particular scenario)
5. **Lexical relations** of the word with other words, such as synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy
6. Common collocations (p. 126)

If the learner has access to many of these features, they can serve to disambiguate the target word. The provision of such detailed information, often called ‘Rich instruction’ or ‘Rich scripting’ (McWilliam, 1998) aims to provide a deeper understanding of a word, and make it an ‘accessible vocabulary item’ (Nation, 2001, p.95). However, common criticisms of rich instruction are that there are:

- Too many words to teach
- Too many features of a word to teach
- Other methods exist
- Teaching may not be the best way to assist vocabulary acquisition
- It consumes much of the lesson time (Adapted from Nation, 2001, p.95)

Although these criticisms have some validity, rich instruction can at least be seen to attempt to address the high level of word knowledge that many agree is necessary to really ‘know a word’. Furthermore, I have found that simple teaching techniques can quickly facilitate access to many of these factors:

- Supplying a written record (form) including indication of word grammar i.e. (v), (n), (adj) etc
- Limiting phonemic transcription to problem sounds i.e., vowels, silent ´gh´ or ´kn´, or main stress, can reduce time whilst addressing pronunciation
• Providing an example sentence can supply valuable syntax information
• Providing learners with access to ‘good dictionaries’, and time to use them can empower the learner by allowing them to choose their own level of rich instruction
• Seal’s 3C method addresses most of these factors and due to its versatility it can be extended or adapted to offer collocations or lexical relations

However, the use of such techniques will represent a choice by the teacher of ‘how much time’ they think the new vocabulary warrants: it may also raise the question of ‘when?’

When to provide rich instruction

**Recommendation 5:** Gradually increase the level of rich instruction over various meetings. Avoid learning overload and cross association by limiting the level of rich instruction to manageable increments.

An important factor to consider when determining the level of ‘rich instruction’ is: how new is the word to the learner? Vocabulary learning can be seen as “a cumulative process where knowledge is built up over a series of varied meetings with the word” (Nation, 2005, p.2). This approach considers the likelihood of cross association: a phenomenon of confusion that occurs when learners are
concurrently introduced to poorly known and semantically similar words (Schmitt, 2000, p.147). Therefore, during UVI the teacher should consider if the teaching of lexical sets (left and right, all the rooms of the house, synonyms) or offering numerous collocations is likely to aid or distract the learner. Furthermore the teacher must avoid ‘learning overload’, by not overburdening the learner with too much intra-lexical information at once. These considerations will necessitate the teacher revisiting UVI encountered lexis, in order to build up such knowledge incrementally.

**Receptive vs. Productive Knowledge**

*Recommendation 6:* Determine if the target language is destined for a receptive or a productive use when deciding how much time, or the level of rich instruction, to dedicate to its teaching.

Vocabulary knowledge should be looked at as a continuum between ability to make sense of a word, and ability to automatically access the word (Faerch et al, cited in Laufer, 1997, p.126). By viewing knowledge in these terms the common differentiation of ‘active’ and ‘passive’ or ‘productive’ and ‘receptive’ vocabulary can be seen to be simplistic in nature. However it is a distinction that still can be of great assistance to the teacher. It is recognised that ‘productive’ and ‘receptive knowledge’ (often linked to ability to utilise in conjunction with the ‘productive skills’ i.e. writing and speaking or the ‘receptive skills’ i.e. listening and reading) require different levels of word knowledge (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2000). Speaking requires the greatest knowledge of a word’s features (Nation, 2001) and the ideal
of ‘native speaker perfection’ often requires mastery of all features (Laufer, 1997). Therefore, as the teaching of ‘productive knowledge’ is a more time consuming process, it is advisable that the learner only be burdened with such instruction when it is essential. When only receptive processes are necessary then the teaching of ‘receptive knowledge’ may be both sufficient and time effective (2001, p.24). However, as English is not a phonetic language, the teaching of pronunciation may be said to contribute to both production and recognition of a word and should therefore be addressed whenever convenient.

**UVI vs. Lesson aims**

**Recommendation 7:** If fully addressing UVI jeopardises the lesson aims, prioritise and act accordingly. However, do not be afraid to abandon nonessential lesson aims, if the need for UVI generates new and more relevant ones.

Brown (1992) suggests that a balance must be struck between the UVI occurrence and the success of an activity, meaning that the activity must not be sacrificed for UVI. However this may be an oversimplification and it should be the individual teacher or the learners who decide where time is best spent. Often UVI may present an opportunity for ‘negotiation’ of new learning goals that are of more value to the learner than the originals. This ‘jungle path’ (Scrivener, 1994) method of teaching may appear daunting to the inexperienced teacher, but if used carefully it can provide relevant
and interesting lessons that free the teacher from a dependence on published materials.

**UVI and conditions for learning**

UVI can be seen to facilitate many conditions which are thought to be necessary for language learning to occur.

**Schema theory** – According to lexico-semantic theory words are efficiently learnt by connecting them, in a sort of semantic map, to words that have already been learnt. As the differences in words become apparent, and the number of learnt words increases, the mind is forced to create intricate filing systems to place both old and new words. The design of these systems is thought to be informed by background knowledge or ‘schema’ (Schmitt, 1997, p.28). During PVI the teacher attempts to activate this schema through various teaching techniques; however, during UVI (and especially learner requested UVI) interest in the new lexis may already be generated. Especially during requests, the learner may already have activated, and be drawing on, their schematic knowledge: therefore providing the conditions necessary to locate the new vocabulary.

**Context** – Unlike much PVI, which is often decontextualized, UVI is normally situated in a context: be this an individual’s private context or a shared, class generated context. Furthermore as UVI typically occurs during an activity such as listening, a grammar presentation, or a communication, often context is at the level of the text. This may provide opportunities for learners to engage in inductive reasoning processes or 'guessing from context'.
Clark (as cited in Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997) suggests that two main types of context influence the learning in the following ways:

- Linguistic context, such as the ability of a learner to deduce rules of morphology or lexical occurrence, promotes comprehension.
- Extra linguistic context can further promote understanding by providing the learner with rich input through notions of culture, use of situations, gestures etc (p.28).

The presence or absence of such clues can greatly affect the 'encyclopaedic knowledge’ or ‘schema’ that is drawn on. As Schmitt (1997) states: “context is necessary to activate the full resources of word meaning” (p.28). Furthermore, practice activities, such as those suggested in Seal’s 3C method, provide opportunities for learners to test hypotheses by attempting to place the new vocabulary into a communicative context.

**Recommendation 7:** Attempt to address all requests for UVI in some way to give learners a greater sense of ownership of the learning, and to keep them motivated.

**Motivation and learner centred learning** – It is generally accepted that motivation plays a key role in successful language learning (Lightbown and Spada, 1999; Little, 1991). The occurrences of UVI can be seen to represent the kind of ‘learning centred’ demands for instruction that are generated by learners’ genuine ‘gaps in knowledge’. The ‘noticing’ of such gaps are thought to provide optimum conditions for the intake of new language (Ellis, 1997). Furthermore, addressing learners needs (real or perceived) and
requests for instruction, involves the learner in the decision making. Little (1991) says this provides a sense of ownership which can be positively motivating and thus aid learning.

**Recommendation 8:** Vary techniques of instruction when teaching UVI to appeal to a broader range of learning styles. Cater for learning styles not addressed by UVI, when planning consolidation or recycling activities.

**Learning styles** – It is well documented that many language classes cater for a narrow band of learning styles. This is especially true for UVI, due to an inability to plan an unplanned occurrence. As can be seen from Table 1, UVI, like traditional teaching, heavily favours the Lexical Verbal of Howard Gardener’s learning styles (McKenzie, 1999) and completely excludes Musical and Naturalistic, where prior preparation of materials is essential. Even though individual learners comprise of many learning styles, the need for variety of teaching techniques is paramount to appeal to all types of learner. Moreover, the case for consolidation activities and recycling, where planning is often possible, is further fortified when one considers the difficulty of addressing all learning styles through UVI.
Table 1 showing techniques used for UVI and the learning styles they address

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word for description</th>
<th>Method of conveying meaning</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>LV</th>
<th>ML</th>
<th>BK</th>
<th>MU</th>
<th>ITr</th>
<th>ITa</th>
<th>NT</th>
<th>EX</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wellington boots</td>
<td>Mime</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wink</td>
<td>Facial expressions</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>Draw on board</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Draw a cline from <em>never to always</em> and include <em>often</em></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chase</td>
<td>Get learners to act out</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Paint the town red</td>
<td>Tell personal anecdote</td>
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<td>Campaign</td>
<td>Get learners to deduce from context of text</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Window sill</td>
<td>Point to object</td>
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<td>Exploitation</td>
<td>Explain (with examples)</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Hope</td>
<td>Read out dictionary definition</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Put up with</td>
<td>Translate it</td>
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<td>Café</td>
<td>Show picture in book</td>
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<td>That’ll be the day</td>
<td>Act out a short conversation</td>
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<td>Disc</td>
<td>Learners who know explain to others who don’t</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Catalogue</td>
<td>Learners look up in dictionaries</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Hostage</td>
<td>Create a story using model dolls</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Vase</td>
<td>Play a game (matching etc.)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Give up the ghost</td>
<td>Tell a story which includes the words</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Reduction</td>
<td>Draw a diagram or graph.</td>
<td>X</td>
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| VS = Visual/Spatial, | LV = Linguistic/Verbal, | ML = Mathematical/Logical |
| BK = Bodily Kinesthetic, | MU = Musical, | ITr = |
| ITa = Intrapersonal, | NT = Naturalistic, | EX = |
| Existencial. |   |   |

**Source:** Complied using, Scrivener, 1994; McKenzie, 1999; and Budden, 2005.

**UVI and memory**

**Recommendation 9:** *Keep a record of the UVI as it occurs to enable recycling and test writing, and review the new vocabulary before the end of the lesson. Encourage learners to record their new vocabulary, and if necessary, offer guidance on vocabulary books.*

Like all learning, vocabulary encountered through UVI is only of use if the learner can remember it. Schmitt (2000) claims that the highest risk of forgetting the target word occurs in the first 20 minutes. This suggests that learners could benefit from having their memories refreshed before end of the lesson. However, this practice does not necessarily have to be repetitive or de-motivating. A few basic techniques can breathe life into an essential teaching stage:
• **Productive use** – Learners can write stories, poems, dialogues, funny definitions, quizzes or presentations. They can discuss concepts, grade words, make own flash cards etc

• **Games** – Bingo, hot seat, miming, anagrams, hangman, missing word sentences, humming pronunciation, pelmanism, hyponym tennis etc

• **Vocabulary records** – Learners can be given time at the end of the lesson to transfer the new vocabulary to their own vocabulary books. Learners often require advice on how to layout and complete these records

• **Dictionaries** – Learners can be directed to ‘good dictionaries’ to, remove ambiguity, or choose their own level of rich instruction

Vocabulary should be revisited on multiple occasions, over ever increasing increments to better facilitate memory (Nation, 2001). However, there is often no guarantee that UVI vocabulary will be encountered again. Therefore, the teacher must keep records to plan recycling and to write tests. I have found that a simple list copied from the board at the end of the class and stored in the register is sufficient. However I have observed other teachers using equally effective learner managed methods such as vocabulary boxes or class vocabulary posters.

**Implementing UVI in the classroom**

*Recommendation 10: Recognize that you they already engage in UVI and probably already adhere to many of the recommendations*
proposed herein. Reflect on practices and fine tune them to address UVI most effectively.

Whenever I speak to teachers about UVI, I often discover that the teacher perceives UVI to be a new and extra thing to include in their teaching. Fortunately for them, this is untrue, as most good teachers will already be responding to the ad hoc wants and needs of their adult EFL learners, within each lesson. Furthermore, although teachers claim to limit UVI in favour of lesson aims, in a recent study it was shown that teachers rarely refuse a request for UVI (McDonald, 2006). Moreover this study showed that teachers treat UVI like PVI, affording it a similar amount of time and using a similar amount of techniques to convey meaning. Although this shows that teachers do recognise the importance of UVI, it also shows that teachers are underestimating the characteristics that distinguish it from PVI, and thereby limiting the efficiency of their vocabulary instruction. By recognising the differences of UVI and PVI, and by adjusting their methodology accordingly, teachers can improve the overall quality of their direct vocabulary instruction.

Conclusion
Although direct instruction is not the most efficient method of learning vocabulary, it has an essential place in the classroom. As the majority of vocabulary instruction will consist of UVI, it is sensible to deal with this in an informed manner. Therefore a number of factors, such as frequency, the destined use of the new lexis and appropriate level of rich instruction must be considered before the teacher decides how much time to dedicate to UVI. UVI can offer the
teacher opportunities to address the needs and the wants of the learners and so aid motivation.

Although UVI can provide many of the essential conditions necessary for language acquisition to take place, it is not without its limitations. For this reason, the teacher should keep records of taught lexis in order to plan tests and recycling. Furthermore, UVI addresses a narrow band of learning styles, which may be overcome by careful consolidation or communicative practice activities. Even though most teachers already practice UVI, some improvements may still be made by combining reflective practice with a UVI specific methodology. By using the recommendations herein, it is hoped that the teachers will continue to improve their UVI, and so increase the overall efficacy of direct vocabulary instruction in the adult EFL classroom.

References


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Title
What do we want teaching-materials for in EFL teacher training programs?¹

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Abstract
During the past several decades, scholarly consideration has focused on the concept of teacher knowledge and a variety of reform efforts to rethink both the structure and practices of teacher education to enhance teacher preparation process. As a consequence, the tripartite knowledge base of EFL teacher training is built on the partnership between universities and schools to support student teachers’ language competence, pedagogical knowledge, and teaching competency. Within this framework, one strand of enquiry has focused on the role of teaching materials in EFL teacher education; however, literature reveals few insights into how to evaluate and select teaching materials and sources of knowledge for each component of the knowledge base. In order to address this problem, this paper reviews the knowledge/competency base of EFL teacher training program and the types of input content that support such knowledge/ competency, and suggests some criteria for evaluating
teaching materials according to theoretical/practical underpinnings of teacher education (Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006).

**Key words:** EFL teacher training; teaching materials; materials evaluation

1. Introduction

Input, knowledge, skill, and competency are terms that educators have used over time to specify the essence of ‘what’ teacher education programs provide student teachers with. Two general trends are extensively documented and researched in literature to describe this content: *what* teachers should know to be qualified to teach a subject and *how* they actually learn to teach it. The division between theoretical and practical knowledge is well framed in the distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge (Woods, 1996):

Declarative knowledge is knowledge *about* teaching- knowledge of subject areas and the ‘theory’ of education; procedural knowledge is knowledge of *how* to teach- knowledge of instructional routines to be used in the classroom (MacDonald, Badger, & White, 2001, p. 950).

A number of language educators (Day, 1993; Fradd & Lee, 1998; Ur, 1997; Freeman, 1989, 2002; Morain, 1990) have broadly discussed the definition of professional knowledge and its significant role in EFL teacher education. Central to these discussions is the idea that there is a close connection between the dichotomy of
declarative/procedural knowledge and specification of objectives, content, and outcome of EFL teacher education programs (Lightbown, 1985; Richards & Nunan, 1990; MacDonald, Badger, & White, 2001). Within this framework, one strand of enquiry has focused on the role of teaching materials in developing teachers’ declarative and procedural knowledge (e.g., Borg, 2007; Goker, 2006; Day, 1993; Freeman, 1989, 2002). However, there is a dearth of research into the issue of materials evaluation and selection for teacher education programs. The focus of this paper is to find out more about teaching materials which best suit the knowledge base of EFL teacher education so as to:

• discover the role of teaching materials as sources of knowledge and skills in EFL teacher training programs, and
• suggest some criteria to evaluate such materials for their suitability and beneficiality.

2. The knowledge/competency base of EFL teacher education

During the past several decades, scholarly consideration has focused on the concept of teachers’ professional knowledge and a variety of reform efforts to rethink both the structure and practices of teacher education (Sandlin, Young, & Karge, 1992) to enhance teacher preparation process (Shulman, 1987; Woods, 1996; Fenstermacher, 1994; Valli & Tom, 1988; Verloop, Van Driel, & Meijer, 2001).

Traditionally, teacher education is “characterized by a strong emphasis on theory that is ‘transferred’ to teachers in the form of lectures” (Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006, p. 1021). Professional knowledge is defined as ‘learning about teaching’ and is presented to student teachers through a collection of courses on
content knowledge and pedagogy. Almost all parts of teacher education programs take place in the university or teacher education center and the only bridge to practice comes “in observing teachers and in practicing classroom teaching” (Freeman, 2002, p. 73). The knowledge-transmission view towards teacher education has been under consistent scrutiny for its many problems and limitations. This is primarily due to the fact that the knowledge base of university-based teacher education is incapable of filling the gap between ‘theory’ as it is treated in teacher education programs and the knowledge and skills of experienced teachers, ‘competency’, at schools. Drawing on research-presented evidence, educators have redefined professional knowledge and the relationship between theory and practice within the context of teacher education (ten Dam & Blom, 2006; Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006).

The educational reform to reformulate the knowledge base of teacher education thus has focused on a shift from learning about teaching to learning how to teach and from ‘knowledge for teachers’ to “knowledge of teachers” (Verloop, Van Driel, & Meijer, 2001, p. 443). The term knowledge base refers to “the entire repertoires of skills, information, attitudes, etc. that teachers need to carry out their classroom responsibility” (Valli & Tom, 1988, p. 5). The main learning goal for such teacher-training programs is becoming a good teacher. Schelfhout et al. (2006) believe that to produce good teachers, teacher education programs should prepare student teachers to be able to:

- master the content knowledge of the discipline they are specialized to teach
• have skills and knowledge about teaching/learning in order to teach properly
• work in school contexts
• notice any shortcomings in their teaching and constantly try to improve it
• take on a broader pedagogical and moral responsibility

This constructivist view to the process of teacher education demands a new look at the relationship between teaching and learning (Manouchehri, 2002). The value of a knowledge base, thus, lies both in the conversion of information to understanding and the appropriate application of knowledge in a variety of contexts (Fradd & Lee, 1998). The assumption that teachers construct their own knowledge on the basis of experience highlights the role of schools in teacher education programs and “opens the door to organizing teacher education according to the principle of learning through participation in real, meaningful practices” (ten Dam & Blom, 2006, p. 649). Thus the focal point of teacher education becomes the collaboration between schools and universities and a balance between theoretical knowledge and practicing skills. The university provides student teachers with scientific concepts and the school supports and directs learners’ participation in professional practice, while both organizations work collectively.

On the basis of the partnership between universities and schools, language teacher educators have specified the knowledge/competency base of EFL teacher education programs (Fradd & Lee, 1998; Morain, 1990; Day & Conklin, 1992) and have proposed a tripartite including:
• knowledge of language: content knowledge, knowledge of the subject matter, English language

• knowledge of science of teaching and pedagogy: pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of generic teaching strategies, beliefs, and practices; along with support knowledge, the knowledge of the various disciplines that would enrich teachers’ approach to the teaching and learning of English

• knowledge/competency of teaching in reality: pedagogical content knowledge, the specialized knowledge of how to represent content knowledge in the classroom and how students come to understand the subject matter in the context of real teaching; the students’ problems and ways to overcome those problems by considering all variables related to their learning (teaching materials, assessment procedures, parents, etc.)

To establish the knowledge/competency base, different types of teaching materials are used in teacher training programs. Teaching materials in general mean “any systematic description of the techniques and activities to be used in classroom teaching” (Brown, 1995, p. 139) and include various “experiences and activities by which, or as a result of which, the [teacher] learner develops knowledge of the profession” (Day, 1993, p. 2). 

3. Teaching materials in EFL teacher training program

In his proposition of professional knowledge source continuum (Figure 1), Day (1993) clarifies the role of different types of sources of knowledge in EFL teacher training program. He discusses the
types of activities by which or as a result of which, the student teachers can develop either the declarative knowledge (at one end of the continuum) or the procedural knowledge (at the other end of the continuum) of teaching profession. “In between these two ends are a variety of activities that may, depending on their orientation, allow the learner to develop knowledge closer to one end or the other” (Day, 1993, p. 2).

Other language educators (Freeman, 1989, 2002; Bolitho, 1986; Ur, 1997; Richards & Nunan, 1990) have also discussed the importance of the input to distinguish between teacher education and teacher training. Teacher development is more involved with in-service teacher education, it relies more on teachers’ personal experiences and background knowledge as the basis of the input content, and its typical teacher development activities include “teacher study groups, practitioner research, or self-development activities” (Freeman, 2002, p. 76). The outcome is generally evaluated through self-assessment techniques like reflective thinking and journal writing. On the other hand, the teacher training process is mostly viewed as a pre-service strategy, its content is generally defined externally, and the input content is presented through conventional processes such as lectures, readings, and observations; or participant-oriented processes such as project work and case studies. The outcome of the instruction would
be evaluated through academic display techniques like exams, term papers, or sample teachings.

In accordance with the defined knowledge/competency base of EFL teacher training program within partnership framework, the whole teaching preparation program is designed in three components: language component, science component, and practicum component.

3.1. Language component

Language proficiency is one of the most essential characteristics of a good language teacher (Brown, 2001; Cullen, 2001) and “has indeed constituted the bedrock of the professional confidence of non-native English teachers” (Candido de Lima, 2001, p. 145). The language component thus aims at improving the content knowledge, i.e., student teachers’ general knowledge of English, or their communicative competence. The courses offered here may focus on developing teacher learners’ English language proficiency (courses on listening-comprehension, conversation, writing, reading, vocabulary and idioms, grammar, and pronunciation) or providing insights into Western culture (literature courses). To attain such goals, two types of teaching materials can be used: teacher-made teaching materials such as photocopied pamphlets, drama, and games; or commercially prepared materials like textbooks, audio/video tapes, educational software, etc. These teaching materials serve the following purposes (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 7):

- A source for presentation material (written or spoken)
- A source of activities for learner practice and communicative interaction
A reference source for learners on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and so on

- A source of stimulation and ideas for classroom activities

- A syllabus (where they reflect learning objectives that have already been determined)

3.2. Science component

From a theoretical perspective, EFL teachers require specialized knowledge about language, teaching theories and beliefs, and pedagogy. The courses offered in this component aim at providing student teachers with methodological and pedagogical knowledge (courses on teaching methodology, testing, research methods), supplying knowledge about language(s) (courses on linguistics), and supporting knowledge from other disciplines in applied linguistics (courses on sociolinguistics, neurolinguistics, etc.).

The content of scientific information is conventionally given to student-teachers through lectures, readings (teacher-made or commercially prepared), or discussions (Freeman, 2002). Generally, the readings are provided and recommended by teacher trainers. Teacher-made sources of knowledge are mostly in the form of pamphlets or handouts and contain summaries of important points. The content of the scientific information can also be found in scientifically pre-prepared reading materials such as journals, reference books, and textbooks.

3.3. Practicum component

From a practical perspective, EFL teachers have to acquire proper skills and knowledge to learn how to teach in a real context, the
school setting. “Learning to participate in the social and cultural practices with regard to education is assumed to be crucial for developing a professional identity as a teacher” (ten Dam & Blom, 2006, p. 647). The courses offered in this component thus focus on the development and expansion of practical knowledge of schools (e.g., the learners and their characteristics, teaching materials, assessment, parents) through observation, socialization, and interaction.

Recently, under the influence of social constructivism, teacher educators and researchers have addressed the issue of teaching materials and techniques more seriously to empower student teachers pedagogically and provide them with greater understanding of professional practice (Edge, 1991; Fosnot, 1996; Goker, 2006; Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006; Schelfhout, et al., 2006). From among the processes that help practice teaching are the constructivist techniques including reflective thinking (e.g., Lee, 2005), portfolios (e.g., Mansvelder-Longayroux, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2007), and peer coaching (e.g., Goker, 2006).

4. Materials evaluation in EFL teacher training programs

4.1. Language component

One of the central issues that has been a matter of contention among educators for a long time is whether to use teacher-made teaching materials, the anti-textbook view (Crawford, 1990; Walz, 1989; Kramsch, 1987), or commercially prepared teaching materials, the pro-textbook view (Brown, 2001; Allwright, 1981; Daloglu, 2004) in language classes. Within this framework, Harwood (2005) studied various anti-textbook arguments in the literature and made a
distinction between strong and weak anti-textbook views. According to this proposition, the strong view advocates the abandonment of any type of commercially prepared materials in language classes while the weak view “finds materials in their current state to be unsatisfactory in some way, but has no problem with the textbook in principle” (Harwood, 2005, p. 150). In other words, the weak anti-textbook view holds that teaching materials should be selected carefully through evaluative reviews “founded on understanding of the rationale of language teaching and learning and backed up by practical experience” (Cunningsworth, 1984, p. 74). As a consequence, several criteria such as program goals and objectives, theory of language, theory of learning, learners’ needs, and cultural issues have to be taken into account in the process of materials evaluation/selection (Cunningsworth, 1995; Garinger, 2001, 2002; Robinett, 1978) for a language course.

4.2. Science and practicum components

Although the issue of teaching materials for teacher education has been well documented in teacher education research (e.g., Bolitho, 1986; Edge, 1991; Fenstermacher, 1994; ten Dam & Blom; 2006; Schelfhout et al., 2006; Lee, 2005; Manouchehri, 2002) and even recently has been recognized by language teacher educators as having enormous influence on the future development of language teachers (e.g., Borg, 2007; Freeman, 2002; Goker, 2006; Nunan & Lamb, 1996), not many detailed studies (e.g., Bax, 1995) outlining the criteria to evaluate teaching materials for developing teachers’ knowledge of science and pedagogy (the second component) and competency of teaching in reality (the third component) have been
documented in EFL teacher education literature. The definition and application of systematic criteria for evaluative reviews would let teacher educators and researchers judge the potential benefits and limitations of teaching materials for the specified knowledge base of EFL teacher training programs.

Due to the fact that language component and science/practicum components are different with respect to goals, knowledge base, and input content, the criteria proposed by language educators to evaluate teaching materials for language courses (e.g., Cunningsworth, 1995; Garinger, 2002; Robinett, 1978) are not suitable to be used for evaluative purposes in the second and third components of EFL teacher training programs. Evidence (Rahimi & Mosallanejad, 2007) supports the fact that more than half of these criteria are inappropriate or irrelevant for evaluating teaching materials developed for science and practicum components of EFL teacher-training programs and should be replaced by other criteria.

5. The basis of the criteria
As mentioned earlier, teaching materials suggested for developing teachers’ professional knowledge (e.g., Borg, 2007; Schon, 1987; Lee, 2005; Mansvelder-Longayroux, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2007; Goker, 2006; Day, 1993; Schelfhout, et al. 2006; Freeman, 1989, 2002) have to undergo evaluative reviews to ensure “that careful selection is made and that the materials selected closely reflect the aims, methods, and values of the teaching program” (Cunningsworth, 1995, p.7). This consideration raises the issue of setting systematic criteria to judge appropriateness of materials for their “true purpose, that is, to help learners to learn effectively” (Jordan, 1997, p. 138).
To this end, I scrutinized seven principles recently proposed by Korthagen, Loughran, and Russell (2006). Their proposed principles are driven from analyzing realistic examples of teacher education programs to find a shared professional language among teacher educators and suggest guidelines and possibilities to reconstruct teacher education from within. Their principles are:

- **Principle 1:** leaning about teaching involves continuously conflicting and competing demands (both theory and practice)
- **Principle 2:** learning about teaching requires a view of knowledge as a subject to be created rather than as a created subject
- **Principle 3:** learning about teaching requires a shift in focus from the curriculum to the learner
- **Principle 4:** learning about teaching is enhanced through (student) teacher research
- **Principle 5:** learning about teaching requires an emphasis on those learning to teach working closely with their peers
- **Principle 6:** learning about teaching requires meaningful relationships between schools, universities and student teachers
- **Principle 7:** learning about teaching is enhanced when the teaching and learning approaches advocated in the program are modeled by the teacher educators in their own practice

According to Korthagen, Loughran, and Russell (2006), these fundamental principles “shape teacher education programs and practices in ways that are responsive to the expectations, needs and practices of teacher educators and student teachers” (p. 1022). Thus it
is arguable that they can form the foundation of evaluation criteria to judge the suitability of teaching materials for a responsive teacher education. To support this argument, I have suggested some criteria, by adapting the above-mentioned principles, for materials evaluation/selection in the second and third components of EFL teacher education programs.

Below the suggested principles and their significant role in materials evaluation/selection are discussed under four main topics: (1) aims and objectives of EFL teacher training program with regard to the knowledge/competency base, (2) student teacher’s role, (3) cultural issues, and (4) teacher trainer’s role.

5.1. Aims and objectives of EFL teacher training program (the knowledge/competency base)

Principle 1. Teaching materials should focus on both theory and practice.

Learning about teaching involves focusing on “how to learn from experience and on how to build professional knowledge” (Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006, p. 1025). To construct such knowledge and competency both theory and practice are important in teacher training program and have their own respective roles. An important goal of teacher education, then, should be to establish links between these two key elements. Teacher educators believe that approaches that value both teachers’ practical knowledge and formal theories as relevant components of the knowledge base of teaching might enhance the quality of both in the process of teacher preparation (Verloop, Van Driel, & Meijer, 2001).
Although SLA theory has “either a direct or indirect effect on the instructional routines and procedures of language teaching” (MacDonald, Badger, & White, 2001, p. 252), inclusion of theory in the program should be done with care. Student teachers expect from a course “instant panaceas, rigid rules of thumb, clear statements of practice, and absolute generalizations” (Brumfit, 1983, p. 60); and “definitions, rules, and absolutes” (Brown, 1983, p. 54). Thus teacher education process has to integrate theoretical principles with teaching competencies in order to deepen student teachers’ professional knowledge and develop “skills and knowledge with which student teachers can contribute to a culture of professional cooperation in schools” (Schelfhout et al., 2006, p. 875).

**Principle 2: Teaching materials should let learners construct the knowledge by theory-creating processes**

The knowledge of learning about teaching has to be viewed as a subject to be created rather than as a created subject. “The teacher educators should actively create situations that elicit wish for self-directed theory building in their students” (Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006, p. 1027). Teacher education programs should foster group processes in which student teachers together work creatively on theories of teaching and generalize teaching knowledge through inductive approaches (Schelfhout et al., 2006). Examples of research already exist in which using teaching practice as a basis for discussing educational approaches and the theoretical rationales for them could lead to a change in prior conceptions (Fosnot, 1996) and to greater satisfaction with the relevance of teacher training and
educational theory to later practice (Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006; Schelfhout et al., 2006).

5.2. Student teacher’s role

*Principle 3: Teaching materials should consider an active role for student teachers*

Student teachers should experience various aspects of teaching by effectively influencing the learning process. “The learning of student teachers is only meaningful and powerful when it is *embedded in the experience* of learning to teach” (Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006, p. 1029). Teacher education process has to create opportunities for teacher learners to construct knowledge by genuinely participating in teaching experiences and actively leading the learning process rather than remaining passive recipients.

“To fully illuminate the dynamics of a teaching situation, student teachers need opportunities to understand what is involved in planning the teaching, doing the teaching, and reflecting on the teaching” (Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006, p. 1029). This can be achieved when student teachers are actively engaged in performing tasks, participating in activities, and directing and influencing the whole process of learning and teaching.

*Principle 4: Teaching materials should provide learners with opportunities for self-researching and researching on teaching issues*

Teacher training program should provide opportunities for student teachers to direct their own professional development by researching their own teaching. Student teachers can research their teaching through reflective practices, case methodology, narrative enquiry, and
The aim of all these techniques for pre-service teachers is to learn new ideas better and sustain professional growth after leaving the program.

Moreover, student teachers should be involved in research projects on teaching issues. Research-engaged teachers “generate a greater understanding of specific issues in teaching and learning” (Borg, 2007, p.2), gain knowledge and skills “to theorize systematically and rigorously about practice in different learning contexts” (Reid & O’Donoghue, 2004, p. 569), and take appropriate action on the basis of the outcomes of their enquiry to improve the quality of their own teachings.

**Principle 5: Teaching materials should support collaborative peer-coaching learning/teaching**

Learning to teach and developing classroom practice can be enhanced by peer-supported learning both in pre-service and in-service teacher education (McIntyre & Hagger, 1992). Research findings suggest that the use of peer collaboration and collaborative reflection has the potential to facilitate teacher development (Manouchehri, 2002) and “will help to bridge the gap between what is done in teacher education and what those learning to teach actually need in their future practice” (Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006, p. 1034).

In peer coaching, teams of pre-service teachers regularly observe each other, exchange ideas, provide assistance and support, and try to understand their peers’ perspectives. The whole process help student teachers use skills learned during training in their future classes, to exchange feedback with peers and colleagues more actively, become more reflective teachers (Brown, 2001) and “develop the capacity to
take on new perspectives and build new understanding about the profession” (Manouchehri, 2002, p. 717).

5.3. Cultural issues

Principle 6: Teaching materials should place a strong emphasis on contextual factors of the local culture

Student teachers have to receive regular input with respect to contextual factors of the local culture in which they are going to apply their professional knowledge. The input source can be the national syllabus which specifies the aims, content, methodology, and evaluation of the language program (Breen, 2002) for a particular group of learners in a social context; or the milieu, “the educational context, including the array of cultural, social, racial, and other groups to which students and teachers belong and in which they are embedded and which affects how they receive and negotiate the subject matter taught” (Kanu, 2005, p. 495).

It is important to note here that although the TESOL profession deals with an international language, the teacher education curriculum deals with national priorities (Fradd & Lee, 1998) and should undertake serious cultural analysis at the receiving end of cross-cultural knowledge transfer. The reason is that though the incoming theories and models may be eminently suitable for the country of origin, they are questionable, sometimes even outright failures, in the developing countries (McLaughlin, 1996; O'Donoghue, 1994). The key point here is that within the process of curriculum design and materials development and evaluation certain factors such as the political climate, traditional beliefs, and cultural
values of the local context should be taken into account (McLaughlin, 1996; O’Donoghue, 1994; Kanu, 2005; Zajda, 2004).

5.4. Teacher trainer’s role

Principle 7: Teaching materials should provide opportunities for teacher trainers to model educational approaches in their teachings

Teacher educators have to model educational approaches and guidelines (they give to their learners) of how to teach (theory and practice) by making use of them in their own classes. Teacher trainers have to bear in mind that they have to “teach as they preach” (Schelfhout, et al. 2006, p. 879). Modeling educational approaches by teacher educators gives teacher learners a better insight into the importance of those teaching approaches, guides teacher learners how to exactly execute them in practice, and encourages student teachers to use them in their future teachings.

6. Conclusions

The basic goal of the traditional approach to teacher education is the transfer of theoretical knowledge (Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006) from teacher trainers to student teachers through “processes of organized professional education” (Freeman, 2002, p. 73). This view to teacher knowledge is increasingly critiqued for its meager impact on practical skills teachers acquire in the classroom. For this reason, educational reforms have focused on rethinking the knowledge base of teacher education and the relationship between theory and practice.

Under the influence of constructivism and socio-cultural perspectives of learning, more attention now is given to the importance of the process and context of learning, interaction and
socialization among learners, and self-construction of knowledge by teacher learners in the development of professional knowledge (Manouchehri, 2002; Verloop, Van Driel, & Meijer, 2001; Schelfhout, et al. 2006) in teacher education. As a result of this, knowledge/competency base of EFL teacher education has been developing remarkably and rapidly on the basis of collaborative teacher education and the partnership between universities and schools for the last three decades (Freeman, 1989, 2002; Fradd & Lee, 1998; Brown, 1995; Richards & Nunan, 1990; Nunan & Lamb, 1996). In this framework a number of enquiries have discussed the issue of teaching materials and activities for developing student teachers’ professional knowledge (e.g., Day, 1993; Goker, 2006; Borg, 2007). However, the issue of systematic evaluation of teaching materials and sources of information seems to remain intractable: which instructional materials best suit EFL teacher education programs and what criteria would be more beneficial to judge their appropriateness.

To address this matter, the present paper reviewed the content of EFL teacher education program, its knowledge/competency base, procedures utilized to present that knowledge/competency to student teachers, and the types of teaching materials that best suit this provision. Based on insights provided by Korthagen, Loughran, and Russell (2006), seven principles were suggested for evaluation/selection of teaching materials and sources of information in EFL teacher training programs.

The proposed principles support the fact that materials evaluation/selection is not a one-dimensional issue and is highly related to other components of teacher education program. The principles are beneficial for teacher trainers and materials developers
in the process of materials evaluation and selection for EFL teacher training programs. They would also open up opportunities for EFL researchers to revisit the role of teaching materials in educating good EFL teachers.

Notes
1 This article has borrowed its title from Allwright’s (1981) and Harwood’s (2005) articles.

References


Title
An Investigation on the Language Anxiety and Fear of Negative Evaluation among Turkish EFL Learners

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Abstract
Teachers’ observations, students’ experiences, and the review of related literature indicate that language anxiety is a significant factor adversely affecting the language learning process. Thus, this study aims to investigate the sources and levels of fear of negative evaluation as well as language anxiety among Turkish students as EFL learners, and to determine the correlation between the two. A foreign language anxiety scale and a scale for fear of negative evaluation were administered to a sample group of 112 foreign language learners. The collected data were used to provide a descriptive and correlational analysis. The results of the analysis indicated that EFL learners suffer from language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Furthermore, fear of negative evaluation itself was found to be a strong source of language anxiety. In light of the findings of the research, the following recommendations were noted: Firstly, in order to cope with anxiety, learning situations and context should be made less stressfull. Effective communication is another way to relieve language anxiety.
**Key Words:** Language Anxiety, Fear of Negative Evaluation, English as a foreign language

**Introduction**

According to Harmer (1991), some of the reasons to learn English as a foreign language are school curricula, need of advancement in professional life, living in a target community permanently or temporarily, interest in different cultures, and some other specific purposes. At the end of the learning process, learners are usually expected to become proficient in several areas of the target language, such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, discourse, and language skills. On the other hand, it is obvious that the learning of English as a foreign language is closely and directly related to the awareness about certain individual differences, such as the beliefs, attitudes, aptitudes, motivations and affective states of learners. Among these variables, particularly language anxiety as an individual difference is an affective state seriously impeding achievement in a foreign language (Gardner, 1985). Hence, one of the purposes of the present study is to examine the sources and levels of language anxiety among EFL learners.

Anxiety as an affective state is defined as an uncomfortable emotional state in which one perceives danger, feels powerless, and experiences tension in the face an expected danger (Blau, 1955) and it can be classified into three types. **Trait anxiety**, a more permanent disposition to be anxious (Scovel, 1978), is viewed as an aspect of personality. **State anxiety** is an apprehension experienced at a particular moment in time as a response to a definite situation (Spielberger, 1983). Finally, the last of the three types, **situation-**
Specific anxiety is related to apprehension unique to specific situations and events (Ellis, 1994). Language anxiety is a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Drawing upon the synthesis of previous research on foreign language anxiety, Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) describe the concept as the apprehension experienced when a specific situation requires the use of a second language in which the individual is not fully proficient. To sum up, language anxiety falls under the category of situation-specific anxiety. Foreign language anxiety has three varieties. Communication apprehension occurs in cases where learners lack mature communication skills although they have mature ideas and thoughts. It refers to a fear of getting into real communication with others. Test anxiety, on the other hand, is an apprehension towards academic evaluation. It could be defined as a fear of failing in tests and an unpleasant experience held either consciously or unconsciously by learners in many situations. This type of anxiety concerns apprehension towards academic evaluation which is based on a fear of failure (Horwitz and Young, 1991). Finally, fear of negative evaluation is observed when foreign language learners feel incapable of making the proper social impression and it is an apprehension towards evaluations by others and avoidance of evaluative situations. The research also aims to investigate the levels and sources of fear of negative evaluation on the part of EFL learners, and it focuses on the relationship between language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation among EFL learners.
The results of the previously conducted studies regarding foreign language anxiety indicate that personal and impersonal anxieties, learners’ beliefs about learning a foreign language, teachers’ beliefs about teaching a foreign language, classroom procedures and testing are among the main sources of anxiety (Young, 1991). Furthermore, a review of the related literature reveals that the level of language course, language skills, motivation, proficiency, teachers, tests, and culture (Bailey, 1983; Ellis and Rathbone, 1987; Young, 1990; Price, 1991; Sparks and Ganschow, 1991; Oxford, 1992) are other factors arousing anxiety. However, it should be noted that prior studies focused on the identification of foreign language anxiety. For instance, Horwitz (1986) developed the Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (FLAS) to measure communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. The results of the this study suggest that language anxiety is distinct from other types of anxiety. Furthermore, it was the study of Gardner, Moorcroft, and MacIntyre (1987) that distinguished language anxiety from others. The findings of the study conducted by MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) aiming to measure the three types of language anxiety – i.e., communication apprehension, test-anxiety and fear of negative evaluation – demonstrated that communication anxiety includes fear of negative evaluation as well.

The findings of the previous studies also indicate that there exists a significant correlation between foreign language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, an issue that has attracted little attention in language learning research (Kitano, 2001). According to Horwitz et al. (1986), fear of negative evaluation is triggered by the teacher as a fluent speaker and the classmates. Young (1991) argued that the
reason why learners do not participate in the classroom activities is the fear of committing a verbal error. Similarly, Price’s study (1991) indicated that learners are afraid of making pronunciation errors in classroom. Finally, speaking in front of their peers is another source of anxiety in learning a foreign language (Koch and Terrell, 1991).

A review of available literature indicates that related studies conducted in Turkey are too limited. The findings of one of these studies (Dalkılıç, 2001), which focused on the relationship between achievement and foreign language anxiety, showed that foreign language anxiety is a significant variable affecting learners’ achievement. In another study (Koralp, 2005) aiming to investigate the anxiety levels of students and to determine the relationship among different types of anxiety, it was discovered that there is a positive correlation between test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. While two other studies (Atay and Kurt, 2006, 2007) focused on the effects of peer feedback on writing anxiety, Öztürk and Çeçen (2007) investigated the effect of portfolio keeping on foreign language writing and suggested that portfolio keeping is a significant factor that alleviates anxiety. Finally, in a study conducted by Batumlu and Erden (2007), the relationship between language and anxiety was examined. The findings of this study suggest that there is a negative correlation between achievement and anxiety; whereas, the proficiency levels of learners and gender are not significant variables.

English as a foreign language is a must course in primary, secondary and higher education in Turkey. The number of EFL learners is approximately 11 million at primary, 6 million at secondary and vocational (Ministry of National Education, 2006), and 2 million students at higher schools (Turkish Statistics Institute,
However, despite the vast number of EFL learners in Turkey, research activities on EFL issues, as was previously articulated, are too limited. To put it another way, it is not possible to draw general conclusions regarding the level of foreign language anxiety level and the relationship between fear of negative evaluation and foreign language anxiety. There are two basic reasons to call for investigation into foreign language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation among EFL learners. First, the related studies conducted in Turkey are too limited to draw general conclusions. As for the second reason, as was noted by Kitano (2001), fear of negative evaluation is an issue that has attracted little attention in language learning research. Accordingly, with these concerns in mind, this paper examines two research questions:

1. What are the sources and levels of foreign language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation among learners?
2. Is there a relationship between fear of negative evaluation and foreign language anxiety?

**Method**

The sample group of the study consisted of 112 students at the English Language Teaching Department (ELT) of Balikesir University. The group included all the students enrolled in the department. Of all the participants, 19 (17%) were male and 93 (83%) were female students. The mean age of the participants was 20.7. The group consisted of 25 freshmen (22.3%), 28 sophomores, (25%), 27 juniors (24.1%), and 32 seniors (28.6%). All the participants were Turkish students with an advanced level of English. They all had previously studied English during their high school education and
attended the ELT department after the Foreign Language Examination, an official selection and placement test administered before admitting students to the ELT departments in Turkey.

The instruments used to collect data consisted of a questionnaire interrogating the participants about their age, gender, and grades; a foreign language anxiety scale (FLAS) adapted from the FLAS developed by Horwitz et al. (1986); and a scale for fear of negative evaluation (FNE) developed by Leary (1983). However, as the main focus of the research is the level of anxiety, and the relationship between language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, the findings on the relationship between the subject and dependent variables are not relevant to the scope of the study. Thus, the findings concerning the subject variables investigated in the study were briefly presented. The FLAS contained 25 multiple-choice items that aimed to measure the degree of anxiety level while the scale of FNE included 12 multiple-choice items designed to assess the degree to which the participant experiences anxiety at the prospect of being negatively evaluated. The items in both the FLAS and the scale of FNE were answered within a scale ranging from one to five (always=5, usually=4, sometimes=3, almost never=2 and never=1).

The procedure of the study included the administration of the instruments and statistical analysis. The author administered the questionnaire, the FLAS, and the scale of FNE during the 10th week of Spring 2006 Semester. Subsequently, the collected data were analyzed using the SPPS software. In the process of analysis, first and foremost, the reliability coefficient of IAS in Cronbach’s Alpha Model, a model of internal consistency based on the average inter-item correlation, was computed and compared to the coefficients
found in previous studies. The reliability coefficients indicated that the scales of the FLA and FNE administered to measure the levels of language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation display a high level of reliability. Speaking more specifically, the reliability coefficients were found to be 0.91 for FLAS and 0.93 for the scale of FNE. The scale developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) proved to be reliable with the coefficient of .93 in Alpha model and the test-retest coefficient of .83. As for the statistical analysis of the research questions, the data were examined under three subheadings: the means and standard deviations were computed to find the levels of the language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, as well as to examine the homogeneity of the group. Secondly, Pearson correlations were calculated with their significance levels in order to determine the relationship between language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Finally, t-test and ANOVA were computed to detect the correlations between the subject variables of age, gender, and grade and the dependent variables.

**Results**

The findings of the study were divided into three sub-sections: the level and sources of language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, the relationship between the two and the relationship between subject and dependent variables. To put it another way, a descriptive and correlational presentation of the collected data has been provided. The descriptive data included the means and standard deviations of the statements in the FLAS and the scale of FNE. On the other hand, the correlation data consisted of the findings related to both the
correlations between language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation and the relationship between subject and dependent variables.

The first research question concerned the levels and sources of language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation of foreign language learners. Hence, the findings about the levels and sources are presented in Table 1 and 2 in descending order. These values indicate that EFL learners suffered from language anxiety due to certain anxiety-provoking factors. First, the findings reveal that learners experienced language anxiety when they were not prepared for the lesson. Second, communication apprehension felt towards teachers, peers and native speakers was suggested as a factor provoking anxiety. Third, for most of the students, teachers’ questions and corrections in the classroom environment were among the factors intensifying their anxiety. As the values indicate, among other sources arousing anxiety were fear of speaking during classes, concerns about making mistakes, fear of failing classes, test anxiety, and negative attitudes towards English courses. The values presented in Table 2 demonstrate that learners also suffered from fear of negative evaluation. First of all, foreign language learners had the fear of negative judgments by and leaving unfavorable impressions on others. Besides, others’ negative thoughts and fear of making verbal or spelling mistakes, fear of shortcomings noted and the faults found by others and the fear of disapproval by others are other sources causing fear of negative evaluation. To summarize the findings, as the mean values were found to be 2.61 for language anxiety and 2.89 for fear of negative evaluation, it could be concluded that foreign language learners suffered both from language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation.
Table 1. Sources and levels of language anxiety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of language anxiety</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not being prepared for the lesson</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of failing classes</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication apprehension with teachers</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test anxiety</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication apprehension with native speakers</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of forgetting vocabulary and sentence structure while speaking</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ corrections</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of being called on in class</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of making mistakes</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication apprehension with peers</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ questions in class</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative attitudes towards English courses</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Sources and levels of the fear of negative evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of fear of negative evaluation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative judgments by others</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of leaving unfavorable impressions on others</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative thoughts of others</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of making verbal or spelling mistakes</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of being noted the shortcomings by others</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of being found fault by others</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of disapproval by others</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second research question inquired whether there existed a relationship between the levels and sources of language anxiety and the fear of negative evaluation. The values presented in Table 3 point out that there was a significant correlation between language anxiety
and fear of negative evaluation. Firstly, the data indicate that thoughts of others were significantly correlated with being called on in the classroom, communication with teachers, peers and native speakers, fear of making mistakes, teachers’ questions, not being prepared for the lesson, fear of forgetting vocabulary and sentence structure while speaking, negative attitudes towards courses, fear of failing and test anxiety. Secondly, the values also demonstrate that there existed a significant correlation between the fear of shortcomings noted by others and some sources of foreign language anxiety. Fear of leaving unfavorable impressions on others was significantly correlated with most of the foreign language anxiety sources, except for teachers’ corrections and communication with native speakers. Furthermore, fear of disapproval by others was also significantly correlated with the fear of being called on in class, communication apprehension with teachers and peers, fear of failing classes and test anxiety, teachers’ corrections and not being prepared for the lesson. That the participants fear that others would notice their mistakes was significantly correlated with the anxiety-provoking factors, except for teachers’ corrections and communication apprehension with native speakers. In addition, others’ negative judgments about the subject were correlated with communication apprehension with native English speakers, test anxiety, fear of forgetting vocabulary and sentence structure while speaking, not being prepared well for the lesson and fear of being called on in class. Finally, fear of making verbal or spelling mistakes was significantly correlated with all anxiety-provoking factors, except for communication apprehension with native speakers. Speaking concisely, the obtained results show
that language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation are significantly correlated (p=.0).

Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N=12</th>
<th>Others’ thoughts</th>
<th>Shortcomings noticed by others</th>
<th>Fear of leaving unfavorable impressions on others</th>
<th>Fear of disapproval by others</th>
<th>Fear of being found fault by others</th>
<th>Negative judgments by others</th>
<th>Fear of making verbal or spelling mistakes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear of being called on in class</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication apprehension with teachers</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ questions in class</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of making mistakes</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ corrections</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not being prepared for the lesson</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asian EFL Journal 432
As the study mainly focuses on the levels and sources of language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation and the relationship between these, the findings on the relationship between the dependent and subject variables seem irrelevant to the scope of the study. Nevertheless, the related results shall be presented in brief. In this sense, the data obtained from the study were divided into two groups: the correlations between subject variables and language anxiety, and the relationship between subject variables and fear of negative evaluation. The findings on the relationship between the subject variables and language anxiety indicate that there exist significant correlations between some of the statements provided in the FLAS and learners’ gender, age and grade. Firstly, a significant correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not being prepared for the lesson</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication apprehension with peers</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.22 0.35 0.31 0.14 0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of forgetting vocabulary and</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.02 0.22 0.13 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sentence structure while speaking</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.01 0.32 0.25 0.21 0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative attitudes towards English courses</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.01 0.04 0.09 0.41 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of failing classes.</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test anxiety</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication apprehension with native speakers</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.05 0.10 0.07 0.11 0.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
was found between gender and test anxiety (p=0.01). In other words, according to the mean scores, females are more worried about tests than males are. Furthermore, ages of learners were significantly correlated with teachers’ corrections in classroom (p=.004), learners’ negative attitudes towards English courses (p=0.03), and test anxiety (p=0.05). To put it another way, it was concluded that the older they were, the less anxiety they had. Thirdly, grade was a significant factor correlated with communication apprehension with teachers (p=.02), teachers’ corrections in classroom (p=.05), communication apprehension with peers (p=.02), negative attitudes towards English courses (p=.03), and test anxiety (p=0.02). As a result, the correlational values show that junior students were more worried than the seniors. To sum up, the findings of the study suggest that age, gender and grade are significantly correlated with some statements in the FLAS. The findings on the correlations between fear of negative evaluation and the subject variables show that age and grade were significantly correlated with some statements in the scale of FNE, whereas gender did not have any effect on fear of negative evaluation at all. To begin with, grade is significantly correlated with two of the fears; i.e. disapproval by others (p=0.00) and making mistakes (p=0.04). This means that, while 19 and 20-year old students suffered from disapproval by others, fear of making mistakes was a source of fear of negative evaluation for all the participants. The values also indicate that grade was significantly correlated with some of the sources of FNE, such as leaving an unfavorable impression (p=0.01), disapproval by others (p=0.04), and making mistakes (p=0.03). In other words, the higher their grades were, the less they suffered from disapproval and making mistakes. Consequently, the findings of the
research demonstrate that learners’ age, gender and grade were the factors with significant effects on both foreign language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation.

In conclusion, the results indicate that foreign language learners suffered from language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation; that fear of negative evaluation is a strong source of language anxiety, and that certain subject variables had significant correlations with the levels of language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. According the findings of the study, first and foremost, the sources of language anxiety included communication apprehension with teachers, peers and native speakers, not being prepared for the lesson, test anxiety, and negative attitudes towards English courses, whereas the sources of fear of negative evaluation were negative judgments and thoughts of others, leaving unfavorable impressions on others, fear of making verbal or spelling mistakes, disapproval by other students, shortcomings and faults found by others. Secondly, the correlational data show that fear of negative evaluation is a source of language anxiety in EFL learning. Finally, the data obtained from the study point out that female students felt more worried about tests than males did, and younger learners were more anxious about tests than the older ones. In addition, negative attitudes towards English courses constituted a source of language anxiety only for younger learners and students’ grade was correlated with communication apprehension with teachers and peers as well as test anxiety. Finally, elder learners had a lesser degree of fear towards leaving an unfavorable impression, disapproval by others, and making mistakes than the younger students did.
Conclusions and Discussion
Since the available research is too limited to draw conclusions and it seems necessary to increase the awareness about the issue of the target groups in Turkey, this study aimed to examine the sources and levels of foreign language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, as well as to determine the relationship between the two dependent variables. The results of the previous studies demonstrate that language anxiety is distinct from other types of anxiety (Horwitz, 1986), and among types of language anxiety are communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1989). Furthermore, a review of the available literature shows that language anxiety emanate from numerous sources, such as the level of language course, language skills, motivation, proficiency, teachers, tests, and cultural differences. Furthermore, though fear of negative evaluation has attracted little attention in language learning, it is still a source of language anxiety deserving further research (Kitano, 2001). On the other hand, it is very crucial to emphasize that the related studies conducted in Turkey are still too limited to arrive at some conclusions. The sample group of the study consisted of 112 advanced level EFL students. The instruments used to collect data consisted of a background questionnaire, the foreign language anxiety scale, and the scale of fear of negative evaluation. The collected data were used to provide a descriptive and correlational analysis to address the research questions.

Four main results were obtained from the study. The first is that EFL learners suffer from language anxiety which is aroused by factors, such as unpreparedness for class; communication
apprehension with teachers, peers, and native speakers; teachers’ questions and corrections in classroom environment; tests and negative attitudes towards English courses. Secondly, the sources of fear of negative evaluation consist of negative judgments by others, leaving unfavorable impressions on others, making verbal or spelling mistakes, and disapproval by others. Thirdly, the fear of negative evaluation is a strong source of foreign language anxiety. Moreover, fear of negative evaluation leads to the fear of being called on in class; test anxiety; communication apprehension with peers, native speakers, and teachers; fear of making mistakes while speaking; and negative attitudes towards language learning. What is more, it makes learners anxious when their teachers asks questions and makes corrections. Finally, certain subject variables significantly correlated with some sources of language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. More specifically, females are much more worried about tests than males are. In addition, younger students display a greater anxiety towards communication apprehension with teachers and peers, teachers’ corrections in classroom and tests than their elders are, and also suffer from the fear of disapproval by others while students in the first three grades are more afraid of making mistakes than the seniors are.

A discussion of the results of the present study with relation to those of previous research can be summarized under four headings: the identification of language anxiety, the effects of anxiety on learning process, fear of negative evaluation, and the correlation between the two. First of all, communication apprehension is a significant source of anxiety as found by Horwitz et al. (1986), Koch and Terrell (1991), Price (1991) and Young (1990). According to the
results of previous research, tests and teachers are other strong sources of language anxiety as was suggested by Bailey (1983), and Ellis and Rathbone (1987). However, though teachers are a strong source of anxiety, teacher anxiety is not a term that has so far been recognized in the relevant literature. Although Young (1991) notes that teachers’ beliefs about teaching a foreign language are one of the anxiety-provoking factors, according to the findings of this study, it is obvious that there are additional factors such as learners’ communication apprehension with teachers, teachers’ corrections, all of which play a determining role in the level of anxiety. In other words, all the sources of language anxiety pertaining to teachers could be categorized under the separate category of teacher anxiety which would then constitute the fourth category of language anxiety along with communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Secondly, the results of the present study indicate that foreign language anxiety has several negative effects on language learning process. More specifically, anxious learners suffer from the fear of speaking, making mistakes and forgetting vocabulary and sentence structure while speaking, findings parallel to the previous findings that speaking in front of other learners is a situational source of anxiety in foreign language classrooms (Koch and Terrell, 1991) and that anxious learners commit more errors through fear of making mistakes (Gregersen, 2003). Furthermore, the findings of the study demonstrate that anxiety prevents learners from using correct vocabulary and sentence structure while speaking. Yet, Gardner, Moorcroft, and MacIntyre (1987) argued that there is not a correlation between language anxiety and free speech skills. Thirdly, the sources behind the fear of negative evaluation are negative
judgments by other people, leaving unfavorable impressions on others, committing verbal or spelling mistakes, and disapproval by others. “Others” include both friends and the teacher in the learning environment. In other words, the teacher as a fluent speaker, as was noted by Horwitz et al. (1986), and speaking in front of their peers constitute a source of fear of negative evaluation for students (Koch and Terrell, 1991). Finally, the results of this study demonstrate that there exists a significant correlation between the fear of negative evaluation and language anxiety as Gardner et al. (1987) observed, and as Kitano (2001) noted, that fear of negative evaluation is a source of language anxiety.

Given that learners suffer from anxiety and that it has negative effects on foreign language learning, some recommendations for practical purposes could be noted. First of all, as Horwitz et al. (1986) note, in order to cope with anxiety, learning situations and context should be made less stressful. In this sense, language teachers could play an important role in easing the anxiety of their students. Furthermore, teachers should be well trained on the issue, as Ellis and Sinclair (1989) point out that the focus should be on how to learn rather than what to learn, and then, they should train their students accordingly. Moreover, in the light of the results of the study, teachers should be aware of the effects of gender differences on foreign language anxiety, and use effective strategies to help their younger students. In other words, teachers should have well-formulated strategies with regard to communication with learners, their corrections and questions in the classroom. In brief, they need to promote a low-stress language learning environment (Foss and Reitzel, 1988), use effective strategies to help learners manage the
level of language anxiety (Oxford and Crookall, 1989), reassure them that language anxiety is quite a normal experience at the first stages of language learning process (Campbell and Ortiz, 1991), and positively manage the results of language anxiety. Secondly, effective communication is another way to relieve language anxiety. For instance, Campbell and Ortiz (1991) emphasize that students can talk about their worries with their teachers, other students, and family members. Besides, some other ways to alleviate anxiety are creating a supportive learning environment, explaining students their mistakes, developing realistic expectations and setting time limits (Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002). Finally, some practical activities such as structured exercises, group work, pair work, games, and simulations can be employed to relieve this sort of anxiety. As a result, all the recommendations presented in this paper are directly related to teachers. Hence, teachers’ level of awareness about foreign language anxiety should be raised both during their pre-service and in-service training processes.

As a final note on the limitations of the research, the subjects of the study were limited to 112 EFL learners in the ELT Department of Education Faculty at Balıkesir University, Turkey. On the other hand, the scope of the study was confined to the data collected using the foreign language anxiety scale (FLAS) adapted from the FLAS developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), and the scale for fear of negative evaluation (FNE) developed by Leary (1983), and some selected subject variables. Considering that the study examines the sources and levels of language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation and the relationship between the two, further studies should focus on the relationship between language anxiety and some
other variables such as language aptitude, ability, skills and teaching methodology. Last but not least, the strategies and tactics to allay language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation as well as the role of teachers in anxiety could be a subject of further research.

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20, 559 – 564.


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*Asian EFL Journal* 447
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