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KOTESOL Proceedings 2005

From Concept to Context: Trends & Challenges

Proceedings of the 13th Annual KOTESOL International Conference
Seoul, Korea, October 15-16, 2005

Korea Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
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FOREWORD

The 13th Annual Korea TESOL International Conference was held at Sookmyung Women's University on October 15-16, 2005. The theme for the Conference was ***From Concept to Context: Trends and Challenges***. Over the weekend, more than 900 English teaching professionals joined together to participate in a two-day program offering three plenary sessions, eight featured-speaker sessions, and 110 presentations. Our KOTESOL conferences are becoming increasingly international with each passing year, and this year was no exception. We had 89 international speakers from 14 different countries.

The papers collected for this volume represent the wide diversity of contexts, trends, challenges, and classroom practice among the KOTESOL membership who presented at the International Conference. These 29 papers have been organized into 6 categories: *Featured Speaker Presentations*, *Technology*, *Methodologies and Techniques*, *Learning Strategies and Styles*, *SLA and Applied Linguistics*, and *Assessment*.

We are proud to publish the papers from two of the Conference's featured speakers, Dr. Ana Lado and Mario Rinvolucri. Lado's paper, *Completing the Communication Cycle: Enabling Students to Use English*, links teaching and inquiry and illustrates what can be accomplished when university students mentor younger learners as they engage in authentic tasks and materials during a summer project. Rinvolucri's paper is a workshop report entitled *NLP as a Lever for Conceptual Change in Teachers*. In it, he tantalizes readers with the Neuro-Linguistic Programming notion that *the map is not the territory*.

Readers will also find other papers of interest. Representing technology-related issues, we offer papers on podcasts, concordancing, and a report of students' impressions of CALL. *Methodologies and Techniques* is a broad category encompassing a wide variety of eclectic approaches to language learning. *Learning Strategies and Styles* include three papers on developing autonomy. The five papers representing *SLA and Applied Linguistics* explore issues from students' perspectives. Finally, in *Assessment*, five papers evaluate whole programs, individual courses, and testing.

The 13th Annual Korea TESOL International Conference was a delight for presenters and attendees. It is our hope that these papers showcasing the conference illustrate what our conferences and KOTESOL are all about. Read and enjoy.

Jake Kimball
David E. Shaffer
Supervising Editors
KOTESOL Proceedings 2005

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From Concept to Context: Trends & Challenges

Proceedings of the 13th Annual KOTESOL International Conference

CONTENTS

Featured Speakers

Completing the Communication Cycle: Enabling Students to Use English

Ana Lado
Marymount University, Virginia, USA
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Abstract

Learning to communicate in a second language demands that teachers be able to effectively apply the best that is known about teaching and learning. Teachers incorporate new teaching tools and ideas as they emerge. However, not all new tools are equally effective in enabling students to use English beyond the classroom. In the summer of 2004, I began a project that allowed me to use new teaching tools with school-aged students who were scheduled to work with native speakers in afternoons. The main focus of the afternoons was building three seaworthy wooden boats. The students' ability to participate and to communicate with the native speakers depended on a number of variables, the main one being the explicit teaching of usable English. The project serves to illustrate some inefficiencies of an eclectic communicative approach and the effectiveness of an approach in which communicative activities are incorporated in a research-based and principled program for teaching English.

Introduction

Inquiry-based teaching is relatively rare in the U.S. today. However, English Language Teaching (ELT) has a long and strong tradition advocating teaching as inseparable from inquiry (Lado 1964). For decades now, English language teacher-researchers have been finding new ways to facilitate the learning of English and have given us a myriad of technologies, methodologies, and activities from which to choose (Beglar & Hunt, 2005). We can include these new tools in an eclectic mix of communicative activities or incorporate them into a research-based, planned program for communication.

The following paper describes ways in which we did a little of both in a summer project. We focused on conducting authentic tasks undertaken by small groups of English learners assigned to native speakers. We used a variety of teaching tools and applied principles in a variety of ways according to the circumstances of our language course (Laufer, Meara, & Nation, 2005, p. 5).

The 2004 summer project joined Marymount University students with English language learners (ELLs) on contextualized mathematics and science projects. The highlight and focus was the building of three large, seaworthy, wooden boats. We had 38 students, almost all of whom were ELLs. These 11- and 12-year-old ELLs were placed into small teams of not more than six students. Each team had at least one assigned native speaker. For some tasks the ratio of students to native speaker was 1:4. The mornings were generally spent in two traditional summer school classes. At noon, the Marymount students arrived at these classrooms, and we would work on tasks which were more social in nature. The idea was to provide experiences, mentoring, and exposure to the typical language used by native speakers. In this way, we meant to incorporate the specialized knowledge required in occupations and socializing, areas which "include special rules that go beyond language use and require as well the application of language as a means of achieving non-language-centered goals" (Lado, 1988, pp. 46-47).

OBSERVATIONS

The first summer was a pilot project in which we collected qualitative data by having the native speakers reflect daily on highlights, problems, barriers, and subsequent plans. We used these reflections as a catalyst to improve the teaching and learning for the subsequent day. We encountered difficulties from the beginning with the level of language exchanges between the lowest level ELLs and their assigned native speakers. At first, since the majority of the native speakers had no ELT training, they were oblivious to the language barriers experienced by the lowest level ELLs and the role that English ability level played in their ability to engage in the socially oriented tasks. The ELLs self-separated by ability levels as they worked on tasks. ELLs with the most advanced abilities engaged in the lion's share of the interactions with native speakers, visitors, and the expert carpenters who guided us. The materials we used matched the abilities of the advanced students since these had been designed with English speakers in mind. Our boat building curriculum came from the Alexandria Seaport Foundation (Alexandria Seaport Foundation, 2001). Advanced ELLs were able to comprehend the written and spoken English, and they could listen, work, and socialize simultaneously with the English speakers. The less advanced ELLs were overwhelmed by the often open-ended nature of these English conversations.

Once we began to engage in activities in which cooperation was a key for success, for example, jointly carrying a large, wooden boat frame, the native speakers became aware that they were getting to know and engaging in conversations with high-level ELLs while the lowest level of ELLs were lost in the background. One native speaker reflected on the frustration in trying to get a particular task done while working with two girls who were at the very beginning level of English, I have to get work done with them, so I have to learn basic commands in Spanish! A teacher with experience in Social Studies but not ELT offered to prompt these two girls to learn more English. The next day, she talked to them about the need to stop speaking Spanish together: "You need to practice English together." This request was met with respectful silence. These ELLs simply lacked the necessary English to fulfill the request. We also noticed that when cooperation broke down because a beginner couldn't follow a directive, an advanced ELL stepped in, eager to do the task. As long as we let the task drive the activity and allowed any student to pitch in, beginners could avoid using English.

Based on these types of observations, we were able to address the needs of the lowest level of ELLs. We separated them for short instructional activities tailored to their English level. We taught them formulas and chants they could use immediately. For example, we developed group cohesion as we worked by calling out chants. The beginners knew that if they shouted the letters to a seven letter word, the entire group would respond by shouting back a rhyming phrase: “B-O-A-T-I-N-G” “Building boats, is for me!” This illustrates just one way we planned instruction on observations of students so as to enable ELLs at all levels to use English beyond instructional classroom tasks.

Our commitment to exposing the ELLs to experiences with the native speakers included inefficient and ineffective activities. In an effort to use authentic texts, we let the ELLs listen to a Read Aloud or a Power Point presentation that was above their comprehension level. The practice of reading stories which are beyond an ELLs beginner comprehension level is assumed to have global benefits (Wood & Salvetti, 2001). However, we found these types of activities and the use of incomprehensible texts inefficient. We used activities which would teach skills the ELLS could apply that very afternoon or the next day when they were with the native speakers. As time went on, we modified more of the texts used for our tasks. We gradually shifted from an eclectic approach to using authentic materials to a systematic modification of materials and strategies.

We opted to adjust texts in ways recommended by content-based English researchers (Calderon & Minaya-Rowe, 2005; Chamot, 2005; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004). We found that a passage of about 250 words which would have been read to the ELLs in one session, when subjected to content-based ELT, took several afternoons or 6 8 hours of different learning activities before our lowest level ELLs began using some of the vocabulary, particularly the academic and technical vocabulary from these texts. We retro-fitted the authentic material into carefully phased lessons using templates from ExC-ELL (Calderon & Minaya-Rowe, 2005), CALLA (Chamot, 2005), and SIOP (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004). By using these content-based ELT frameworks, we were able to experiment with authentic materials and with a variety of techniques while still providing the ELLs with comprehensible input. We incorporated pre-teaching key vocabulary, teaching beginners to ask for clarification, using graphic organizers, providing for repetition, condensing content, and asking students to make word puzzles and write summaries for each other.

In the following summer, 2005, when given texts or activities that had originally been prepared for English speakers, we easily and automatically made modifications before presenting these to the ELLs. A Marymount student approached us wanting to try a teaching activity from a career counseling curriculum in which students were to learn about business by developing and marketing a candy. I welcomed the chance to modify her activity using the Language Experience Approach (LEA; Nelson & Linek, 1998). LEA is based on using the students' language and experience to write the text. LEA traditionally has the following three phases: (a) the experience, which should be meaningful and interesting, (b) the recording of that experience with a dictation by the students written on a chart by the teacher, and (c) the extension of the text to bridge oral and written language.

I modified LEA based on Robert Lado's Total Approach (1988). His framework takes ELLs through at least four universal stages in order to master the language. These stages are: (a) completing the communication cycle, (b) assimilating the system, (c) developing skills, and (d) utilizing the language.

In Lado's framework, completing the communication cycle refers to the ELL comprehending the meaning, associating the meaning with the language form, and making connections to background knowledge and previous learning. The candy activity we had been given made no provisions for the fact that our lowest-level ELLs did not have the oral background nor the knowledge of American sweets to be able to successfully comprehend the language used in an initial experience developing a candy product. We had to predetermine the language needed during our LEA's first phase. We further expanded the LEA first phase to include activities for both written and oral comprehension. We took photographs of the students during the experience, printed these and organized them into binders, wrote questions for each binder such as Who is on page 10? and What ingredient is Joey holding on page 6? and allowed students to work in teams on these questions. We directed their attention to the written English on the packages of store bought candy and developed different worksheets on which the ELLs copied and recorded these. They further categorized the words by taste, appearance, touch, preferences, and so on.

We developed some worksheets to meet the goal of Lado's second stage, assimilating the system. We wanted the ELLs to establish an internalized system of English that would give them systematic knowledge of English, usable with other words and new situations. These worksheets focused their attention on the functional rules of grammar, pronunciation, word formation, and word families. We had given them the functions and forms which words shared and transferred this knowledge to other words. We wanted them to understand and produce well-formed new utterances for thought-provoking communication. These vocabulary worksheets became opportunities for the types of contextualized guided practice advocated by Nation (2001). Sometimes they decreased and other times they increased the amount of English used. It decreased it when the students were busy and focused on the task at hand. It increased it by creating a medium in which native speakers could work with ELLs to accomplish a language task regardless of the level of English of the ELLs. With the worksheet, the native speaker was in effect given a model to produce and reinforce.

In LEA's second phase, the teacher takes dictation from the students. Typically using LEA with beginner ELLs leads to having a meager dictation chart. However, conducting phase two after our rich phase one lead to more than one dictation exercise. We made a series of charts about our candy experiences.

The third stage for Lado is developing skills, i.e., speaking, listening, reading, and writing “that are not only internalized, but used at normal speed to reflect the language user's personal thinking” (p. 45). Again, we had to greatly expand upon the phases of LEA. The ELLs copied, rewrote, retold, rehearsed and presented our candy experiences.

Finally, Lado describes a utilization stage where the student focuses on the functional knowledge of rules of conversation in order to solve real problems, providing for decontextualization, i.e., the transfer of the skill learned in one context to another context, where the two contexts are different enough that the skill/concept may be applied to any relevant situation, not only the one in which it was originally learned. This final stage is traditionally thought of as a homework assignment for independent practice (Hunter, 1982). However, in content-based ELT, we find several examples such as Chamot's expansion phase (Chamot, 2005) and Calderon & Minaya-Rowe's (2005) consolidation of content and skills with cross-cutting strategies.

We strove to give the ELLs new opportunities to use English with native speakers and could have been satisfied with this level of decontextualized experiences. Yet these activities could easily become eclectic introductions of new English. It took careful planning to sequence activities so that skills and vocabulary introduced one day were reintroduced later in another context. Our initial LEA candy activity was followed by a more elaborate candy product. This was again followed by a LEA cookie activity. These three sequential LEA activities gave the ELLs opportunities to utilize what they had just learned in a different context.

We were also able to plan culminating events for the summer of 2004. We invited members of our families and of the larger community to celebrate the completion of our boats by launching them. The event illustrated what the ELLs had accomplished. We prepared the ELLs for the demands of this event. Some were interviewed by two television reporters, one wrote and recited a poem, another helped read a short speech, still another told the assembled crowd a joke, and we all memorized a series of gratitude chant/cheers for our sponsors.

We have followed the first summer project with a follow up project in the summer of 2005. In the second summer, changes were made. We included more comprehensible input and guided practice by downsizing the number of our ELLs to 20. We provided more individualized instruction to the lowest ELLs, brought in some graduate students working on a master's degree in ELT and asked them to train the other college students in the fundamentals of ELT prior to the start of the project.

Conclusion

How can we remain open to new teaching strategies without becoming overwhelmed with choices that may or may not enable students to use English beyond our class? One way is to link teaching and inquiry. Another is to incorporate the new within a framework of ELT principles. Still another was to plan for daily utilization of the English.

I was able to experience the innovation so fundamental to ELT by embarking on an innovative summer project in which college students tutored, mentored, and befriended younger ELLs. However, the success of the project was accomplished not by simply pairing ELLs to native speakers and giving them an interesting task to accomplish. We enabled them to use the English they were learning and participate more when we carefully planned our project activities according to ELT principles. It was an opportunity for me to examine ELT in a social setting, rich in a variety of activities. I was able to see that ELLs are more productive when we incorporate authentic materials and activities judiciously as part of a principled program of communication.

THE AUTHOR

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Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) as a Lever for Conceptual Change in Teachers

Mario Rinvolucri
Pilgrims, UK

INTRODUCTION

This presentation report is an attempt to evoke the feeling, atmosphere and interactive thought content of the session some of us experienced on the afternoon of Saturday, October 15th, at the 2005 Korea TESOL Conference.

The session began with participants putting their books down, standing up, and taking a partner. The partners faced each other and began moving their arms in unison, one following the other. In some cases, you could clearly make out who was leading the movements and who was the follower. With other pairs, it was really hard to discern who the leader might be: The two people simply seemed wrapped in a kind of instinctive harmony. At moments like these, you know that two humans are actually communicating, and doing so without the extraordinary complication of words.

A CENTRAL NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING CONCEPT

"Why start your session with a classical drama training mirroring exercise?" you might ask. After people resumed their seats, I explained that this session did not aim to be a comprehensive introduction to neuro-linguistic programming (NLP). For this I referred them to the books by Revell and Norman (1997) and Seymour and O'Connor (2003). The purpose of the session was to introduce one NLP concept and to examine just how central it is to our thinking as teachers. The concept in question is:

- The map is not the territory.

- We began chewing this over with the help of three exercises:

EXERCISE 1

Ten people came to the whiteboard at the front of the hall. Each took a marker and had 20 seconds to draw an impressionistic map of Korea. Here we had ten different spatial representations of the territory we conventionally call Korea. Some people drew the country diagonally rather than vertically, some showed the 38th parallel border, some had a clear northern border along the Yalu River, some included the island of Jeju, etc. . . . The maps were different enough to provoke some gasps from the audience.

Quite irrespective of the individual differences in perception, memory, and drawing ability, these maps illustrated the concept that *the map is not the territory* in their inability to show the curvature of the Earth and in their two-dimensionality: they showed no mountains or low places.

EXERCISE 2

For the second exercise, I dictated this sentence:

- I'll meet you at the Seoul City Hall.

People from around the room then told us what came to mind for them on hearing the phrase: *Seoul City Hall*. As you can imagine this building evoked varied responses from people; for some it was hardly known, for others a well-known landmark, for yet others, it was mainly felt to be a subway stop. Some thought it was an interesting building, while others felt it was ugly. We had a clear case of the map being different from the territory.

EXERCISE 3

I dictated the snippet *The old man looked out of the window* . . . and asked people to write one sentence describing the man who popped up before their mind's eye. We seemed to have as many old men as there were people in the room!

After the Session

You may well be wondering what all this has to do with teaching EFL, since after all, it is fairly obvious that people will react differently to the same thing. But is it that obvious? Ten minutes after this session I am writing about, a friend came up to me and asked, "How did your NLP workshop go? He did not ask *How do you feel after your NLP workshop?* or *Did you enjoy the workshop?* or *What wild guesses do you have about how people felt in the workshop?* Instead, he asked *How did your workshop go?*

His question ignores the fact that the multitude of people in that room all had their own hugely complex reactions to the workshop, based on their expectations, on their prior knowledge of the subject, on their mood after lunch, on their emotional reaction to me, and on a million things that I will never know.

In a loose, conversational way, my friend's question is understandable and legitimate. If you start thinking about his question, though, it was and is an absurdity based on the implicit theory that a teacher can comprehend what he is doing from his students' points of view. Clearly this is impossible, and the NLP messages to us teachers are:

- Stop assuming.
- Stop mind reading.
- Stop comfortably fantasizing.
- Ask for clear verbal feedback from your students.

There are so many examples from typical teacher talk that show how we assume that students will have done what we meant them to. Take, for example:

I taught them the comparative last week. Does the speaker really believe that the students, each and every one, learnt the comparative last week? Does she believe that each student understands the comparative in English in precisely the way that she, the teacher, understands it?

I would suggest to you that the dictum *The map is not the territory* should be central to all our thinking about our teaching. It is not a given in current EFL thinking. Current EFL thinking is not aware that accurate communication is, as Caleb Gattegno once said, close to a miracle. If you really take on board the idea that "the map is not the territory," it will change your whole approach to other people. Let me give you some examples.

In a disagreement with a colleague, you will be aware of the presence of two maps, theirs and yours, rather than rectitude (on your side) and error (on the other person's side). When a student regularly fails to hand in their homework, you will be more interested in discovering their map of the situation than in going ballistic or moralistic. The realization that "the map is not the territory" comes in very handy in situations of marital discord where both partners tend to mistake their own map for the territory. Have such things ever happened in your life?

IMPLICATIONS

Let us now turn to the implications of *The map is not the territory* for our teaching. If you take on board the fact that the subjective map and the out-there territory are often seriously different, you will change the sort of reading and listening exercises you give your students. You will start to prefer exercises that get the students telling each other about the different ways in which they have *elaborated* the text when listening or reading. You will find yourself abandoning comprehension questions about the listening or reading text since these questions implicitly deny that each student has their own, quite individual map of what they had just heard or read.

PERCEPTION ACTIVITY

At this point in the workshop, we did an activity to show that perception of units as small as single words varies hugely from one person to the next. Participants created four columns on a sheet in front of them with these headings:

I see	I hear	I feel through my body	I taste/smell

I then explained that I would dictate simple words to them and that each person should write the word in the column that corresponded to the sensory channel in which they got their *first* sensory representation of the word. So, for example, I dictate the word *cow*, and people who get a mental picture of the animal and put the word in column 1, under *I see*. Those who get an auditory representation of *cow* would write it in column 2, and so on.

When I had dictated 25 words, people worked with their neighbors and compared their placings of the words. The lecture hall was abuzz with excited voices as people realized just how different their sensory reactions to these words had been. With the word *mother*, some people got a picture, more people heard her, and the largest group felt her through their bodies. One or two people put *mother* under *taste/smell*. Here you have a typical exercise (first published by Davis & Rinvolucri, 1988) that works on the principle that each person will have their own map, even of single words, and that valuable language practice can be afforded by getting them to compare their maps.

STORYTELLING ACTIVITY

The last activity we did in the workshop was around storytelling. I told the group a searingly sad Vietnamese story, and then we explored the mental pictures that the telling had filled people's heads with. People worked in pairs and asked each other these technical questions:

- Were your pictures black and white or color?
- How big were the pictures?
- How close to you or far away were they?
- Did they have frames or did they go off into space?
- Were you actually in the space where the story took place?
- Did you mentally "become" any of the characters in the tale?
- Were your pictures well focused or blurry?
- Where they flat or did they have deep perspective?

People in the hall found that, just at the level of visual perception, the stories they had in their heads were quite different from those of their neighbors. They were fascinated to be exploring each other's visual mappings of the story. Here was real communicative follow up to a short listening task.

CONCLUSION

I suggested that any post-listening or post-reading exercise should deal with the current reality of the text as elaborated in each student's head and should not hark back to the original text. To ram this point home, I ended the session with a little story about an interview Umberto Eco gave to a journalist shortly after his novel, The Name of the Rose came out. After they had had coffee together, Eco asked the journalist, I know you have a busy life, but have you had a chance to read any of the book? She blushed scarlet, and told him she had read the whole book and some parts twice. Eco sat back and sighed, *Then we do have a problem. Do we discuss the parts you read once, the parts you read twice, or the text that I wrote?*

The Author

__Mario Rinvolucri__ is well known as a teacher trainer and has been in the English language teaching field for over 30 years, most of it with Pilgrims in the UK. Rinvolucri edits Pilgrim's online magazine, Humanising Language Teaching, and is co-author of Ways of Doing and many other ELT materials for teachers and students. Most recently he has co-authored Multiple Intelligences in EFL and Unlocking Self-Expression through NLP.

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Technology

Podcasts: A Language Lab in Your Pocket

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ABSTRACT

Over the last several years, there has been a noticeable shift in modern society - a time shift. Home entertainment devices, such as the ubiquitous VCR and more recently TiVO, have allowed people to record programs of interest and play them back at their convenience. While clearly the bane of network advertisers, this technology has been a boon to busy consumers. The latest item in this line of technology is the “podcast.” Simply put, a podcast is a pre-recorded audio program that is distributed via a subscription system to subscribers who then download the file to their iPod or other portable music player and listen to it on-the-go. This paper reports the brief history of podcasting, the transition from using traditional language learning-based audio tools to incorporating podcast technology in innovative ways in the EFL classroom, and how both educators and their students can easily create and distribute these podcasts using tools found on the Internet.

INTRODUCTION

The New Oxford American Dictionary has designated *podcast* as the 2005 Word of the Year. According to Oxford, writes Haskins (2005), at the beginning of the year, the word *podcast* was “an arcane activity, the domain of a few techies and self-admitted geeks” (para. 1). Reportedly coined by journalist Ben Hammersly, *podcast* is an amalgamation of the words *iPod* and *broadcast*. Defined by the New Oxford American Dictionary as “a digital recording of a radio broadcast or similar program, made available on the Internet for downloading to a personal audio player,” podcasting will take its place in the dictionary's lexicon in the updated version due out in early 2006. However, the term is a bit of a misnomer; neither podcasting nor podcast listening requires an iPod, and no broadcasting is really required. So what exactly is a podcast and what does it have to do with language learning?

Podcast History

The birth of podcasting is closely connected to the origin of RSS feeds. RSS feeds, or Really Simple Syndication feeds, were developed by Dave Winer beginning in 1997 (Winer, 2004). RSS feeds allow Internet users to automatically know when any web page changes have occurred. Winer used this idea to allow users to see updated web logs, or blogs, without having to go to the site. The information automatically came to the user rather than the user manually retrieving the information from the Internet. Over the years, Winer continued to develop and promote RSS. Eventually, he persuaded *The New York Times* and other news media to adopt RSS (Winer, 2004). Now Internet users can direct their computers to automatically provide the content they want. For example, instead of going to the sports section of an online newspaper, users can have news sent directly to their computers. Once subscription to the service is made, any newly posted article will automatically be delivered.

The next key step in the development of the technology was connecting the power of RSS with audio content, specifically MP3-encoded content. This idea was first taken up by former MTV VJ personality Adam Curry in 1999 (Curry, n.d.). The intention was to allow computers to slowly download large audio files, which was time consuming in the pre-broadband era. Curry, in association with Winer, helped develop technical specifications for including media files as enclosure links in the RSS protocol. This amazing partnership of old and new technologies basically went nowhere until 2004. Until then, most people used their iPods and other portable players exclusively for playing music. Curry, who wanted users to be able to download other types of audio content, initially developed a method to upload radio content as MP3 files that could be listened to any time. With limited programming experience, Curry took it upon himself to develop what he called iPodder, a software program that automatically put the audio directly onto an iPod. The broadcast industry, on the other hand, had no desire to embrace streaming media, let alone downloadable pre-recorded radio content (Mohney, 2004).

The final step, which allowed an explosion of podcasts, was integrating podcast downloading capability into Apple's iTunes. Initially, podcast listeners were listening to what they and their friends, virtual or otherwise, had created. These audio blogs had gone unnoticed or ignored by mainstream media. However, in May 2005, Apple CEO Steve Jobs "cited more than 8,000 podcasts, with new ones from Business Week, Forbes, Disney, and Sirius, as proof that podcasting has gone big time" (Louderback, 2005, para. 7). His integration of iTunes with the software for downloading podcasts built in took podcasting to the masses. ESL podcasting sites that had existed as untapped resources were suddenly being noticed.

Transition From the Language Laboratory

Language laboratories have been around in their basic format since the 1960s. The technological wonder of having audio content for language laboratories was indeed a revolution at that time. As early as the 1950s, Norman A. McQuown, former professor at the University of Chicago, realized the need for developing strategies for language learning. He concluded “all problems in which language is involved in one way or another may eventually be brought to a linguistics laboratory for aid in their solution” (*History*, n.d.). Indeed language labs were initially perceived as the solution to the problem of teaching a large number of students in a relatively short time. However, what continues to plague even today's modern language laboratory is an outdated model for language teaching and learning. This could be, in part, a lack of proper teacher training in the use of the technologies in the lab and a lack of imagination in devising activities that truly harness the power of the technology.

Recent integration of computer technologies has breathed new life into the concept of the language laboratory. More imaginative materials and language laboratory design have focused on using techniques such as pair work, group work, role play, and communication games. Additionally, technological improvements have freed instructors from such tasks as producing scores of cassette tapes, CDs, videotapes, and DVDs. Time can now be better spent not only on creating materials, but also on using those materials in a creative fashion. Educators can share their ideas, resources, and materials via the Internet. Content is no longer limited to traditional whole-class video screening or audio listening on an individual basis. A myriad of resources are just a mouse click away.

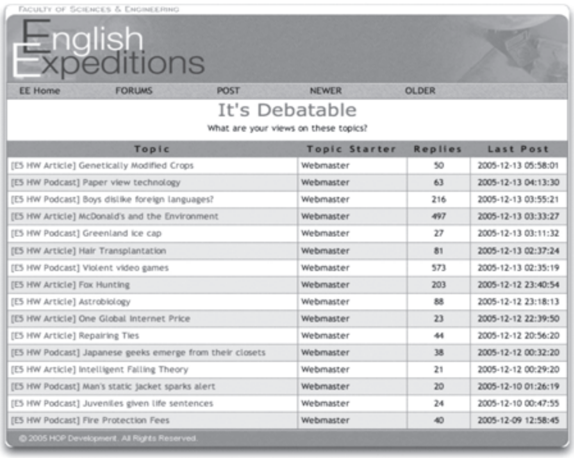
The significance of podcasting is not the innovation of technique or material, but rather its method of delivery. Just as RSS feeds are used for text-based content, podcasts are designed to bring audio and video content to the user rather than users having to manually retrieve it. Users no longer need to physically be in the language laboratory. With the ubiquitous home computer, this idea is not entirely new; however, even a laptop has its limits in mobility. Any MP3 player, the new video iPod, or Creative Technologies' Zen Vision can literally fit in your pocket. In addition, educational content for these devices can be seamlessly downloaded. The challenge for educators is to use it effectively.

Incorporating Podcast Technology

Since the use of language laboratory material is no longer limited to the language laboratory, the first innovation is to incorporate its use into the traditional classroom, home, bus, car, train, subway, or bicycle. Web sites that were once limited to the learner actively seeking out language learning content are now incorporating podcast technology. One such web site, *Breaking News English*, addresses the obvious connection of a current events course with the need for current events materials. Creator Sean Banville uploads a news story to his web site everyday. A podcast subscription will automatically download his daily news story in audio form, which can then be easily transferred to any MP3 player. In addition to this audio file, Banville provides lesson plans that contain a news article, communication activities, pair work, discussion, reading, and vocabulary exercises. Two different levels of classroom lesson plans are reproducible in MS Word and PDF formats (Banville, n.d.). Instructors can use these free downloadable materials in the classroom without ever taking advantage of the podcast function. However, creative use of these materials enhances the classroom experience by expanding it to include anyplace. Something as simple as a true/false quiz of current events from the web site may compel students to subscribe to the podcast and listen to its content daily.

At Shizuoka University of Art and Culture, instructors are creating their own podcasts to be utilized in a newspaper reading course that does not have a language laboratory component. In addition to teaching the traditional aspects of newspaper articles, including inverted pyramid format, newsworthiness, and headline meanings, this course also incorporates a podcasting listening module. Worksheets that were once completed only through written material have been modified to include the podcast component. This blending of methods and technologies enhances course objectives while reinforcing speaking, listening, and writing skills, all of which are not normally associated with a course such as this.

At Ritsumeikan University and Shizuoka University of Art and Culture, a password-protected, inter-university forum allows students to safely and anonymously interact. While these forums have been actively used by students for many years, this year podcasting has been added to enhance the forum exchange. In the “It's Debatable” forum, students listen to a podcast of a newsworthy event and respond to it by posting their opinion. The use of forums allows students the time needed to form their opinions and practice expressing them in writing. Cooperation between universities allows for a division of labor in teacher created materials, utilizing the strengths of individual instructors. A much larger pool of students interact on a limited number of topics providing a variety of opinions. Teachers no longer have to wait until the day of class to see if students have completed their assignment. Students are ready to talk about any given assignment upon entering the class.


Faculty of Sciences & Engineering
English Expeditions
EE Home FORUMS POST NEWER OLDER
It's Debatable
What are your views on these topics?

Topic	Topic Starter	Replies	Last Post
[E5 HW Article] Genetically Modified Crops	Webmaster	50	2005-12-13 05:58:01
[E5 HW Podcast] Paper view technology	Webmaster	63	2005-12-13 04:13:30
[E5 HW Podcast] Boys dislike foreign languages?	Webmaster	216	2005-12-13 03:55:21
[E5 HW Article] McDonald's and the Environment	Webmaster	497	2005-12-13 03:33:27
[E5 HW Podcast] Greenland ice cap	Webmaster	27	2005-12-13 03:11:32
[E5 HW Article] Hair Transplantation	Webmaster	81	2005-12-13 02:37:24
[E5 HW Podcast] Violent video games	Webmaster	573	2005-12-13 02:35:19
[E5 HW Article] Fox Hunting	Webmaster	203	2005-12-12 23:40:54
[E5 HW Article] Astrobiology	Webmaster	88	2005-12-12 23:18:13
[E5 HW Article] One Global Internet Price	Webmaster	23	2005-12-12 22:39:50
[E5 HW Article] Repairing Ties	Webmaster	44	2005-12-12 20:56:20
[E5 HW Podcast] Japanese geeks emerge from their closets	Webmaster	38	2005-12-12 00:32:20
[E5 HW Article] Intelligent Falling Theory	Webmaster	21	2005-12-12 00:29:20
[E5 HW Podcast] Man's static jacket sparks alert	Webmaster	20	2005-12-10 01:26:19
[E5 HW Podcast] Juveniles given life sentences	Webmaster	24	2005-12-10 00:47:55
[E5 HW Podcast] Fire Protection Fees	Webmaster	40	2005-12-09 12:58:45

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One of the benefits is that students become accustomed to utilizing Internet resources by accessing them for homework assignments. Combining podcasts with newspaper articles is of particular interest to educators in the so-called karaoke cultures of East Asia, where subtitles appear on native language television broadcasts at a much higher rate than in the West. Showing students how to use and subscribe to such podcasts increases autonomous learning skills. Finally, teacher-created podcasts targeting specific goals further support the learning process.

The Next Steps in Podcasting

The technology of an audio-only podcast is already being replaced with an enhanced podcast that combines the audio content "with embedded photos at publisher defined points throughout the podcast" (Ludington, 2005, para. 1). One obvious, creative use of such an enhanced podcast would be to have students create walking tours of their hometown, school, or local tourist sites. Students write a script that they record for use as a podcast. In addition to the audio file, students take pictures of key sites or points along the way during the tour. Once completed, these files can be available to anyone via a podcast subscription. Another idea would be to have students create "how-to" podcasts of everyday events such as ticket purchasing, restaurant ordering, or ATM use for students of other countries and cultures.

The idea of enhanced podcasts may be short-lived with the introduction of the video podcast. Virtual walking tours as video podcasts can be downloaded by other students who cannot travel to the actual site of the walking tour. Video interviews of fellow classmates, instructors, or even local business people can be accessed by prospective students or their parents. A short news report of school events can be created to disseminate information to the rest of the student body. Currently, both enhanced and video podcasts are most easily available through iTunes. However, since iTunes is available in both Macintosh and PC formats, this only becomes a problem when choosing a stand-alone player.

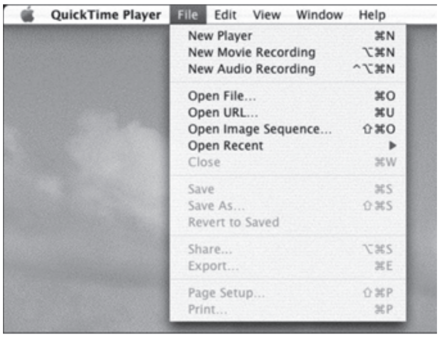
Creating Podcasts

There are two main components in authoring an audio podcast: creating an audio file and exporting the file as a podcast-friendly RSS feed. While there are several ways to create an audio file, the quickest and easiest way may be to utilize QuickTime Pro, a commercial software package. An alternative to paying for QuickTime Pro is to use Audacity, which is available as a free download. (See the selected links list at the end of this paper for further information.)

Using QuickTime Pro to create podcast audio files on either a Macintosh or Windows platform takes only a few simple steps. The six steps outlined below illustrate how to create audio files on the Macintosh platform.

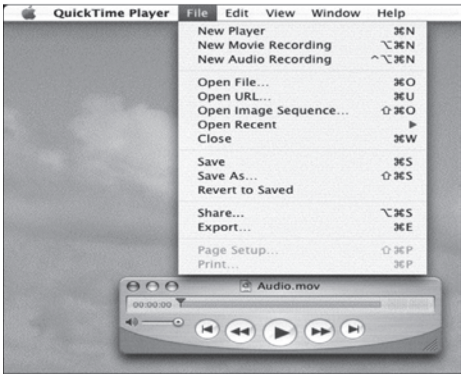
Step 1. Get Internet QuickTime Pro.

Step 2. Choose "New Audio Recording" from the File menu.



Step 3. Push the (red) button to start recording. Push it again to stop recording.

Step 4. Export the file from the File menu.



Step 5. In the Export Dropdown file choose "Movie to MPEG-4."

Step 6. For use with iTunes, you can use either Apple's proprietary AAC (.m4a) format or the more widely used MP3 format, which will work with nearly any audio player.

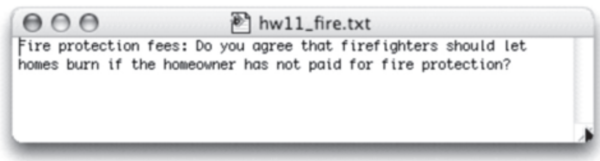
PUBLISHING PODCASTS

The second part of creating a podcast is publishing for availability. To do this you will need to either use blogging software which completely automates the task, such as Feedburner, or create your own RSS feed and upload the feed and audio files to your web server. If you have the PHP middleware program available on your web server, you can easily automate your RSS feed creation process by following these simple steps.

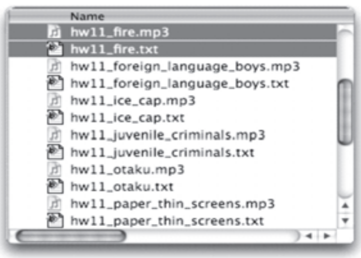
Step 1. Download Canton Becker's free RSS 2.0 MP3 php subscription feed (http://www.ontology.com/canton/projects/podcasting-script.php) and change the environmental variables (contact information, web server name, title, etc.) as detailed in the script.

Step 2. Upload the modified subscription feed from Step 1 to your web server, naming it appropriately.

Step 3. Create a short blurb for each podcast, making sure to name it the same as the podcast itself.



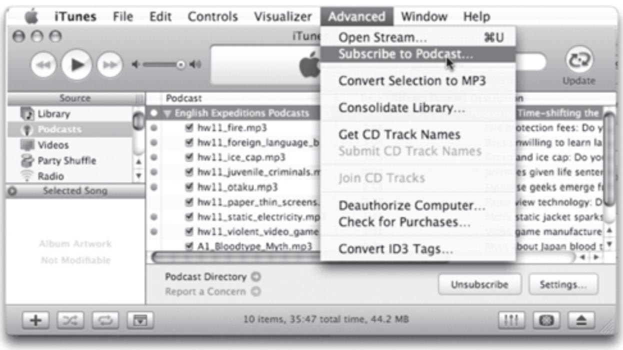
Step 4. Upload the podcast file and the blurb to your web server.



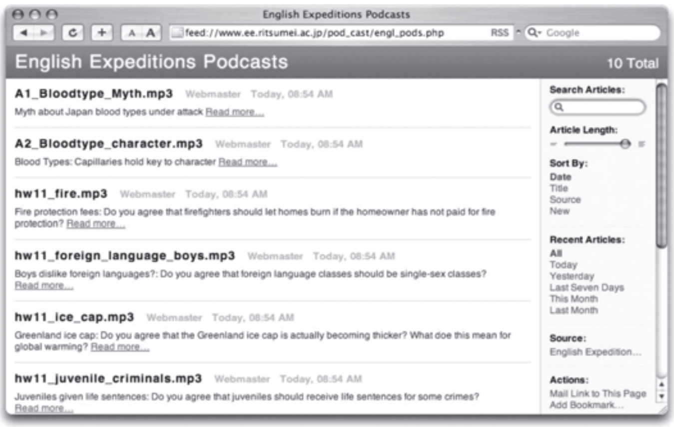
Once the files have been uploaded, the podcasts can be subscribed to as outlined below. The subscription feed file will automatically keep the feed current. For subsequent podcasts, only Steps 3 and 4 need to be repeated.

SUBSCRIBING TO PODCASTS

Subscribing to iTunes podcasts is a simple process. First, make sure that you have iTunes installed and running on your computer (http://www.apple.com/itunes/). Second, select the "Advanced" menu. Next, choose "Subscribe to Podcast." Finally, enter the "feed" URL into the box. Other podcasts are set up as one-click subscriptions. Just click on the link and your subscription is automatically added to the contents of your iTunes folder.



Alternatively, if you do not use iTunes or prefer to use an RSS-compliant browser, such as Safari or Firefox for podcasts, you can simply enter the URL of the RSS feed into the location box of the browser.



CONCLUSION

In the last year, podcasting has gone from the relative obscurity of an enthusiast's home to the studios of the mainstream broadcasting industry, and now looks set to continue to revolutionize the variety of ways we can receive broadcasts. As far as educators and students are concerned, audio and video content that enhances the learning experience can quite easily be produced and made available for study at the students' leisure. As long as educators have this facility, it remains to be seen how effectively they can put it to use, but with EFL web sites like Sean Banville's *Breaking News*, as well as many others appearing daily, it should not be long before we find out. In short, the advent of a personal language laboratory in every student's pocket will continue to challenge educators to come up with creative and effective ways to use this resource.

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Selected Internet Links on Podcasting

1. *Frequently Asked Questions*
   http://www.podcastingnews.com/topics/Podcasting_FAQ.html
2. *The Place to Find Podcasts other than on iTunes*
   http://podcastalley.com/
3. *Download iTunes*
   http://www.apple.com/itunes/download/
4. *Podcast Software*
   http://www.podcastingnews.com/topics/Podcasting_Software.html
5. *Start Your Own Podcast*
   http://www.macworld.com/2005/04/secrets/junecreate/index.php
6. *Audacity* free, open source software for recording and editing sounds
   http://audacity.sourceforge.net/
7. *Create Your Own Podcast: MAC*
   http://www.apple.com/quicktime/tutorials/podcasting.html
8. *Create Your Own Podcast: Windows*
   http://www.apple.com/quicktime/tutorials/podcasting_win.html
9. *Publish Your Podcast*
   http://www.feedburner.com/fb/a/home
   http://www.ontology.com/canton/projects/podcasting-script.php
10. *Ready to Use Lessons with Podcasts*
    http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/index.html
    http://www.eslpod.com/
    http//englishcaster.com/bobrob/

Classroom Concordancing: Increasing Vocabulary Size for Academic Reading

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Abstract

This paper is based on action research aimed at solving the problem of engineering students' insufficient vocabulary size for academic reading. In the study, vocabulary learning was integrated into an existing reading course, and classroom concordancing was applied with the objective of comparing its learning effects on vocabulary learning with those of a conventional method. In addition, the study aimed at exploring students' learning processes and attitudes while dealing with classroom concordancing. The study was conducted with two intact groups of engineering students in one academic semester. In the preparatory stage, a purpose-built corpus was compiled from academic texts in engineering fields. Then target words were selected from high frequency words in the corpus, which were also words in the GSL or AWL lists. This target word list was used to design all lessons, materials, activities, and tests. During the study, the experimental group was trained through paper-based and hands-on activities to deal with concordance information in the corpus, whereas the comparison group was taught through reading and vocabulary exercises. This paper describes the background of the study, general aspects of "classroom concordancing," research methodology, and findings from the study.

Background of the Study

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) countries, reading academic texts in English is closely relevant to students' needs, especially at the university level. Due to high technology transfer from the West, new knowledge is necessarily learned through the medium of English, so reading academic texts in English is currently becoming a central means to learning new information. In order to keep up with rapid advancement in technology, engineering students, for example, are increasingly assigned to read various types of texts in English relevant to their specialized fields. These texts include handouts, textbooks, manuals, journals, and reports. As a result, the English class has become the main means of preparing EFL students to cope with the demand of reading such texts. However, it is often found in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) situations that students' reading proficiency cannot be properly developed due to their inadequate vocabulary size. This problem is frequently mentioned in related papers such as the Cob and Horst (2001) study with Omani students and the Nurweni and Read (1999) study with Indonesian students. Similarly, at Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna (RMUTL), Tak Campus in Thailand, engineering students' limited of lexical knowledge is considered to be the main source of problems in developing their academic reading proficiency. To verify this problem, in January 2004 the vocabulary size of a sample group of students was measured using the Vocabulary Level Tests developed by Nation (2001) and Schmitt, Schmitt, and Clapham (2001). The results confirmed that the students' lexical knowledge was much below the critical base needed for academic reading.

Lexical knowledge is an indispensable part of reading comprehension. Students' limitation of vocabulary size certainly inhibits their understanding of the reading texts. To adequately understand a piece of text, readers must be familiar with most of the words in that text. Previous studies (Nation, 2001; Cobb & Horst, 2001; and Coxhead & Nation, 2001) suggest that students need to be familiar with 95% of the words occurring in a text for adequate understanding. It is also indicated that just over 90% of the running words in academic texts are among the 3,000 high frequency word families in two of the mostly cited word lists, that is, the GSL (General Service List of English Words) and either the UWL (University Word List) or the AWL (Academic Word List). In the case of RMUTL students, their lexical knowledge was found to be much below the lexical threshold for academic reading, so the chance for themto properly understand the texts was very low as well. As a result, their reading proficiency could not develop well without adequate vocabulary. To improve reading proficiency, the students' lexical knowledge gap needed, first and foremost, to be bridged.

Nevertheless, remedial work on bridging this gap was not easily conducted because of the time limitation. In engineering programs, only a few EAP courses were provided and no courses specifically focused on vocabulary learning. The vocabulary component had to be integrated into an existing reading course, and increasing vocabulary size had to be conducted simultaneously with developing reading proficiency in one academic semester. It was necessary to enable students to read academic texts in English as quickly and effectively as possible. Therefore, the conventional method of teaching reading skills and strategies was inadequate to prepare the students properly in a limited time, especially when a large of vocabulary had to be integrated. In such a circumstances, a new effective teaching method was needed to enable students to become more independent in their own learning even after finishing EAP courses. “Classroom concordancing” was selected as a potential solution to this problem.

CLASSROOM CONCORDANCING

“Classroom concordancing” is applied via a corpus-based method prominently used in language analysis in the fields of lexicography and linguistics. It involves corpus compilation from authentic texts and a concordancing program called a *concordancer*. In brief, a *corpus* is a collection of texts compiled for linguistic study whereas a *concordancer* is computer software to access the information in the corpus and then display the output in a concordance format. Basically, most concordancers are used for counting the number of words in the corpus and the frequency of each word's occurrence. In addition, a concordancer can search a particular to-be-studied word and then sort and display data in a way in which word behaviors in various contexts can be observed easily. The corpus outputs are typically displayed in concordance lines and this type of display is called a KWIC (keywords-in-contexts) format. For example, the following illustration is the corpus output from searching the word *current*. In a KWIC format, the keyword *current* is displayed in the center, whereas the immediate contexts of each word are on both sides (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Extract From Concordance Output of *Current*

For electronics,	current	may also be measured in mA.
Every electric	current	produces a magnetic field.
The electron 'flow' is called an electric	current	the electrical force is called voltage.
The metal parts of the torch must conduct electric	current	if the torch is to function.
The electron drift in random directions until the	current	starts to flow.
Microsoft Word is the dominant word processor in	current	use.
For instance, many	current	machines use 64-bit buses.
Three	current	waveforms are produced.
The earth wire can carry enough	current	to blow a fuse.
When measuring high	current	value, refer to resistor self-heating.
The	current	version is AutoCAD 2005, which was

As a corpus and a concordancer are always used together in language analysis, the method is typically called a corpus-based method or a concordance-based method. When a corpus-based method is applied in language instruction, the method is often referred to as *classroom concordancing* underpinned by a learning approach called data-driven learning (DDL). According to Johns and King (1991, p. iii), classroom concordancing is "the use in the classroom of computer-generated concordances to get students to explore the regularities of patterning in the target language, and the development of activities and exercises based on concordance output."

The corpus-based method was introduced to the area of language education a few decades ago. At the beginning, however, it was applied exclusively among developers of curricula, syllabuses, and materials. Recently, there has been increasing encouragement for this method to be applied directly in the language classroom. It is argued that both language teachers and learners should have opportunities to make direct contact with relevant authentic information in the corpus. On one hand, teachers are encouraged to make use of the corpus information to keep up with the current use of authentic language, prepare classroom materials, and find examples of authentic language, etc. On the other hand, Leech (1997, p. 8) mentions, "It is important that the students should be able to acquire the necessary 'hands on' know-how, so that they can explore corpora for their own purposes." In language instruction, classroom concordancing is a very useful method for training students to observe a words' behaviors in multiple contexts. With the capability of a concordancer, programs can quickly introduce learners to a large number of target words in various contexts in a short time. Using this method, according to Cobb and Horst (2001), students can be systematically exposed to hundreds of target words in authentic contexts at an accelerated pace. In addition, Leech (1997) points out that the method makes possible a direct contact between students and immediate relevant data. Students can make use of a unique information resource that is waiting to be unlocked by the human intelligence. Leech (1997, p. 3) emphasizes, "It is this experiential confrontation with the material of study that can make corpus work so rewarding for the students."

So far, empirical evidence in the area of language instruction is not abundant, and very few classroom-based studies were found in Thai educational contexts besides the studies of Sripicharn (2002) and Todd (2001). However, despite different focuses, earlier related works such as those published in Aston (2001), Wichmann, Fligelstone, McEnery, and Knowles (1997), and Johns and King (1991) reported a positive influence of concordancing on language learning in terms of both cognitive and affective aspects.

The Study

This classroom-based research aimed to incorporate classroom concordancing into language teaching practice. It was interesting to find out whether this method could be effectively used for increasing students' vocabulary for academic reading. The objectives were to compare its learning effects with a conventional method's effects on vocabulary learning in terms of student vocabulary size, ability to transfer lexical knowledge to new contexts, and retention rate. In addition, it aimed at explore students' learning processes and attitudes while dealing with classroom concordancing.

Research Methodology

The study was designed in the form of a matching-only pretest-posttest comparison group design (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). It was conducted with two intact groups of RMUTL engineering students in one academic semester, June-September 2005. To equate the groups, the participants from one group were matched in pairs with the other group according to their level of English proficiency, based on the pretest scores. In the preparatory stage, a purpose-built corpus of around 500,000 words was compiled from academic texts in engineering fields (i.e., textbooks, handouts, manuals, news, articles, advertisements, and abstracts). The text topics concerned general interests shared by all disciplines of engineering such as energy, technical drawing, and computer-assisted engineering. Most texts were from Web-based sources recommended by engineering instructors. After the corpus was compiled, target words were selected from high frequency words in the corpus, which were also words in the GSL or AWL lists. This method of word selection ensured that words studied in EAP classes would likely be encountered by students in their specialized reading. The target word list was used to design all lessons, materials, activities, and tests.

During the study, most learning conditions in both groups were similar, except for the methods used. Both groups were taught with the same syllabuses and lessons within the same period of time. Each weekly lesson focused on studying the same target words. All tests and review tasks were also similar. The differences between them were due to the different requirements of the methods used. The comparison group was taught with a conventional teaching method, whereas the experimental group was exposed to classroom concordancing. The former was taught reading skills together with reading and vocabulary exercises in a normal classroom. The latter was trained to deal with concordance information using paper-based and hands-on activities in a language laboratory equipped with enough computers for each participant to use.

As mentioned above, both groups of students studied the same target words in each weekly lesson, but with the different teaching/learning methods. For example, in teaching words used for giving definitions and examples, the target words for both groups were similar (e.g., *mean*, *define*, *refer*, *represent*, *such as*). Two examples of handouts, shortened for illustrative purposes appear below. The first was used with the comparison group, and the other, with the experimental group (see Figures 2 & 3).

Figure 2. Example of a Comparison Group Handout

Activities 1: Read the following passage and answer the questions.

1. How many words are defined in the passage?
2. What are they?
3. What words or groups of words are used for giving definitions?
4. What words or groups of words are used for giving examples?

Machines

The term 'machine' *means* an assembly of parts operating together to perform work. A machine *is* generally *referred to as* any mechanical or electrical device that transmits energy to perform tasks. A simple machine *is defined as* a mechanical component *such as* a bearing, gear, or screw, whereas a machine tool *is defined as* a powered mechanical device *such as* a lathe, mill, drill, etc.

A computer-controlled machine *is known as* a computer-numerical-controlled (CNC) machine. A CNC machine *refers* specifically *to* the machine tools which are controlled by computers in manufacturing work. It *is* sometimes *called* machine intelligence or artificial intelligence. In one sense, CNC machines may be said to *represent* special industrial robot systems.

Answer the questions according to the passage.

1. What is a machine?
2. What is a simple machine?
3. What are examples of a simple machine?

Activities 2: Study the words used for giving definitions in the following sentences.

'Machine' *means* an assembly of parts operating together to perform work.
A machine *is defined as* an assembly of parts operating together to perform work.
A machine *is referred to as* an assembly of parts operating together to perform work.

Match the words in column A with their definitions in column B. Then make sentences like the above sentences.

A	B
…… Energy	a. movement energy
…… Kinetic energy	b. the flow of electron
…… A semiconductor	c. an ability to do work
…… An electric current	d. a material that may act as a conductor or as an insulator

Activities 3: Complete the following sentences with the given words.

means defined refers referred

1. Binary …………………… twice or two.
2. Technology ………………… to the study and science of techniques.
3. In this context, data is ………………… as a collection of numbers or characters.
4. Artificial intelligence (AI) is ……………… to as intelligence shown by anything manufactured by human.
5. Random Access Memory (RAM) …………… that the memory cells can be accessed in any order.

In Activity 1, the students were presented with a short reading passage containing the to-be-studied words: *mean*, *define*, *refer*, etc. First, students' attention was drawn to the target words highlighted in *italics*. A set of questions was given as a guide for students to get specific information from the passage. After reading comprehension was checked, a set of sentences, as in Activity 2, was given for studying different collocations of *means*, *is defined as*, and *is referred to as*. Next, another exercise was assigned for students to match simple technical terms such as *energy* and *an electric current* with their definitions, and then use the matched pairs to make sentences that include these target words. In other follow-up exercises, such as Activity 3, students retrieved this lexical knowledge to complete the given sentences or a cloze passage.

Figure 3. Example of an Experimental Group Handout

Activity 1: Search the words *refer**, *define**, and *mean** to find the answers to the following questions.
1. Which form of each searched word, active or passive, is mostly used?
2. Which keyword is often followed by *to*?
3. Which keywords are often followed by *as*?
4. When is *as* used after these searched words?
5. What are typical collocations of these searched words?

Activity 2: Search the corpus to find the definitions of the following words in *italics*.
1. *Primary storage* is sometimes referred to as ....
2. *Current* refers to ....
3. In RF circuits, *Fo* means ....
4. *Power* is defined as ....

Activity 3: Each set of the given concordances has the same keywords missing from the dotted lines. Read the concordances and determine which given keyword is missing from each set.

means defined referred

Set 1	Q is	____	as the frequency divided by the bandwidth, measured f
	One horsepower was	____	as the amount of power needed to lift 33,000 pounds
	The volt was	____	as the potential difference across a conductor when a
	The potential difference is	____	as the amount of work per change.
Set 2	"Q = 0.5 C"	____	the quantity of electric charge is 0.
	An intangible thing	____	a thing you can't grab it and throw it against the wall.
	Work	____	moving something, lifting something, warming something,
	The term "ground potential"	____	there is no difference in potential (voltage) between a circuit
Set 3	Historically, "memory"	____	to "magnetic core memory" in the 1950s.
	Engineering drawing are	____	to as "blue prints."
	Such circuits are	____	to as "conventional" current as opposed to electron flow.
	A family of CPU designs is	____	to as a CPU architecture

On the other hand, in the experimental group, the students were required to explore language information from the corpus rather than obtain language input from the teacher. The handouts, such as the one in the following example, were used as guides for students to study via the corpus information by encouraging them to observe the immediate contexts of keywords.

With the use of a concordancer, the needed information in Activity 1 and 2 of Figure. 3 could be sought and obtained quickly by observing the corpus information from the concordance display such as that for the following short extract of *refer** (Fig. 4). The information concerning the words *mean** and *define** could also be similarly obtained. A few more exercises were then used to encourage students to retrieve this lexical information by finding the missing words from the given sets of paper-based concordances, such as the one presented in Activity 3, or by completing a cloze passage with the target words deleted.

Figure 4: Extract from Concordance Output of Refer*

Primary storage can be used to	refer	to local random-access disk storage.
Secondary storage would	refer	to offline, sequential-access storage like tape
Rather than using the word electricity to	refer	to the quantity of electric charge, many sour
Computer mainboards are	referred	to as motherboards.
Such circuits are	referred	to as 'random logic'.
Electric current is	referred	to as the movement of charges.
Energy is	referred	to as 'an ability to do work'.
A family of CPU designs is	referred	to as a CPU architecture.
The flow of electrons is	referred	to as electric current.
This gravitational force is	referred	to as ‘g’ in equations.
The resistance is	referred	to as ESR (Equivalent Series Resistance).
Engineering drawing is often	referred	to as 'blueprint'.
Primary storage is sometimes	referred	to as 'main memory'.
Electric current is sometimes	referred	to as amperage, by analogy with ‘voltage’.
Every device from the industrial revolution was	referred	to as an engine.
“Four-stroke”	refers	to the number of piston strokes required to
Electronic design automation (EDA)	refers	to the category of tools for designing and
Current	refers	to the movement of charges.
True ground	refers	to Earth itself.

Research Instruments and Data Collection

For data collection, there were six main types of instruments: classroom materials; pretests, post-tests, and delayed tests; students' logs; teacher's field notes; two sets of questionnaires; and interviews. The pretest, post-test, and the delayed test were identical. At the beginning, the pretest and the first set of questionnaires were administered to collect preliminary data. After each weekly lesson, students' logs were used for the students in the experimental group to reflect their own feeling, opinions, and suggestions while dealing with classroom concordancing, and teacher's field notes were recorded from the teachers' observations and reflections on students' behaviors. Every three weeks, the same review task was assigned to both groups as an on-going assessment. At the end of the study, the post-test and the second set of questionnaires were administered, and the interview was conducted with half of the students in the experimental group. Finally, about a month after the study, a delayed test was administered in order to measure students' retention of vocabulary knowledge.

FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

The study was conducted from June to September 2005 and the delayed test was administered at the beginning of the next academic semester in November. By the time this paper was written, the process of data collection had been completed. However, some findings are selectively discussed in this paper. Only the descriptive data are presented since most data are still in the grouping and analyzing process.

Regarding learning effects from the different methods used, it was found from four review tasks and all tests that the students in the experimental group were likely to perform better than the comparison group in all areas of definitional knowledge, ability to transfer lexical knowledge to new contexts, and retention rate. Nevertheless, these findings still have to be statistically tested to determine whether the differences between both groups were significantly different or not.

In terms of students' processes while dealing with classroom concordancing, it was observed that it took about five weeks for most students to become familiar with the method. The students were fully motivated when the method was introduced in the first week because they liked working with a computer. However, their motivation declined in the next few weeks due to a large amount of corpus information and their unfamiliarity with the contexts of linguistic input. After being trained to use the concordancing method for observing word behaviors in different contexts, the students could gradually better cope with the large amount of data by screening out irrelevant information and paying more attention to the language point being focused on, such as collocations of the targets words. According to data from students' logs and interviews, students made use of the contexts of particular words in reading texts more than ever. Before being introduced to classroom concordancing they had not paid much attention to word collocations in normal reading of paper passages. After they were trained to observe word collocations in the concordance lines, they looked for regular collocations of particular words when they encountered those words in typical paper texts and learned, to a certain degree, how to form their own hypotheses. For example, after they learned that typical collocations of *refer* were *refer(s) to* and *(be) referred to as*, they paid more attention to the immediate contexts of *refer* in their specialized texts in order to verify their constructed lexical knowledge. This performance was also helpful for consolidating their new knowledge of each word's various aspects.

Most students agreed that classroom concordancing was helpful for vocabulary learning and for developing the ability to do language analysis. Asked to compare the usefulness of a dictionary with that of classroom concordancing for vocabulary learning, the students indicated that they were useful for different purposes. The dictionary was useful for providing word definitions and a few examples of word uses, whereas the corpus information provided plenty of examples of authentic uses in familiar contexts rather than giving the definitions directly. The authenticity of the texts also encouraged them to learn more as they were aware that the texts were closely similar to their specialized texts. Words studied in the class were likely to be found in their academic reading. As to the question of whether they would continue to use classroom concordancing for their own learning after finishing the EAP course, some students said that they would, while others were unsure. The students mentioned the need for teacher's support and for longer training before they could properly use the method independently. After being trained for one semester, they could deal somewhat with classroom concordancing. Their computer skill for operating the concordancer was adequate but their skills for linguistic observation still needed a teacher's guidance. However, all of them were sure that they could deal with the method better if they were trained longer. Some students also suggested that the lessons should be designed with more variety of activities in order to make the lessons more interesting. Overall, students' attitudes were positive.

CONCLUSION

Classroom concordancing is another effective option in solving the problems of students' low reading proficiency due to inadequate vocabulary background knowledge. This method is very useful for increasing students' vocabulary. Firstly, it can be an important tool for selecting target words. Frequency-based selection of words ensures that the selected words are meaningful for the students, as they likely occur in their specialized reading texts. Secondly, contextualization of target words can be quickly done and plenty of examples of authentic language use can be easily found with classroom concordancing. Thirdly, classroom concordancing makes it possible for direct contact between students and authentic language highly relevant to their needs, and this contact also motivates them to learn. Finally, students' learning independence is consolidated since the concordancing skills enable them to continue to explore for new knowledge by themselves even after finishing the English courses.

However, it may take some time before the potential of applying classroom concordancing becomes evident. In order to make use of the method, students need training to develop their computer and linguistic skills. Such training has to be gradually conducted to prevent student discouragement due to dealing with a vast amount of corpus information. At the beginning stage, some language input may have to be simplified for students with low proficiencies and linguistic examples must be carefully selected. To make the lessons interesting, the lessons should be designed to provide, as much as possible, a variety of activities. Despite being time consuming, the use of classroom concordancing is worth implementing in order to train students to be more independent in their own learning. Though it may be impractical to base an entire course on classroom concordancing,it can still be used as a supplementary method for students to acquire another useful studying skill.

It can be concluded from this study that the application of classroom concordancing effectively increased students' vocabulary for academic reading. However, the findings are focused mainly on increasing lexical knowledge. It would be interesting to do further study on exploring the method's effects on students' reading comprehension in order to obtain related empirical evidence contributing to the area of teaching English for Academic Purposes.

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Exploration of Students' Attitudes Toward Learning English through CALL

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study employs a triangular approach to explore students' attitudes toward learning English through computer-assisted language learning (CALL) in a Thai university. Based on needs to revise curriculum and to develop effective CALL materials, this study aims to: (a) examine students' attitude toward learning English through CALL; (b) investigate advantages, disadvantages and problems students may encounter during their courses of study; (c) seek ways for implementing and improving CALL materials to satisfy students' needs and administrative policy. The data for the analysis was drawn from questionnaires, observations, and interviews of students registered in four fundamental English courses. The questionnaires elicited three types of information: (a) students' attitudes toward learning English through CALL, (b) course content, and (c) roles of instructors in CALL classrooms in association with a variety of learning activities, difficulty of learning tasks and activities, and problems students may encounter in CALL classrooms. Through observation and interview sessions, students' behaviors and attitudes were further examined in order to triangulate the findings. The analyses suggested positive student attitudes towards CALL course content and activities, and their need to have instructors, as facilitators, get involved in classroom activities. Through CALL courses of study, students realized that they had become more autonomous learners of English. The findings of the analyses were used to develop a framework for fundamental English curriculum revision. The study concludes with implications and suggestions for further improvement of CALL courses with emphasis on students' understanding of CALL classroom philosophy and on instructors' involvement in classroom activities.

OVERVIEW

The School of English in a university in the northeastern part of Thailand has been using computer-assisted programs as a teaching tool since the existing curriculum was implemented with the aim of autonomous learning. The university is the first to implement CALL in English instruction. The CALL programs included a variety of in-house lessons on reading, listening, grammar, and vocabulary in order for students to be able to practice English outside instructor-guided tutorial classes, which were mostly lecture-based. Thus, the classroom materials and CALL programs were developed based on autonomous learning theory and practice. However, problems arose after the programs had been in use for a period of time. Instructors reported problems with CALL materials, such as a lack of explanatory feedback and difficult reading texts. Also, learners' and instructors' lack of understanding, both of their roles in the CALL classroom and of autonomous learning philosophy, in addition to their misperception of technology as a “change agent for the teaching process” (Johnson, Schwab, & Fao, 1999), led to different types of problems in CALL classrooms. The School of English initiated general attempts to solve the problems found in CALL classrooms due to previous curriculum and material development, implementation of web-based exercises, and simplification of reading texts. This research, the exploration of learners' attitudes toward learning English through CALL, is an attempt to improve CALL materials and classrooms with three main objectives: (a) to explore learners' attitudes toward learning English through CALL, (b) to study strengths, weaknesses, and problems in CALL materials and classrooms, and (c) to seek suggestions to effectively improve CALL materials in English classrooms from the learners' perspective. The research attempts to find answers to three research questions with regard to (a) students' attitudes toward learning English through CALL, (b) problems students found with CALL materials, and (c) changes needed in CALL materials development.

Literature Review

Computer-assisted language learning programs have been widely used in the instruction of English as a second/foreign language. In the literature, a number of research studies focus on the efficacy of language learning through CALL programs. Zhong and Shey (2002) examined changes caused by the introduction of multimedia technology to a language classroom. From their analyses of in-class observations, audiovisual recordings, and instructors' lesson plans, Zhong and Shey found that the implementation of multimedia innovation would not be successful if learners and instructors did not understand the philosophy of CALL instruction and of multimedia innovation in the classroom. They concluded that both learners and instructors must be trained and brought to realize the advantages of the new teaching/learning methodology. Furthermore, they should understand their role in the CALL classroom, which places emphasis on learner-centeredness. Likewise, Johnson, Schwab, and Fao's (1999) study indicated the importance of learners' and instructors' understanding of their roles in a CALL classroom for the success and efficacy of an innovation.

There are also such research studies on CALL and its effects on language skills as Castellani and Jeffs (2001) and Wible, Kuo, Chien, Liu, and Tsao (2001). These studies investigated the effects of Internet and multimedia technology on improvement of learners' reading and writing skills. Moreover, Warschauer (1997) studied the effectiveness of using computer-mediated communication (CMC) in language instruction. The study reported that collaborations between learners and between learners and instructor are the key factor to success in a language classroom. Finally, there are studies on the effectiveness of multimedia technology in language learning indicating significant improvement of students' language learning via the use of multimedia technology in English classrooms (Soo & Ngeow, 1998; Jester, 2002).

It can be concluded that teaching English through CALL is effective and can be done with a wide range of activities. However, there are also other variables that should be taken into consideration for successful implementation of CALL in language teaching. They are learning context and culture, learners' and instructor's personal background, differences in learning/teaching experiences, and learners' expectations prior to coming to class. These factors have an important influence on learners' attitude toward CALL learning and teaching and should be explored in further detail to promote the success of CALL programs in the language classroom.

METHODOLOGY

This research is a quantitative study attempting to answer three research questions: (a) what are students' attitudes toward learning English through CALL? (b) what are the problems students find with CALL materials? and (c) what kind of changes are needed in CALL materials development in the Thai university in the study? To validate the findings, the triangular approach is used in the study, using three research instruments to collect data: questionnaires, observations, and interviews. Firstly, the questionnaires were designed to elicit three main items, (a) students' attitudes toward learning English through CALL, (b) student satisfaction with CALL course content, and (c) student satisfaction with instructors' and students' roles in CALL classrooms, in order to investigate learners' perceptions on various learning activities, levels of difficulty of the learning tasks and activities, and problems found in the CALL classrooms. Secondly, the in-class observations were done before the midterm examination and after the final examination to investigate differences in learners' behavior as well as to explore problems found with CALL materials. Lastly, follow-up interviews were used to elicit additional insightful information about students' attitudes toward CALL materials, their classes, and classrooms.

In terms of participants in the study, there were 535 participants out of the 1,650 students who enrolled in four fundamental courses at the Thai university: English for General Communications I, English for General Communications II, English for Academic Reading III, and English for Academic Reading IV. The nature of the two English for General Communications courses was different from that of the two English for Academic Reading courses. The English for General Communications I and II courses were divided into two hours of classroom instruction and one hour of CALL laboratory practice a week. The CALL materials were developed mainly by using the Authorware application. The instructor's role in the individual-study CALL laboratory was merely as a facilitator who provided general information and guidance while students worked on their own, selecting CALL exercises to work on as well as designing their own pace and time of study. On the other hand, the two English for Academic Reading courses were divided into one hour of classroom instruction and two hours of CALL laboratory practice a week. The CALL laboratory activities were mostly web-based learning through guided in-class activities with reading tasks coupled with listening, writing, vocabulary, and grammar exercises. Students were asked to finish problem-solving and project-based tasks together with the presentation of their class work at the end of each laboratory session. The instructor's role in the CALL laboratory was one of a moderator and facilitator who lead class activities, provided guidance, controlled time, and stepped in to assist in the problem-solving and project-based tasks.

FINDINGS

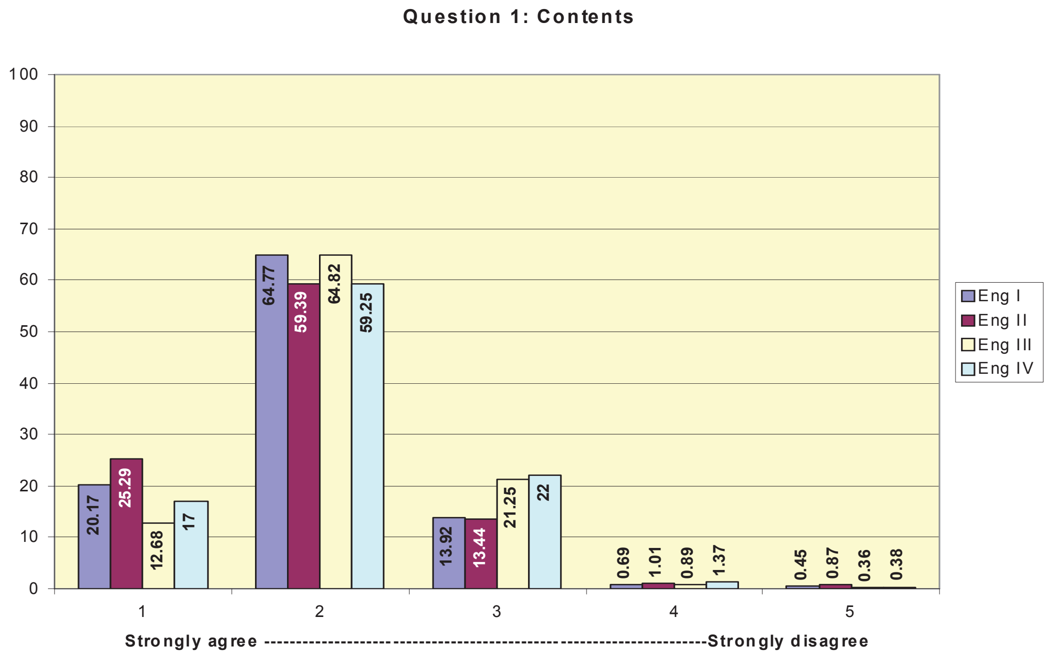
DATA FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRES

Data gathered from the questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations reveal that the majority of the students from the four English courses had positive attitudes towards the use of CALL programs in language learning. However, many problems were reported on the basis of materials and classroom development. The following sections present the results in detail according to the research questions which focus on three aspects: student satisfaction with the CALL contents, instructors' and students' roles in the computer classrooms, and student attitudes towards using CALL as a learning tool.

Contents of the CALL Programs

It was found that students who enrolled in English I, II, III, and IV had positive attitudes towards CALL programs, as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Satisfaction of English I, II, III, and IV Students with the Contents of CALL



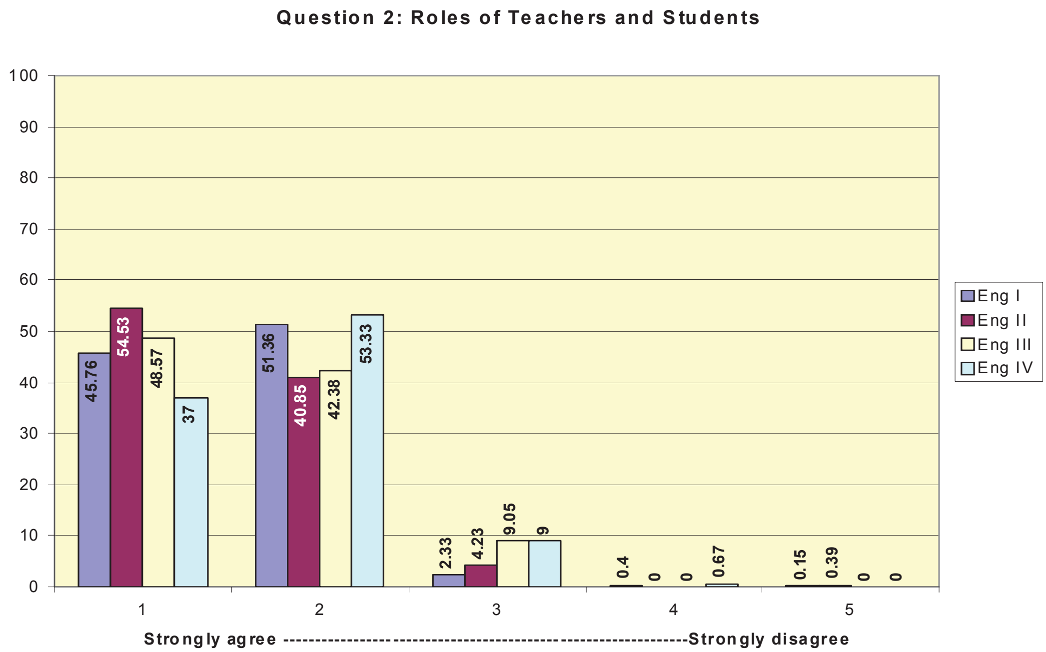
It can be concluded that most of the students (English I: 84.94%, English II: 84.68%, English III: 77.50%, English IV: 76.25%) agreed or strongly agreed with the suitability of the contents of the CALL programs, especially the parts regarding the suitability of class duration (English I & II for 1 hour, English III & IV for 2 hours), and the various levels of difficulty of the lessons provided in the programs. Moreover, they thought that the contents were adequately covered and the exercises directly related to the contents presented in the regular classroom sessions. Most of the exercises were well designed, interesting, and suitable for self-instruction. In their opinion, CALL lessons provided more practice and reinforced understanding of lessons taught in the regular classroom sessions.

However, 48.63% of the students stated that in some exercises, the examples and explanations on the focused grammar points or errors were unclear and insufficient. About 15% of English I and II students and 23% of English III and IV students disagreed with the suitability of the number of lessons provided in the programs. They said that there were too many exercises to complete within a limited time. As a result, they felt frustrated if they could not finish all of them.

Instructors' and Students' Roles in CALL Classrooms

More than 90% of the students from the four English courses (English I: 97.12%, English II: 95.38%, English III: 90.95%, and English IV: 90.33%) agreed or strongly agreed with the suitability of instructors in their facilitator roles as well as with their own roles as independent learners in the CALL classroom (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2. Instructors' and Students' Roles in the Computer Classroom



The students stated that the presence of instructors was very useful, especially when students had problems concerning language points. Sometimes, they did not know why the answers (in the self-corrected program) were wrong. Most of the time, the explanations of the grammar points were in English, and they were not sure if they understood them correctly. Students reported that they really needed the instructor's help because immediate responses were necessary for them to work properly on the following exercises. Therefore, the instructor in the role of facilitator was helpful for self-instruction activities.

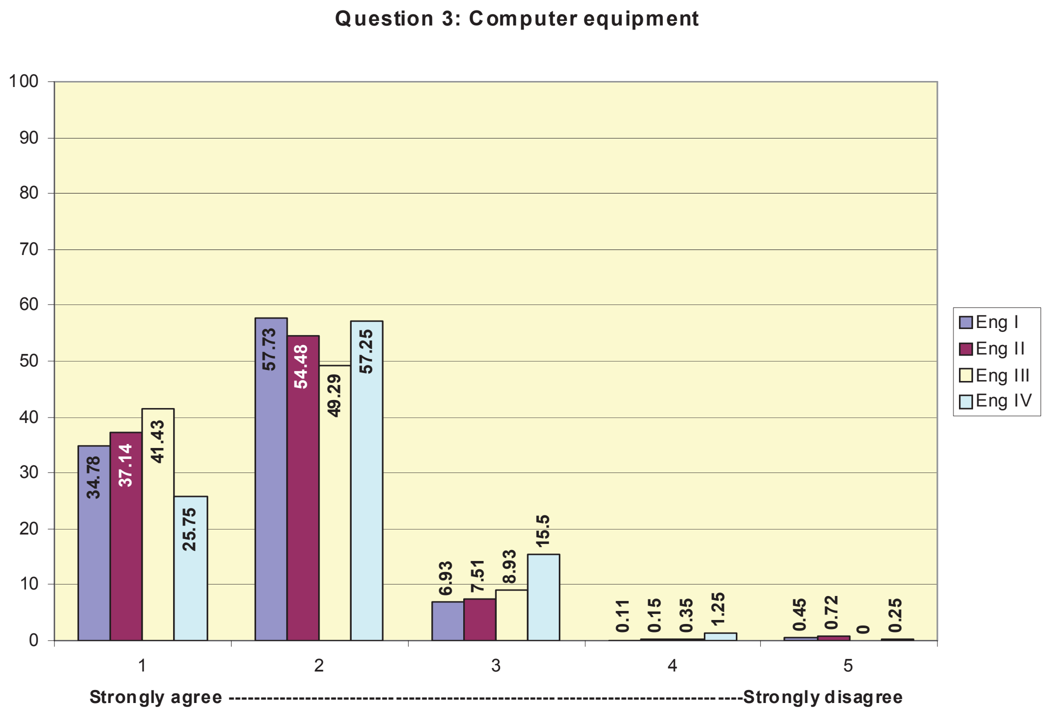
About 94.27% of the students from the four English courses enjoyed studying English using CALL by themselves together with the instructor-directed class because the two methods served different purposes. CALL laboratory helped students learn to be more autonomous by addressing their own weaknesses while the instructor-directed class focused on student-student or student-instructor interactions, new content, or grammar presentations. On average, 88.23% of the students strongly agreed with the idea that learning English through CALL helped students to be responsible for their own learning. However, instructors' guidance and assistance in the CALL laboratory is still necessary although students work mainly on the CALL programs. Some students suggested hiring a teaching assistant in the CALL laboratory in order to provide enough assistance to the 50 students in a class. In contrast, only 1% from the English IV course stated that they did not agree with the use of CALL. They preferred to study with only instructors in regular classrooms.

Students' Attitudes Towards Using CALL as a Language Learning Tool

Students from the four English courses (English I: 92.51%, English II: 91.62%, English III: 90.72%, English IV: 83%) agreed or strongly agreed that CALL programs were useful tools for effective language learning. Moreover, CALL made learning more interesting. It also motivated students to learn language by themselves rather than wait for their instructors' directions. Lastly, students also accepted that CALL programs play an important role in language learning nowadays. Nonetheless, students suggested that other tools necessary for learning should be made available, such as on-line Thai-English dictionary Web sites, and grammar links containing explanations in both Thai and English on grammar points. As CALL is the main tool for learning, the computers, related equipment, and application programs such as Real Player should be available and ready for use at all times (see Figure 3 below).

However, about 10.20% of the total number of the students (English I: 7.04%, English II: 7.66%, English III: 9.28%, English IV: 16.75%) disagreed with the idea of learning through CALL. For these students, learning English with instructors in a regular classroom was preferred. They considered it more effective than learning with CALL programs, where they could get responses from instructors immediately.

Figure 3. Students' Satisfaction with the Computer Equipment as a Learning Tool



DATA FROM THE INTERVIEWS

In addition to the figures presented, the data from the interviews strongly support the findings of the questionnaires. It can be summarized as follows:

1. CALL can enhance learner independence since students have to design and decide on their own CALL exercises at their own pace, and learn from their own mistakes. This method enables students to learn how to learn independently in the future.
2. The use of technology for language learning makes them feel more up-to-date and modern.
3. The use of the Internet in their project work provides them with chances to expose themselves to authentic language in use.
4. Different methods of teaching (CALL and instructor-directed) make learning more interesting. Only studying with instructors for three hours can easily be boring.
5. Studying with CALL programs creates equal opportunities for shy and poor learners to learn in class.
6. Learning language through CALL allows students to gain computer skills at the same time.
7. Students become independent. They can choose what they want to learn,

improve their weaknesses, or practice particular language points since CALL programs can serve individual needs.

Some examples of the student interviews are presented below:

English I Student: *"I like it because learning English through CALL is interesting. I can improve my weak points with many types of exercises. I gain a lot of knowledge from learning by myself, especially through the feedback. I know my weaknesses from my mistakes."*

English II Student: *"The combination of CALL (1-2 hour) and instructor-directed (2 hours) classes is perfect. It is not as serious as learning only with instructors for three hours. Moreover, learning by using technology is a modern learning method. Instructors can explain the points that some students feel unclear about in the computer class and suggest more exercises on those points. Some students dare to ask questions because it is more individual learning than in a regular class, where they may easily feel embarrassed when posing questions."*

English III Student: *"Using the Internet as a resource allows students more exposure to authentic language that is related to a particular topic. It is real-world language use beyond the handouts given by the instructors or the instructor's explanation. If I know how to use a computer and its applications, it will be useful for my learning in the future."*

English IV Student: "*Successful language learning is about frequent practice and self-instruction. Therefore, computer lessons are practical because I can practice as often as I wish, while I cannot do this with instructors."*

DATA FROM THE OBSERVATIONS

In addition to the results from the questionnaires and the interviews, data from computer class observations reveal some new insights regarding learner independence and learning motivation, which are discussed in the next section.

Learner Independence

From the observations, the researchers found that students in English I and II courses who were required to work on designed CALL lessons attentively learned English through CALL without instructors' direct control. They frequently used an English-Thai online dictionary to solve vocabulary problems. Many of them had separate notebooks for vocabulary. They tended to ask their peers before asking the instructors when they encountered difficulties. Some of the students looked happy when receiving positive and encouraging feedback to their answers. However, there were still a few students who did not like the designed CALL exercises, so they played computer games, chatted, and checked their email.

English III and IV students did problem-solving project work in groups. They helped one another to search for the information on the Internet. Guiding questions and recommended Web sites were provided. A majority of the students seriously focused on their task and tried to finish it on time because there was a lot of work to finish. From the computer screens, it was obvious that most of the students followed the guidelines. The obligatory submission of the project within the designated time and a required presentation at the end of the session were the reason that students were on task in getting their work done. In short, it can be seen that students learned to be more independent in the CALL class. They can be responsible for their own learning if they know what to do. In other words, a clear task is an essential factor to keep students working on independent learning successfully.

Learning Motivation

It is apparent that the students in the CALL classes were highly motivated to learn. Most of them worked on their tasks attentively. Some of them smiled while playing some linguistic games. Some of them did the exercises repeatedly in order to get 100% correct answers. They felt motivated enough with their prior success to proceed on to harder exercises. They also appeared enthusiastic and active. None of them showed signs of sleepiness, in contrast to what was found in regular classroom situations. It can be claimed that CALL is a tool that makes learning more interesting, motivating, and fun.

Learning Problems Reported by the Students

From the three research instruments, data concerning learning difficulties encountered by the students can be divided into two types: learners' problems and CALL lesson problems. As for learners' problems, there were three main points mentioned. Firstly, students were not sure about the content they gained from the lessons. Some of them felt that they learned nothing from the exercises. They did them mechanically and tended to forget them after class. Secondly, the students felt more secure learning with instructors. They could ask if they did not understand. They did not need to guess or try out the answers with limited clues; this was especially true for students who were poorer at English. They were unable to understand complicated examples or explanations provided in English. Lastly, students lacked computer and typing skills. As a result, it took them an unusually long time to do the exercises. The problems relating to CALL lessons, on the other hand, can be divided into two categories: content and technical issues. As for content, students complained that the large number of exercises provided in the computer programs frustrated them because they wanted to do all of the exercises within the limited time provided. This was because they were to be tested on some of these exercises in class later. Additionally, students had access to the lessons only in their class time. Therefore, they tended to be worried if they could not finish all the exercises. Secondly, students suggested having four-skill lessons; those they were offered contained only grammar, listening, and reading lessons. Finally, some students said that the reading passages were too difficult.

There were also some technical problems that occurred while using the CALL programs. For example, the answers to the exercises were to be typed in and were fixed. The typing in of even an extra space or a misspelling would cause the program to indicate an incorrect response. Moreover, some exercises were considered boring to students because they were text-only with no colorful pictures.

Students' Satisfaction With the Current CALL Lessons and Suggestions

The majority of the students were satisfied with the current CALL lessons. However, students reported some weaknesses and suggested improvement in terms of class duration. They suggested that there should be a longer period of time, such as 1.5 or 2 hours instead of 1 hour per week, for CALL classes. They also suggested that the computer equipment should be ready for use at all times. Moreover, the seating arrangement in the computer rooms was problematic. It was suggested that the outer rows be removed because students could not see the instructor's screen and the seats were not accessible.

DISCUSSION

From the results, it can be concluded that CALL plays very important roles in language learning nowadays, especially on learner's motivation and autonomous learning. However, CALL programs alone cannot automatically lead to learning efficacy. The findings of this study reveal other crucial factors that CALL instructors, learners, and lesson designers should take into consideration.

INDEPENDENT LEARNER TRAINING

Training on the essential roles of independent learners and instructors is necessary for all involved. It is necessary because the concept of independence in learning is rather new to Thai students and instructors, who are normally more familiar with spoon-fed instruction. Instructors traditionally direct students on what to learn, how to do things, and ways to correct their work. Students spend most of their time as listeners and followers, rather than decision makers. Because of the differences between traditional roles and independent roles in which students have to take responsibility for their own learning, the learner should be provided with training containing this type of information at the beginning of the course. A clear understanding of their roles in the CALL classroom would give students a clear picture of what to do with the CALL lessons, making students less frustrated and providing them with correct expectations. Moreover, the training could also facilitate students' self-adjustment to becoming independent learners more successfully. The idea of independent learner training is crucial and should be repeated every semester. That is because there are many distractions in a CALL class, such as the Internet, through which students can access other web sites. It can be a tempting distraction. Consequently, the learning goals may not be achieved.

CALL LESSONS

From the data, it was found that the students like to learn through CALL because of its interesting qualities. Therefore, it is obvious that the CALL lessons will be successful if they contain the following preferable features. First, the lessons must be interactive. That means students can get feedback on their work after they finish it, for example, "Excellent," "Well-done," "Try again," and so on, through which they can learn their strengths and weaknesses.

According to students' opinions, this kind of feedback can increase their motivation to get 100% correct answers. Besides, the concept of self-assessment will be instilled as part of their learning behavior. Self-assessment ability helps them learn to make decisions about doing the exercise again or starting a new exercise.

Second, the computerized lessons should be interesting and fun in terms of design and challenging in terms of content. According to the data, appealing lessons should contain some colorful cartoon characters, animated pictures (video clips), and sound (sound tracks) produced by advanced programs such as Macromedia Flash. This is not an easy task. English instructors may have to cooperate with a computer technologist to create attractive lessons. Interesting lessons can maintain student concentration longer than usual. Additionally, the lessons should be time- and age-appropriate. With regard to challenging content, students, who are about 18-20 years old with a science background, like working on problem-solving tasks and logical thinking activities.

Third, adequate numbers of exercises on one aspect with graded levels of difficulty should be provided. In addition, instructions and explanation on particular grammar points should be clear enough for self-instruction. In some cases, the instructions and explanation may have to be in Thai and English, especially in the early stages. This is because some students still rely on their first language for their own understanding. Furthermore, other tools that facilitate the learning process such as related web sites and links, and Thai-English, English-Thai and English-English dictionaries are recommended to enhance learners' self-instruction capability and effective independent learning.

SEATING ARRANGEMENT AND EQUIPMENT IN THE COMPUTER LAB

Even though the CALL lessons are for independent learners, all seats should be accessible and provide equal chances for learners to properly see the big screen in front of the classroom. In this context, the seat arrangement was in a V shape, so it is hard for students who were sitting on the outer sides to see the screen. As a result, they usually do things other than the assigned exercises. Moreover, equipment such as headphones and some applications (e.g., Real Player), as well as the Internet, should be regularly checked before and after classes.

Conclusion and Recommendations for Further Study

From the data, it is apparent that although a majority of the students have a positive attitude towards CALL, the scores on the questionnaires slightly and gradually decrease for students enrolled in the higher courses, i.e., English II, III, and IV. Thus, it would be useful to investigate further the influencing factors and causes of the decrease in scores in order to prevent it from occurring in the future. Finally, multimedia innovation may not be effective if learners and instructors do not truly understand the philosophy of autonomous language learning. Both stakeholders, learners and instructors, should thoroughly understand the advantages of classroom innovation as well as their roles in the CALL classroom.

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Methodologies and Techniques

A Communicative Approach to Teaching Large Heterogeneous Classes

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Abstract

Teachers of English in Korea and other countries often cite large classes as one of their main concerns when faced with the challenge of teaching English in a communicative way. Another problem which surfaces with large classes is their heterogeneous nature. It is inevitable that there will be some variation in language ability within a large group of students, not forgetting differences in learning styles and other variables. This paper addresses some of the constraints imposed by class size, reasons why large classes exist, the impact of the communicative approach, and practical ideas for teaching large classes. The author bases her observations on her experience of working with overseas-trained teachers of English from mainly Asian countries over a twelve-year period, in addition to a study of research carried out by experts in the TESOL field.

Introduction

In primary and secondary schools in Korea, it is quite common to have 40 or more students in one class. This is the norm in most countries in East Asia, although education authorities are working to reduce numbers where possible and practical. In most Western countries, class size can vary depending on whether the school is in an urban or rural area, or public or private, but the overall trend has been to reduce class size in line with new approaches to teaching and with a desire to produce a learning environment compatible with student needs. This is particularly evident in the TESOL industry in Australia and other countries where language centers often have a maximum of 18 students in a class and an average of around 15 students or less.

Constraints Imposed by Large Classes

Whereas many teachers have been teaching large classes competently for a number of years, some of them would no doubt concede that they have encountered some difficulties in teaching English and other subjects effectively to large numbers of students. It is often difficult to address students' individual needs in a large class. The teaching approach may be less personalized and may need to cater to the majority of students where mixed ability or mixed learning styles are concerned. Textbooks are generally homogeneous in their approach to language levels, although they sometimes claim to cater to students from pre-intermediate to higher intermediate level, by way of a compromise. Discipline problems sometimes plague large classes and teachers are often worn out at the end of the day with a heavy marking load generated by 40 plus students in each class. However keen and well-behaved the students may be, opportunities for active participation or oral responses are limited in large classes. Space may also be limited and furniture fixed firmly in place. Teachers may be required to raise their voice or use a microphone to reach all the students, while also attempting to write on the board with one hand and coordinate student movement and responses in whatever way possible. Many teachers are more than capable of such physical and linguistic dexterity, but deserve to be less stressed, with the means to express themselves more freely and encourage their students to communicate more frequently and fluently.

Teachers may be faced with limited resources or textbooks with limited scope and other common constraints such as the pressure to prepare for internal and external examinations. Large classes are normally ranked fourth in a list of recognized constraints, limited resources coming first, followed by examinations and textbooks in second and third place (Ward, Barr, Chai, Hua, Kong, & Lu, 1995).

One problem which may result from the above-mentioned constraints is that students may not learn effectively or may get bored and restless. Interaction in class may be teacher-centered and mainly text-based. As a consequence, the weaker students may fall behind in their learning and the gifted students may feel frustrated in their attempts to make progress.

Reasons for Maintaining Large Classes

Despite the obvious advantages of a reduction in class size, many teachers may still prefer to maintain the status quo. There are several possible reasons for this. One reason may be that they prefer to teach fewer classes per week, even if it means that they are on the large side. More non-teaching time means more time for lesson preparation and more time to plan collaboratively with their colleagues. Creating smaller classes could mean creating more classrooms to accommodate them, and this may not be possible in some schools, owing to financial and space constraints. It could also be that the teachers feel more comfortable teaching in a traditional teacher-centered way. They could also argue that they generally manage to achieve the academic results the school, the teachers, and their parents are looking for. They may admit that the students often attain higher marks in their reading and writing skills in English than in their speaking and listening, but the students have usually been thoroughly drilled in test practice, which will assist them in getting through their school or tertiary entrance examinations.

The main reason why students often manage to achieve good academic results despite the size of their classes is linked to their cultural background and expectations. In the words of Watkins and Biggs (2001), students from Confucian-heritage cultures (CHC) such as China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and Korea are taught in classroom conditions that in terms of Western standards cannot be conducive to good learning: large classes, expository methods, relentless norm-referenced assessment and harsh classroom climate. Yet CHC students out-perform Western students, at least in science and mathematics (p. 3).

Views on what makes a good teacher also influence students' and teachers' performance in class. Teachers raised in a society based on Confucian values are expected to model certain quality learning outcomes. They are expected to demonstrate knowledge, explain, drill, imitate, and rehearse their students in the arts of choral speaking, repetition, memorizing, and other forms of copying and reproduction of useful information (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996). In Korea, educators are generally considered to be dispensers of knowledge and molders of character (Siu, 1992; Strom, Griswold, & Slaughter, 1981). Students are well trained in listening and remembering what they are taught by authority figures whom they revere and respect.

An interesting perspective on why teachers and their students often feel comfortable and make satisfactory progress in large classes is provided in Cortazzi and Jin (2001). A questionnaire was administered to 129 Chinese university students in Tianjin, Beijing, and Wuhan and to groups of similar university students in other countries, allowing comparisons with Britain (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998), Japan (Cortazzi & Jin, 1997) and Malaysia (Cortazzi & Jin, in press) and Turkey. A few examples of their findings are shown in the table below:

Table 1. Selected Items Showing Students' Ratings of Aspects of a Good Teacher

A “good” teacher…	Means CHINA (n=129)	Means Britain (n=205)	Means JAPAN (n=93)	Means TURKEY (n=165)	Means MALAYSIA (n=101)
Has deep knowledge	4.535	3.548	4.484	4.494	4.337
Is patient	4.307	4.571	3.696	4.344	4.020
Is a good moral example	4.181	3.808	3.802	4.337	4.257
Is friendly	4.372	4.177	4.333	4.472	4.141
Explains clearly	4.271	4.730	4.516	4.475	4.564
Organizes a variety of classroom activities	3.884	4.200	3.946	4.242	3.554
Has an answer to students' questions	3.884	4.200	3.946	4.242	3.554

(1 = strong disagreement, 5 = strong agreement)

When comparing the responses of students from a Confucian-influenced society, which would apply to both China and Korea, with the responses from British students, some interesting differences can be noted. Chinese students feel more strongly that a good teacher should have deep knowledge and be a good moral example, whereas British students place more value on a teacher's ability to organize a variety of classroom activities and to answer students' questions.

THE IMPACT OF THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH ON LARGE CLASSES

The impact of the communicative approach on teaching and learning in East Asia has certainly introduced more pair work and group work into the language classroom. Even though some teachers are still reluctant to speak in English, they have absorbed recent innovations into their classes, adapting them to their way of teaching. These innovations can work well in large classes with students who are trained to listen to instructions and react promptly. The teachers' style of delivery may sometimes appear too disciplined and robotic to a Western eye (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996), but this learner-trained learning can be very effective in classroom organization because it reduces the transition time between lesson stages or different activities.

What often happens in a Western-style classroom, with energetic, extrovert teachers trying to bend over backwards to encourage their students to express themselves orally and negotiate meaning, may be considered by some students with an Asian background as inappropriate and exaggerated. Their learning style may be more introverted. Some Korean students may dislike overt displays of opinions and emotions (Liu & Littlewood, 1997). Hashbarger, Ross, Tafoya, & Via (1986) noted that Korean students insist that the teacher be the authority and are disturbed if this does not happen.

STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING LARGE CLASSES EFFECTIVELY

There are many strategies which can be employed to teach large classes effectively. Group work and pair work need not be hampered by lack of classroom space or immovable furniture if students turn round in their seats to face each other. Cooperative learning, information-gap activities and problem-solving tasks can take place in both small and large classes. Oral interaction can stem from pairs speaking sequentially and students can learn from listening as well as speaking. The stronger students can assist the weaker students in a heterogeneous class and the same or different tasks can be used with students of differing language ability. Differentiated, multi-level tasks can be used with excellent results without making the linguistically weaker students feel they are under-achieving.

Collaborative learning creates a dynamic environment for the students, whatever the size of the class. It could be argued that there is no separate methodology for the handling of large classes (Hubbard, Jones, Thornton, & Wheeler, 1983) and that it is simply a matter of carefully selecting appropriate teaching techniques and strategies. Hubbard et al. suggest that pair work could be restricted to half the class at any one time to cut down on noise in a large class, but students are not usually as sensitive to noise as the teacher. Groups could be set a task or problem to solve and a chairperson from each group could present the main points to the class. The teacher can try wherever possible to abdicate turn-taking control to the students. Students can be encouraged to evaluate their own work and that of others, some groups or pairs can listen and comment while others perform. Students should be free to learn in whatever way suits them best, as long as other students have equal opportunities to progress.

Technology plays an increasingly important role in the teaching of English and other subjects. Useful tools such as OHPs, TVs, video recorders, data projectors, and multimedia systems can help to replicate or replace the textbook, but they should never be allowed to replace the human dimension of a good teacher. There is no doubt that technology can greatly assist large classes and their teachers by enhancing the visual impact. In an investigation of sensory learning preferences, Reid (1987) found that Korean, Chinese, and Japanese students are all visual learners, with Korean students ranking the strongest. They like to read and obtain a great deal of visual stimulation. For them, lectures, conversations and oral directions without any visual backup are very confusing and can be anxiety-producing.

Technology can also magnify the sound to reach all the students. It is hard for a teacher to move freely around the class if they are holding a microphone in one hand, as has been observed in classes in Hong Kong schools, while trying to write on the board or control student activities with the other hand. Any equipment which sets the teacher free from such constraints is a bonus.

An important consideration with large heterogeneous classes is to cater for as many individual students as possible. Tasks and topics can be varied to cater to different levels of language proficiency within the class. Collaboration can be encouraged at all levels with interesting topics to whet the linguistic appetite. Learners can benefit from a choice of tasks and materials personalized according to their level of interest and ability. Some instructions can be compulsory and others can be optional for the fast learners. A range of answers can be given with open-ended cues for the more advanced learners. According to Penny Ur (1999), it is certainly not recommended that activities done with large heterogeneous classes should always be open-ended, but the introduction of such procedures can increase learning and interest. By contrast, exercises in textbooks are likely to be based on mainly closed-ended items.

Teachers of English from East Asia participating in programs of English and Methodology for TESOL Purposes programs at ICTE at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia, enjoy language activities which involve collaboration and often good-hearted competition within and between groups. Activities such as jigsaw listening, jigsaw reading, running dictation, and strip stories are invariably popular with teachers on in-service courses. They enjoy role play, drama, radio plays, and other activities which encourage them to work together creatively in producing language while catering to individual learning differences and different proficiency levels. It was highly rewarding to then see some of these teachers putting these activities into practice in their own classes in China with up to 40 eager young middle school students.

Another collaborative activity that works well with groups of students is the Dictogloss approach as advocated in Wajnryb (1986). This involves four stages: preparation (brainstorming), dictation (once for gist, twice for notes), reconstruction of the text (pooling notes in groups), and finally, analysis and correction of the reconstructed text on the board, on the OHP, or with photocopies. This approach works well with both lower- and higher-level learners and the text used can be simple or more complex.

Space can be creatively used for teaching and the class need not be confined to four walls if the school permits. Students can be taught indoors or outdoors. Walls and corners can be used as well as whiteboards and blackboards. Sound can be blocked off in class with the use of headphones, and chairs and desks can be moved into all kinds of configurations wherever possible. The size and shape of the room are more important than student numbers (Hubbard et al., 1983), provided that the teacher uses them creatively. Carefully chosen strategies can compensate for physical and other constraints.

Hubbard et al. (1983) presents one possible model for the organization of group work within a class of 56 students at an intermediate level. Group A could be involved in a listening comprehension using a tape recorder junction box. Group B could have a lower-level reading comprehension task. Group C could have a reading comprehension task at a higher level. Group D could have a higher-level writing activity. Group E could be engaged in a language game. Group F could have a writing activity at a lower-level, and Group G could be involved in an oral activity such as a dialogue in a quiet corner, if available.

Some Useful Strategies for Teaching Listening Skills to Mixed Ability Classes

Some interesting techniques for teaching mixed ability classes were demonstrated by Richardson (2005) at the English Australia Conference using techniques taken from a text by Tice (1997). Willing conference participants were asked to decide whether they wanted to be challenged in the listening activity, whether they wanted to take it easy, or to be in the comfortable middle group. Instructions were then given to each group by the teacher and subsequently a description of an avuncular old man and a little old woman was read out to the whole group. One person from each group then got together with two people from the other groups to pool information. It emerged that the challenged group had been required to draw the man and woman on a blank sheet of paper with all the features, clothing, and accessories described orally. The middle group had been given the outline of the man and woman to complete and the group requiring more assistance had been provided with some of the features, but had to fill in the missing details. This listening activity could prove very engaging with a large class, and students could either be discreetly given the appropriate task by the teacher or decide for themselves whether they wanted to be challenged or otherwise. Any person, object, or scene could be described by the teacher in person to the whole class or on tape in separate groups. A description of people could be given an added cultural dimension by being country-specific.

Another listening activity demonstrated by Richardson (2005) was a graded dictation. The “advanced” group was required to write down each word of the text with a few key words given on a sheet of paper. The “middle ability” group was given a gapped text to fill in. The “less confident” group was able to benefit from a multiple-choice type text. When the participants re-grouped to share information, an interesting observation was made: The linguistically weaker students had all or most of the answers and could help those in the other groups to fill in the gaps. This was obviously empowering for them and generated a lot of language as the information was shared.

When students are given choices in class, they are given special consideration which assists with their learning. The choices involve them rather than isolate them, and this can prevent them from feeling frustrated in a large heterogeneous class.

Conclusion

To reiterate a point made earlier, there does not need to be a separate methodology for handling large classes. There does, however, need to be a certain amount of ingenuity, time, and thought devoted to teaching strategies which can involve all the students in a collaborative learning process. There are creative textbooks which can assist the teacher, and a considerable body of research has been carried out dealing with how students with a Confucian-heritage background such as Korean learners can be taught effectively. A good teacher can overcome the tyranny of space, the complexity of different learning styles and mixed ability, and the imbedded constraints of cultural barriers which can impede the improvement of students' spoken English. There is no right or wrong way to learn English, simply a wealth of different ways for teachers to enable their students to progress at their own pace, to learn collaboratively, and to communicate orally and in writing. A positive outlook, creativity, and a sense of purpose work well in most cultures, particularly when it comes to learning or teaching a language. The Korean Ministry of Education has given priority to communicative competence in the 7th curriculum and this initiative, combined with the Korean teachers' willingness to combine new with culturally appropriate approaches to teaching English, can produce the desired results.

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Critical Thinking in Japanese EFL: A Rationale for CT in the Classroom

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the appropriateness of developing critical thinking skills in the Japanese EFL classroom. While language teachers design activities and lessons to provide maximum opportunity for communication and interaction, such lessons are often unsuccessful in a Japanese context. This is perhaps because the lessons assume critical thinking abilities which many Japanese students lack. The paper provides a rational for introducing critical thinking in a Japanese EFL context. Further, it provides a way to introduce critical thinking skills through the use of advertisements and commercials. Student awareness of bias and opinion manipulation in advertising can assist in developing critical thinking skills because students will question the premises of the advertisements. Further, students will learn to give evidence of the claims they make about the propaganda they see by explaining the evidence and images and what they suggest. Such activities can be the start of a process of improvement that can lead to critical writing and reading.

WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING?

Critical thinking has been a central tenet of Western thought for over two millennia. Socratic thought emphasized the importance of probing and questioning the basis of claims, especially those of commonly held beliefs. Later Western thinkers, such as Bacon and Descartes, borrowing from the Greek skeptical tradition, helped to form modern scientific inquiry. Modern educators such as Summers and Dewey challenged the tendency of public education to socially indoctrinate students and advocated the goal of fostering critical thinkers (A Brief History of the Idea of Critical Thinking, 1997).

Despite the struggle of these two forces, improving critical thinking instruction continues to be a concern in first language classrooms in the United States (Paul & Nosich, 2001). This concern about shortcomings may be explained in part by research showing that many have trouble explaining what critical thinking is (Atkinson, 1997). Many misunderstand the critical word with its negative connotation and are turned off by the belief that it means criticizing and doubting everything. For this paper, I use the same definition of a critical thinker I give my students.

Critical thinkers do not accept what they see, hear, or read as fact. They reserve judgment on what people tell them to be true and look at the evidence for a claim. A believable claim must have good reasons to support it. An accepted claim must be reevaluated when there is new evidence.

CULTURE AND THE CLASSROOM

This goal of first language classrooms to foster critical thinkers has also entered the ESL/EFL classroom. Indeed, many popular classroom activities in which students express their own thoughts and views, collaborate to solve problems, interpret a reading, engage in debates, and write clearly and concisely actually require some basic critical thinking skills. Many EFL programs in universities in Japan have courses that are based on discussion and debate, literary criticism, and academic writing – all which assume quite advanced critical thinking ability.

Fellow EFL teachers in Japan can confirm my own observations that Japanese high school and university students are unprepared for such activities. They experience frustration when teaching Japanese students to question ideas because of the students' perceived lack of interest and inability or unwillingness to engage in critical discussions of issues (Yoshioka, 2002). Students often show extreme caution or reluctance to discuss controversial issues, and when allowed, tend to choose very safe and seemingly banal topics. Reasons for positions are often superficial, bland, and weak. Many students withdraw into silence after brief statements of agreement or disagreement and are unable to follow-up with reasons for their positions. Non-Japanese teachers often become frustrated and dismiss students as lazy, unimaginative, and childish.

Such assumptions miss the cultural issues at play. The relationship in traditional Japanese schools between student and teacher does not allow the kind of interaction needed to foster or demonstrate critical discourse. The teacher is given respect and authority. Students are taught to accept the statements of teachers and superiors as truth or at least with the appearance of acceptance. Those who question the statements of superiors are viewed as rude, arrogant, immodest, and showoffs.

Japanese culture can be referred to as a high-context one, in which the relationship between people and the behavior within interactions is more important than the ideas or tasks at hand. In high-context cultures, directly challenging another's beliefs is extremely inappropriate and unnecessarily aggressive. This is true among one's peers and can even be observed at the university research level. Most faculty research does not undergo the kind of rigorous challenge that is expected in foreign universities. With low-context cultures, on the other hand, behavior and challenges during interaction are more easily overlooked as the ideas being exchanged are more important (Gibson, 2000). It would seem that low-context environments are more suitable for fostering critical thinking skills and perhaps even second language acquisition itself. Learning a second language through activities demanding critical inquiry must indeed be baffling to students from a high-context culture.

EFL teachers may find themselves having to make a choice: 1) adjust to the cultural norm of the classroom and society by adopting the familiar role of knowledge provider or 2) integrate basic critical thinking skills into the course. Many EFL teachers are opting for the second choice. The challenge of EFL teachers is to promote a version of critical thinking within a high-context environment. However, in discussing this choice with fellow EFL teachers, some challenges were raised. Below, three are listed with solutions suggested.

1. Critical thinking is hard enough to do in a first language let alone a second one. Students do not have the English linguistic abilities to engage in critical inquiry.

While students may lack vocabulary, they often do have basic conversational skills. I have tried basic critical thinking activities with low-level students with some success. Explaining good reasons for beliefs does not require complex grammar. Providing basic expressions for expressing opinions and questioning claims make this easier. Keeping classes small and encouraging small group work can make activities less intimidating.

2. Students do not understand the relationship shift expected between student and teacher.

I agree that this is a great challenge for teacher and student. A mutual acculturation must take place for teachers and students. Teachers must explain the new relationship and also adjust to cultural norms of politeness and sensitivity to embarrassing situations. Teachers can help students to feel comfortable asking questions and encouraged, and show students what is expected of them. Teachers can explain that such critical inquiries will actually help them in language acquisition.

3. It is cultural arrogance for non-Japanese teachers to assume that their students need training in thinking. We are forcing our students to reject their own cultural norms.

Indeed many "Westerners" are lacking in critical skills as well. As one aspect of language teaching is to expose students to attitudes and values of the target language, an exposure to Western logical thought is expected. Further, we must acculturate them to a classroom community which promotes language acquisition. In addition, we can allow for the linguistic gentleness and sensitivities to others in high-context cultures while still engaging in critical inquiry. I try to explain that critical thinkers are not necessarily aggressive or rude. There are conventions and gentle subtleties in the English language as well that allow the speaker to question without offense. In addition, as one fellow EFL teacher pointed out, we are teaching our students verbal self-defense. As all cultures have strengths and abilities to share, the Western academic tradition can help our students to defend their own beliefs better. Finally, as students use the Internet more for research and information from questionable sources, critical thinking skills will be even more important.

Advertisements for Critical Thinking

HOW TO BEGIN

Teachers who find themselves teaching a group of students lacking in such skills can first expose students to looking at the basis of a claim through the analysis of commercial propaganda. While most intelligent people will acknowledge that commercials are not to be trusted as truth, they do indeed influence our thoughts and behavior. We perhaps unconsciously accept that a product has the characteristics professed in the advertisement. By analyzing advertisements we find in everyday media, we may uncover the manipulation behind them. Further, when students make a claim that an advertisement attempts to persuade us to a belief, they too must back up such a claim with evidence from the commercial, such as the colors, sounds, images and what they evoke. Such skills at the opening stage can further serve students in their own writing finding evidence in a text that evokes an idea or supports a claim. This awareness of the use of imagery can later be enhanced in the analysis of how fiction writers use such tools to evoke a thought or feeling.

PROCEDURE

Students are presented with a series of advertisements found in newspapers or magazines. The teacher can ask what images or words they notice first. The teacher can then ask students what words or feelings come to mind when looking at the images and words. Together the class might conclude that advertisement designers want us to feel or think these thoughts and buy the product to think or feel them again. When exposing such thought and feeling manipulation, one can then question such claims.

Students can analyze advertisements or commercials in pairs or individually. When explaining the claims and support of the designers, students must support their own claims with evidence from the advertisements. Such activities can be written or spoken, and can be extended to further investigation of advertising techniques. These skills of uncovering the truth or falsity of a claim and supporting one's own claims with evidence from the subject can be reinforced through writing about a commercial. Students must make a claim about the intentions of the designer and then give evidence from the advertisement. Other students can disagree with these claims as well. Students can even create a study of several ads with similar themes or for similar products. In addition, they can design their own ads with absurd claims and then challenge each other on the evidence or lack of evidence. Such activities are meant as an introduction to a new way of thinking. The same questions and patterns can be revisited in a number of activities with readings as well. A claim by a writer can be examined for the kind of words and images used. Students can also look at reasons for claims by others in their reading and discussions. These activities will not result in instant, mature critical thinking. However, when it is clearly explained to students what they are to do, they may surprise you. It must be remembered, however, that these ideas are intended merely as an introduction to a long process of discovery.

CONCLUSION

The development of critical thinking skills has a place in the second language classroom. As ESL/EFL teachers, we expect such skills in many of our language teaching activities. However, Japanese students do not perform as well as expected in such activities. This is because of a classroom and social culture that discourages direct inquiry and analysis of others' beliefs. EFL teachers who design courses and activities with interaction and analysis must train students to think critically. Students need to be shown what is expected of them, and both teachers and students need to acculturate to the new classroom environment. Teachers can start with simple analysis activities using commercials, but will need to integrate expressions and skills throughout their courses.

THE AUTHOR

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From Reader to Reporter: Approaching News English in the Classroom

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Abstract

This paper focuses upon the author's experience of teaching a course entitled English in the News to university students in Japan. It is a course in which students are required to go beyond the role of media consumer to that of media producer, activating and demonstrating their learning through the production of a newspaper. It is argued that by providing an opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning, commitment to the learning process and the quality of learning is enhanced. Importantly, it is also argued that through using their knowledge, students reinforce understanding and are more likely to retain learning. Issues of learner autonomy, motivation, "ownership," and teacher flexibility are central to the success of the course.

Introduction

Courses related to "news" English are common to university language programs in many countries. For most such courses, the students' role is primarily a passive one: to read assigned texts and answer questions concerned with comprehension and lexis. Students may have little, if any, say in the selection of course materials and little opportunity to pursue issues and ideas arising from the reading of a text. The concern is with reading comprehension and the acquisition of lexis, both of which are assessed in weekly, midterm, or end-of-term tests. This paper presents a very different approach, one in which students are actively involved in the selection of materials, are required to engage with and discuss ideas and events in the news, and are finally required to demonstrate their learning in the production of a newspaper. It is a course designed to develop in students an interest in current affairs and equip them with skills and knowledge providing access to the news media, one requiring students to demonstrate their learning and understanding in a productive manner.

Context and Focus

The author teaches at a small liberal arts college in Japan. During the first year all students are required to take a one-year intensive program in English for Academic Purposes. This occupies a majority of the freshman year. In the second year, students also take a one-term (10-week) course in writing a research paper. With this exception the students receive little language support after the first year. Courses in their major areas of study may be delivered in either English or Japanese.

During the second year, the author offers the elective course *English in the News*. This is open to students from across the university, drawing students from the arts, social sciences, and natural sciences. Class size is limited to twenty-six. Motivations for doing the course vary, as do levels of English ability and interest in the news and current affairs. The course meets for 70 minutes twice a week for one ten-week term.

As noted above, the main focus of university courses related to news English is frequently with reading comprehension and the acquisition of lexis. Additionally, such courses may make extensive use of teacher translation and explanation, with the students passively listening in the classroom. In devising the *English in the News* course, the concern was to have a broader focus. Undoubtedly a "news" English course should seek to develop students' reading skills and the acquisition of news-related lexis. However, it was felt it should also seek to do much more. The news media is concerned with *current* affairs, the events, ideas, and concerns occupying the media. A course in news English should therefore seek to develop interest in those events, ideas, and concerns, and provide opportunities for students to discuss such issues, i.e., opportunities to put forward their own views and understandings. It should seek to *engage* students with the ideas and events occupying and motivating the media. Such engagement would require students to be actively involved in the selection of course materials, the choice of subject matter, and articles that *they* find motivating and wish to discuss.

A further concern was to raise student awareness of the news media. Thus, rather than focusing solely upon one article extracted from a newspaper or magazine, the concern was to go beyond the individual article to raise student awareness of the variety of material within newspapers, the wider news media, and access to such media. This would require the provision of whole newspapers in the classroom with time available for students to explore such materials. It would also require instruction on how to access English language materials in libraries and bookshops. Additionally, reflecting the multi-media nature of news reporting today, it should make use of other media sources such as the Internet and TV and radio broadcasts that may be more accessible to students. This would require instruction on how to access such sources, not solely for the course itself but also in the hope that students would continue to pursue an interest in current affairs after the course.

A prime pedagogical concern was also with retention of learning. Too often courses place a heavy emphasis on receptivity and testing. Unfortunately, once a course concludes, students may then forget much of their learning. Thus, a concern was to seek active student engagement through discussion, the intent being to get the students to make active use of news English, of language encountered during the course. It is through use that language learning is reinforced, that new language becomes part of a student's active usage, rather than something to be memorized for an end-of-course test and then forgotten. Such a concern also informs an end of course requirement that students produce their own newspaper. The aim is to provide an opportunity for students to both demonstrate and reinforce their learning, to bring together much of their learning to date, and provide a creative and motivating learning experience in which students are enabled to assume "ownership" (Widdowson, 1994) of English. It is a formative rather than summative approach to assessment, one permitting students to make use of their English and to pursue issues of concern to themselves.

The prime focus of the course is, then, not primarily with reading comprehension and lexis. Rather, though these are important aspects of the course, the prime focus is upon events and ideas. It is a course that is topic-driven rather than text-driven, the focus being placed upon ideas and events motivating to course participants, not upon readings selected by the teacher or contained in an assigned course text. Secondly, it is a course concerned with media accessibility, with building student awareness of media sources and an understanding of the characteristics and conventions of the media, print and broadcast, characteristics that once understood make access a more manageable process for the language learner. It is then concerned with learning that builds student confidence. Importantly, though students are required to produce a newspaper at the end of the course, it is not a journalism course and does not seek to teach journalistic skills. The newspaper provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning.

Course materials are chosen based on two criteria: (a) that they be topical, dealing with issues currently in the news, and (b) that they deal with issues the students are concerned with. To meet these needs, materials are selected by both the teacher and the students. Readings chosen by the teacher are drawn from that week's newspapers and news broadcasts (TV and radio). Where possible these are chosen with a balance between topicality and student interest. Secondly, students themselves nominate topics they wish to pursue and also offer materials they have selected. It is the materials selected that dictate the language content of the course.

Building Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills

The course is divided into two parts. The first seven weeks are concerned with the development of listening and reading skills, the acquisition of news-related language, building awareness of media sources and media access, developing an understanding of journalistic features, and the content of newspapers. This is accomplished in a variety of ways. Firstly, for homework, students are required to listen to English-language news broadcasts on TV and the Internet. The BBC is used extensively for TV and radio news broadcasts; both are easily accessible over the Internet. Additionally, students are required to read the English-language press, either through newspapers available within the country or articles available on newspaper web sites such as those of *The Guardian*, *The Times*, and *The Independent*, together with magazines such as *The Economist*. Students are also asked to pursue other web sites of personal interest, such as newspapers, web sites in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, or sites focusing on environmental issues, economics and development, science and technology, etc.

The above listening and reading is carried out as homework during which the students are expected to make notes, both of new language or language they found puzzling, and of the content, including their reactions and opinions concerning the topic and the reporting of the topic. During the first 15-20 minutes of each lesson, the students work in small groups of 3 or 4 and, using their notes, present the content of their homework to each other and discuss the topic. They are also provided with an opportunity to ask questions of the teacher to clarify problems of language use and comprehension, or to engage the teacher in their discussions. The prime focus is, however, upon discussion on engagement with the ideas and events themselves with the students making active use of news English. This is a very different approach to one in which reading is carried out in the class and the emphasis is upon comprehension, teacher translation, and the memorization of vocabulary. It is an approach in which the students themselves actively identify topics and select materials and make active use of language in discussion – an approach in which the students assume considerable responsibility for their own learning and are permitted to give voice to their own opinions on issues of personal concern.

Secondly, listening skills and language awareness are developed in class by use of short video recordings of news items, 2-3 minutes in length, usually taken from that morning's BBC news broadcast. Beyond comprehension of the main facts, students are required to identify new language such as lexical items, colloquialisms, and phrasal verbs. Chosen by the teacher, these short news items are selected from major areas of news coverage such as war, natural disasters, crime, politics, and economics. That is, they serve to raise student awareness of the language associated with a large proportion of news coverage, permitting the teacher to draw student attention to where language overlaps with topic areas, thereby engaging students and developing their understanding of events in the world in which they live. Once again, beyond mere comprehension and explanation of linguistic items, students are provided with an opportunity to discuss an issue and express their opinions in small groups, and to engage the teacher in *their* discussions.

Thirdly, the remainder of the lesson is devoted to additional articles assigned as homework and activities related to the media. On the one hand, these are concerned with human-interest articles. On the other, they are concerned with the news media itself and features of journalistic English. Amongst the subjects covered are (a) differences in content and language between “quality” and “popular” newspapers, (b) the sections of a newspaper, (c) an examination and comparison of editorials and the idea of a newspaper having a “voice,” (d) a comparison of articles on the same news item, political cartoons, and headlines, and (e) differences between reportage, analysis, and comment. Importantly, the students are made aware of stylistic features associated with news English – that the first paragraph usually consists of one or two sentences only and that these contain all of the most important information, the “who,” “when,” “where,” “why,” “what,” and “how” of a story. Such knowledge permits anyone to navigate a newspaper at speed, to gain the main facts, and to be selective about which articles to read at length. Too often, learners of English find the task of reading a newspaper a daunting one. With a little knowledge, they can skim quickly through as they would in their native language, stopping to read only those items of particular interest. The intent here is to raise student awareness of the nature of the newspaper, to help them more readily access its contents and, importantly, to develop their abilities to judge in a critical manner the content of what they read.

Application, Reinforcement, and New Learning

The second part of the course, the writing of a newspaper, occupies the final five lessons (two and a half weeks) of the term. During the first four of these lessons, students work in small groups of three or four to produce a group newspaper. In the fifth lesson, group newspapers are displayed in the classroom for all groups to view. The newspapers produced are a one-off copy and not intended for printing or distribution. The teacher is responsible for providing general structuring for the project, not for setting rigid demands and restricting the students to meeting those requirements. Rather, the intent is to establish a general framework within which students are provided with an opportunity to pursue personal interests, make use of and demonstrate their learning, reinforce such learning, and jointly engage in further learning. Throughout, it is the teacher's task to provide assistance and guidance where required – support as opposed to instruction.

The guidelines set reflect the author's context: class size, student ability and motivation, and time and resources available. Each group is asked to produce a paper containing all of the following:

1. A Front Page
2. Sections (Four or more)
3. An Editorial
4. Advertisements
5. Photographs and Illustrations
6. Additional Items (e.g., crosswords, weather, TV schedule, political cartoon, etc.)

In addition, each student is required to write a minimum of four articles, contributing to three sections of the newspaper. No article length is specified, and the students are free to write as many articles as they wish. Neither is specific content dictated, though the front page should be concerned with topical issues, which are either in the national news or related to the students' own local or university community. Students are encouraged to pursue their own individual interests, and the groups are free to organize themselves and allocate responsibilities.

The above guidelines require that the students make use of their learning from the first seven weeks of the course. In particular, by being required to contribute to three different sections of the paper, they are required to make use of a variety of language dealing with different topical areas. That is, the students are required to actively demonstrate their learning, their knowledge of topic areas and associated language, the content and structure of a newspaper, awareness of audience and, in the editorial and analysis items, their awareness of political tone and bias. Primarily, the concern is with the applicability of learning, providing students with an opportunity to assume and demonstrate ownership of English, to make active use of the language, and in so doing, to continue the learning process and reinforce their learning to date. It is an opportunity they readily respond to, going to great lengths to produce as professional a paper as possible.

For the students, most work associated with writing their newspaper – the writing of articles, drawing of cartoons, taking of photographs, creating crosswords, etc. – occurs outside of the classroom. In class, work is group work, e.g., students reviewing each other's contributions, suggesting corrections, and allocating further responsibilities. All group work is in English, making active use of the language. An important feature of the classroom environment is the provision of 30-40 newspapers for students to refer to. This they do extensively, examining everything from layout to language (lexis, syntax, and stylistic features), making comparisons between “popular” and “serious” newspapers, noticing the balance between text and visuals, and between articles and advertising, etc. Working independently and cooperatively, selecting their own news items, writing their own articles, editing articles, and compiling the final pages of their “newspaper,” the students are actively involved in learning about, using, and reinforcing their awareness and knowledge of "news" English. It is an environment in which student engagement and learning go hand in hand, learning being the result of discourse and activity (Halliday, 1978). Within the guidelines set for the task, the students work semi-autonomously in their discussions, contributing to each other's understanding, and enhancing their learning through interaction (van Lier, 1996).

Throughout the project the teacher's role is to act as mentor, above all, to facilitate and guide the process of student participation (Rogaff, 1990). The teacher should circulate, sitting in on group discussions, pointing to suitable examples in newspapers, and drawing student attention to journalistic features that may have been overlooked. Above all, the teacher's role is to share the students' interests and enthusiasm, and respond as needed. Gattegno (1972) argues that students learn most effectively through a process of discovery, with teacher intervention to set them on the right path at a minimum. After the grounding provided in the first part of the course, the teacher's task now is to mediate this process of discovery, foster group endeavor and creativity by allowing pursuit of individual motivations, and provide guidance where necessary. Importantly, the teacher should not spend time in class correcting student work. Students should take their work home and revise it themselves after peer review in class. If they wish then to give it to the teacher for correction out of class, they may do so. The teacher should, above all, engage in monitoring and facilitating in-class activities.

In producing their final product no special knowledge of layout or document processing is required. Most students can accomplish a remarkably professional final product through cutting and pasting onto large poster-size sheets of paper. Some students can be very resourceful, making use of outside facilities such as large-size color photocopiers. Keen to do the best they can, their newspaper is an opportunity to give voice to their concerns, to make use of English to address topics and issues chosen by themselves. Most respond readily to the opportunity and make a considerable effort to produce work of a high quality, keen to demonstrate their abilities and creativity, keen to make use of *their* English. The final product, and the engagement of students in its production, provides an excellent formative means of assessing learning, a means that is highly motivating (see Appendices A and B for examples of student work).

Conclusion

The *English in the News* course takes a different approach to that adopted by most courses in "news" English. Beyond the acquisition of lexis and the building of reading comprehension skills, the course seeks to equip students with knowledge and skills permitting them to successfully access and use the news media in all its forms. The course succeeds because it permits and encourages students to pursue their own interests and give voice to their own concerns and interpretations. It is a process calling for teacher flexibility and a willingness to respond to student motivations, recognizing the benefits to be gained from assigning greater responsibility to the learner for his or her own learning experience. It is a course in which a participative approach (Sfard, 1998) to learning is emphasized and to which the students readily respond. If the intent is to enable students to become skilled in the English language, then they deserve to be given an opportunity to use and reinforce their learning and skills to assume "ownership" of English.

The Author

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APPENDIX A: SAMPLE STUDENT PAPER (SPORTS PAGE)

Pg. 7

Saved by the Hero!

By

Final score: Japan vs. North Korea 2-1 Masashi Oguro nailed a last Victory goal 3 minutes before end of the game, lifting Zico's men over North Korea at Saitama Stadium on Wednesday night February 9th. Japan fought its World Cup 2006 quest with Asian Group B rival, North Korea. Substitute Masashi Oguro scored in injury time to give Japan the dramatic win. Ogasawara scored in the fourth minute on a 25-meter free kick and Oguro, who came on for Tamada, netted the winner after Korean keeper Sim Sung Chol let a rebound go free. Oguro's astonishing goal relieved all the supporters who had been faithful through the game, never giving up.

It is Time. The High School Volleyball players at Battle!!

It is almost time for the high school volleyball players to start their battle since the 36th Spring National athletic meeting will be held at the Yoyogi gym from the 20th of March, where 53 school teams each from boys and girls will be participating to try and aim to be the champion.

The Spring National Athletic Meeting for high schools volleyball teams have been held since 1970. This athletic meeting has now been an important athletic meeting as it has created many important Japanese volleyball players, such as Megumi Kurihara and Kana Oyama, who have been the two super rookies at the Athens Olympic, Koichi Kato who played as the captain of All Japan team in the year 2004.

Preliminary games of the spring national athletic meeting have started all around Japan since the beginning of February, and in several prefectures, the representative of the prefecture has already been set.

The Spring National Athletic Meeting will be held for about a week, where the champion will be decided on the last match on the last day. All the high school volleyball fans are looking forward to see many good games again this year at the court of Yoyogi Gym.

Japan Baseball Final Standings

Central	Won	Lost	Tied	Pct.	GB
x-Dragons	79	56	3	.585	-
Swallows	72	64	2	.529	7.5
Giants	71	64	3	.526	8.0
Tigers	66	70	2	.485	13.5
Carp	60	77	1	.438	20.0
BayStars	59	76	3	.437	20.0

Pacific	Won	Lost	Tied	Pct.	GB
p-Hawks	77	52	4	.597	-
x-Lions	74	58	1	.561	4.5
p-Fighters	66	65	2	.504	12.0
Marines	65	65	3	.500	12.5
Buffaloes	61	70	2	.466	17.0
BlueWave	49	82	2	.374	29.0

Do you want to exercise? The OASIS Sports Club will help you!!

By

RESENT study done by the Tokai University Sports Center during the latter part of January, showed that people of today are too busy and lack time to do exercise, and so the OASIS Sports Club in Shibuya, will offer anyone over 20 years old to visit and exercise freely for one week from the 14th of February.

The study showed that compared to the data of 30 years ago, the Japanese lack at average an hour of exercise everyday. This shift is said to have happened because of the rise in the quality of life in Japan. Nowadays, there are many people who use several types of transportation which caused the reduction of walking.

As the life style changed, the amount of exercise one does have changed a lot in the past 30 years. From hearing the result of the Tokai University Sports Center, the OASIS Sports Club in Shibuya wanted to offer to anyone above age 20 a chance to come to the sports club and exercise. It will be free of charge during 14th of February to the 20th.

Yuta Tabuse almost elected as member of the All Star Game

By

The National Basketball Association (NBA) announced on the 8th of February that Yuta Tabuse, the only Japanese player in the NBA, gained many points in the fan vote for the election of players for the All Star Game 2005.

Yuta Tabuse was the top player in the Noshiro Kogyo High School in the years 1998 to 2000, which was a team which won 20 times as the champion of the All Japan High School competition.

After graduating high school, he went to the university in Hawaii, and on his return, he joined the Toyota team.

As he strongly wished to play in the NBA, he started taking the tryouts of several teams of the NBA from 2002. From the effort he made, he joined the Phoenix Suns from the summer camp 2004, and played 4 games while in the pre-season as a point guard for the Suns, but the team dismissal him.

What was amazing about the results of the fan vote for the All Star Game was that although Tabuse have been dismissed, there are still many fans who look forward to seeing him play in the court of NBA. Maybe next year or the year after that, Tabuse might be in the court as his level of basketball is making progress everyday. All fans, especially the Japanese, hope to find him in the All Star Game someday.

Note. Student names have been removed.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE STUDENT PAPER (FINANCE PAGE)

Dirty Male, Friday, March 7, 2003 FINANCE Page 11

Dirty Male

COMMENT

A GREAT SORROW

A fatal event for the history of movies has just happened. Tam Cruise, appeared on more than 20 movies and received over 15 major awards, passed away last Wednesday. This is an inestimable damage for the future of the movies.

His incomparably prominent talent for acting had been essential and also been encouraging other Hollywood stars. It is very regretful that we have lost such a gifted actor. His great achievement in acting will be talked about for ever.

Recommendation to coexist with Iraq

According to the news, the war will begin in 6 weeks.

Two years ago at election speech, Mr. Bush claims that "I know the humanbeing and fish can coexist peacefully." Two years later, he claims to attack on humanbeing itself without 'just' cause. It seems that president Bush can coexist with fish, but cannot with Iraq.

He identifies Iraq as belonging to an 'axis of evil,' but if thinking the matter objectively, one will soon find that the action of the US itself is an evil.

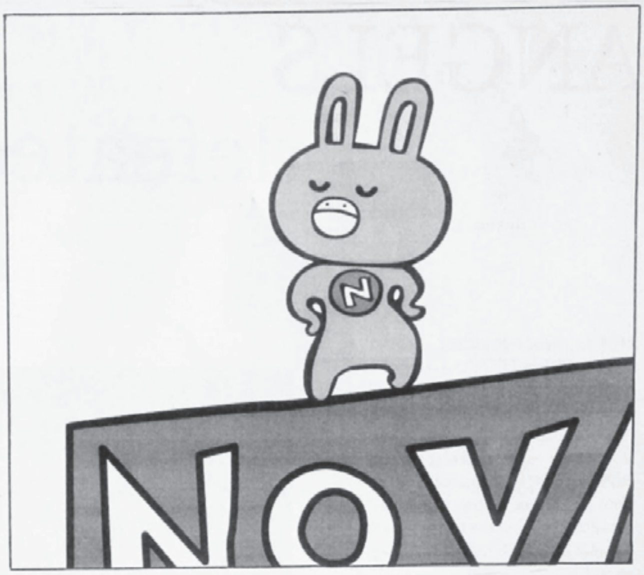
Now antiwar demonstration has been on going world wide. Fighting against the enemy is not always called courageous: true courage is to withdraw from Iraq and coexist with the enemy.

Mix up fancies with facts

Yesterday, a downright weired case occurred. One of the most famous picture "Mona Lisa" was scrawled without noticing by guards and breaing the glass around the picture. It doesn't seem to be mere trick, and it's likely to be the criminal's challenge to the police. If so, it can be thought that this case was occurred by criminal influenced by detective stories. Because of development of media, it is said that there are many people who are unaware about differences between real world and stories. such silly rigs have to be run only in novels or movies.

Cheer-leading is a sport!!

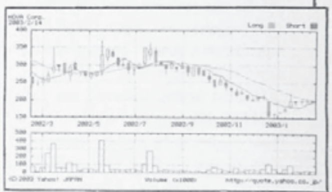
Most of people may think that cheer-leading is not a sport. What is it that qualifies an activity to be as a sport? The fact that they don't tackle to their opponents does NOT mean they are not athlete. Their practices are just as intensive and their competitions are even more intense than football or basketball game. They practice, have rules, go through training, sweat, fall, get hurt.... there is no reason that cheer-leading should not be considered as a sports.



Can a weird rabbit be a white knight?

MARKET REPORT

By



THE STOCK market is now sluggish worldwide. And NOVA, which has been improving on its market share in volume and percentage on the strength of its unique commercial films, also seems suffering from slumping stock price.

A few months before, a weird rabbit suddenly appeared on TV, swaying its hips on walking, singing something through its nose------'you can listen a lot, then you can speak a lot'.

Many people say a novel idea on commercial message played an important role on NOVA's success, which now shares almost 50% of language school market in terms of sales, 56% in terms of students, 65% in terms of the number of lessons, and 63% in terms of the number of teachers. Former commercial films were so striking, memorable, and effective.

In deed, the rabbit called NOVA usagi is striking and memorable. However, can it really save the situation? According to yahoo finance, the stock prices is now bumping along the bottom around 200yen per share, which once recorded 350 yen per share in July last year.

Every paper says the stock market is now sluggish worldwide.

If NOVA had expected its new strange mascot to break a deadlock on stock price, the present market situation only tells that it is difficult.

Note. Student names have been removed.

Warm-up for Language Learning

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Abstract

This paper discusses why warm-up stages are important for lesson plan design. A review of the research indicates a lack of a definitive design approach, and this paper gives a research-based form for constructing a warm-up stage for a specific lesson. This comprises four elements: rapport-building, with example script provided; anchoring with a visual referent; orienting students to the goal structure and its explanation; and finally brainstorming with a context-specific, effective-for-learning visual for developing content and lexical schemas. While not applicable in complete detail for every lesson or class, the paper can provide a springboard for more creative and effective warm-up stages during lesson plan design.

Introduction

A warm-up stage is a process of initial orientation to the language learning lesson. I recommend using a warm-up stage for teaching because such a process can enhance students' downstream target-language comprehension and performance in a particular lesson. The process described in this presentation will have several steps.

1. Establish rapport between all classroom interactants.
2. Present the lesson objective.
3. Provide chances to develop formal and content schematic associations.
4. Provide chances to practice principles of communicative collaboration and learner autonomy.

Four key elements within this process that are given special attention are:

1. Rapport
2. Goal orientation
3. Schema and topic familiarity through brainstorming
4. Visual scaffolding

Figure 1. Examples of Warm-ups in the Literature

What sort of rock is sedimentary rock? Can you tell me the names of any sedimentary rocks? ... Yes, limestone is one. Do you know what kind of sediment limestone is formed of? It was mainly calcareous, the remains of living organisms. What's the meaning of calcareous? The same sort of substance as chalk for instance. .. Yes, it produces quicklime. Do you know what that is used for?

Example A (Nuttall, 1996, p. 168)

Today we're going to practice talking about likes and dislikes, and we're going to talk about music and movies and stuff. OK? OK Kenji? Now, I want you to open your books at page 22, that's where the unit starts, and [inaudible comment from student] . . . What's that? . . . Yeah, that's right. Now, I want you to look quickly through the unit and find one example, one example of someone saying they like something, and one example of someone saying they don't like something? OK? One example of each. And I'm going to put them here on the board.

Example B (Nunan, 1999, p. 18)

BOX 15.5: DESCRIPTION OF A LESSON

This was a heterogeneous class of 35 fifteen-year-olds.

9.15 The teacher (T) enters, students (Ss) gradually quieten, sit, take out books.
9.20 T elicits the topic Ss had been asked to prepare for today ('conformism'), elicits and discusses some key words, does not write them up.
9.25 T distributes cartoons, asks Ss to work in pairs and suggest captions that have to do with the topic. Some Ss work, most do not.
9.30 T elicits results: only three pairs are willing to suggest ideas. T suggests they carry on for homework.

Example C (Ur, 1998, p. 222)

Before You Listen

Work in pairs. Look at the ad on page 134 for a bicycle shop from the yellow pages of the telephone book. What things do you think you might hear on a telephone message for this store? Make a list. Then compare your answers with one other student's.

Example D (Nunan, 1999, p. 186)

Examples of warm-ups, such as the ones found in Figure 1, show some important features: small talk/rapport, goal orientation, topic familiarity, brainstorming, schema development, and visual scaffolding are critical for understanding warm-up design.

In Example A, the teacher is trying to elicit student knowledge to form a schema about kinds of rocks through display questions. In Example B, the teacher explains the goal, and then gets students to find examples for developing topic familiarity. In Example C, the teacher begins with some administrative housekeeping, and then, through a visual referent, attempts to develop some topic familiarity. In Example D, the teacher uses a visual to develop topic familiarity and a schema for "commercial telephone messages."

These examples focus on different aspects of the warm-up stage. In this presentation, a more cohesive approach to warm-up design will be offered. By appealing to research, warm-up staging designs can be made more effective. From this research, it will be seen that more attention to atmospherics (preparing the emotional atmosphere) should be given, and building a tighter structure of information can also be helpful. Thus, this paper provides a research-based methodological approach that seeks to integrate research in language learning for orienting students to the lesson.

DEVELOPING RAPPORT

Rapport is the ability to build trust and confidence with others, often when there is little time available (Hale and Whitlam, 1995). According to these authors, it is especially important to use under the following conditions:

1) Dealing with diffuse cultures, which value relationships above individuality
2) Dealing with sensitive topics that require the revealing of personal thoughts and opinions
3) The relationship is an on-going, long-term affair

Korea is considered a diffuse culture (Littrell, 2005). To successfully negotiate teaching in a foreign country, it is good practice to acknowledge the influence of cultural differences. Developing a relationship with students, what is sometimes referred to as *skinship*, can facilitate a more positive response to learning. The language learning classroom, in the context of a communicative approach, will require students to share aspects of their personal and private minds. Some topics may hold more import for some students than others. Because such predictions are hard to make in advance, developing rapport may help to create a more smooth, less tense or obstructed, free flow of ideas and opinions. Finally, the responsibility teachers have is usually in the longer term. The classroom is a type of on-going contract in which the teacher is expected to provide a regular learning environment with learning support, and the students, in exchange, are expected to produce and achieve learning targets.

Bickmore (1999) suggests that rapport is built through sequentially following the frames of small talk to the finding of commonality and similarity, and through to self-disclosure. In Table 1, one possible script for creating rapport is provided. It is important to note that this particular script was created for a particular learning goal, answering the question *How do you deal with conflict?* in a job interview setting. This goal will help to focus discussion of warm-up design for the entire presentation.

Table 1. Rapport-Building Script

Frame 1	*(T. smiling)* Good morning/afternoon! *[Ss respond.]*	Greeting / initiate frame
Frame 2	Today is (*day of the week*)! It's the (*beginning/middle/end*) of the week. *[Ss respond affirmatively.]* How was your week - interesting? Busy? Stressed? *[Ss respond variously.]*	Small talk frame Building sense of communal feeling
Frame 3	[*Teacher focuses on several students' negative responses*] That's too bad. Has anyone else had an experience like that one? *[Ss respond.]* [*Teacher picking up on one student's problem with a person*] That's interesting. How did you handle that situation? *[Ss respond.]* How else would you handle that kind of situation? *[Ss respond.]*	Task frame Commonality Self-disclosure

Although the first frame in Table 1 would be quite typical of routine, daily social interaction, it is interesting to notice from Table 1 that none of the examples suggest a greeting for students when beginning the class. In Frame 2, the teacher gradually moves towards eliciting personal information from students.

The information shared is not personal yet; it is the kind of information we would normally be comfortable sharing even with a stranger. In Frame 3, the teacher gradually moves towards clarifying and expanding on students' responses. By reflecting to the whole class, some commonality is developed. By getting students to share personal solutions to problems they faced, some self-disclosure is also created.

GOAL ORIENTATION

The next step in the process is goal orientation. Prabhu (1987) suggests that perceived purpose and clear outcome was satisfying to learners because there was a clear criterion of success and a sense of achievement from success (p. 23). Oxford and Shearin (1994) show that when learning is explicitly tied to the accomplishment of objectives, the rate of achievement is exceptional. Finally, Nunan (1999) recommends "mak[ing] instructional goals explicit to the learner" (p. 211). From the body of research available on goal setting, it is the contention here that students gain the most benefit for downstream learning when they become aware of the learning goals as soon as possible; thus, why not in the initial warm-up stage?

To continue with the job interview example, after the initial rapport-building, the teacher could draw attention to a section of the whiteboard on which the topic and schedule for the lesson was recorded prior to class (Figure 2). A brief explanation of the schedule could proceed. Although concise, such an orientation should help students become aware of the class direction. By leaving the schedule on the board throughout the class, this information can become a visual referent for the students, which helps to focus attention. By habitually providing this kind of information in every class, the scheduling can become a kind of achievement anchor, to use Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) terminology, where students' expectation for learning goals is enhanced and reinforced.

Figure 2. Developing Goal Orientation

BRAINSTORMING THE TOPIC SCHEMA

According to the American Heritage Dictionary (Answers Corporation, 2005), brainstorming is "a method of shared problem solving in which all members of a group spontaneously contribute ideas." Cullen (1998) provides a very helpful discussion on why brainstorming is useful for language learning, by basing his comments to the good language learner research by Rubin and Thompson (1982).

First, good language learners organize information about language. Since each learner posses their own unique bank of information about a topic because of their individual experiences, sharing this information expands the knowledge base of all students in the class. Brainstorming helps to connect information from different sources to the topic at hand, opening the large passive vocabulary vault in each student.

Second, good learners find their own way and take charge of their own learning. The information in a brainstorming session comes from the students, not the teacher. Students become aware that they are not blank slates, but come in with valuable information that they can contribute, even teach, to each other.

Third, good language learners make intelligent guesses. Since brainstorming does not preclude or set conditions on what kind of answers are acceptable, students gain a sense of competence and success from the start of class. Downstream in the lesson, this can reduce their performance anxiety and help them be more willing to offer answers in language tasks.

Finally, good learners use contextual cues to help them in comprehension. As we will see in the next section, using a visual referent to facilitate brainstorming encourages students to pick up cues from the picture for making sense of the situation. By focusing on different aspects of a visual during brainstorming, students can be drawn to noticing different features of the context, and hence, the different choices for particular language uses and purposes.

How to Brainstorm: Using Visual Representations of Context

Research indicates that:

1. Learning information is more effective when the entire brain is used.
2. Generally, the left side of the brain does auditory processing; the right side, visual.
3. Information is presented to students in both an auditory and visual format, both the left and right hemispheres process that information simultaneously.
4. Visual referents permit strategies to organize knowledge into semantic or associative clusters.

From these results, using a visual referent to facilitate brainstorming is a time-effective technique for eliciting textual and contextual information from students for initial scaffolding to language learning. Depending on the level of language proficiency and knowledge of the world that students have, teachers need to structure the brainstorming in more or less detail, for the discussion to proceed effectively. In addition, Canning-Wilson (2001) reminds us that visuals need to be characterized by at least four criteria to be the most useful for this purpose.

First, the visual referent should contain an appropriate amount of contextual information. The information should roughly suggest to students the setting, the interactants, and the register in use. How much detail, however, is a critical consideration. For instance, in my opinion, Example 4 from Table 1 contains too much linguistic information to be useful. Students will concentrate on interpreting that information. In addition, too much information can constrain the depth and breadth of student input. For brainstorming to be successful, a wide license of expression is most welcome. The nature of the topic can also constrain the imagery. If the visual contains images of graphic emotional content, that might limit the utility. Finally, and quite sensibly, the visual needs to be related to the goals of the class. A visual referent that is tangential to learning content would not develop relevant topical and lexical schemas, and would serve to orient students to the purpose of the class. In Figure 3, a possible visual for the job interview lesson is provided.

In this visual referent, a customer service representative at a complaints desk is taking a complaint from an irate customer. Another representative comes along and is able to intervene, bringing a resolution to the situation. This is the kind of factual narrative structure that a successful answer to the job interview question, *How would you handle conflict?*, that a potential employer is looking for. This introductory visual would help students orient to a model answer text presented later in the lesson in a way that, I believe, satisfies the four criteria discussed above. It describes the setting, the situation and the interactants, without providing too much detail. While conflict is a sensitive issue, its cartoon-like representation in the visual softens the tone and mood without detracting from the characteristics of the depicted interaction.

Figure 2. Visual Representation for Job Interview Class Brainstorming Session

Frame 1 Frame 2 Frame 3

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have discussed why warm-ups are important for lesson plan design. I have presented a research-based form for constructing a warm-up stage for a specific lesson with examples of a rapport-building script anchored with a visual goal structure and its explanation, and a brainstorming session supplemented with a context-specific, effective-for-learning visual for developing content and lexical schemas.

Warm-up stages need not, and should not, require a lot of time to administer in a lesson. The important aspect of learning is practice, and the bulk of the lesson should be focused on that stage. However, it is important not to neglect the presence of a warm-up stage in our lessons, due to its downstream value for learning.

Warm-ups may take other forms, and given the particular nature of classroom objectives, or the make-up of students, may not be necessary. For example, if classes as a rule are clearly linked from one to the next, developing a schema may not always be necessary. However, recycling and review is always a useful technique.

Finally, some caveats. A warm-up stage may be an unfamiliar approach to learning in some classrooms, especially in ones that would usually be more traditional (i.e., not communicative). In such cases, students will probably require multiple exposures to group brainstorming, responding to questions, etc., before becoming comfortable with them. In addition, age is an important limitation. Young children would find the visual referent to be an unfamiliar context, and the use of a visual may not be useful. Of course, those concerns have more to do with larger curriculum issues than lesson design. At the same time, however, it is worth mentioning that the recycling of familiar routines at the beginning of class in a way that is relevant for later learning echoes some of the concepts expressed here.

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Popular Music and Its Role in the EFL Classroom

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Abstract

Effective teaching and learning rely heavily on student interests and motivation. It is no secret how much high school and university students love popular music. It makes sense, therefore, to build upon this in the teaching of English, since the wealth of popular songs in the English speaking world offers a rich and extensive resource for language educators. Popular songs allow students to learn language patterns, idioms, and structures effortlessly, and are an excellent source of informal and colloquial English. In addition, popular songs make the target language and culture more accessible to students. This workshop examined the role of popular songs in optimizing learning and motivation. The rationale for using popular songs in the EFL classroom was explored, and suggestions were offered for their use. Song selection guidelines were discussed. There was also a practical demonstration of the use of popular songs in the classroom.

Introduction

Basic pedagogical theory indicates that for learning to be effective, it must be meaningful, stimulating, and motivating for students. There is perhaps no greater way to achieve this with high school and university students than through the use of popular music. Students bring a wide variety of experiences and interests to the learning process. Popular music is arguably the most pervasive, the most stimulating, and the most unifying of all these interests. It makes sense, therefore, to tap into this powerful language teaching resource, and utilize its enormous compendium of English language experiences, to ensure successful and enjoyable language learning.

Rationale

The research literature abounds with arguments for the use of music in language learning. Schoepp (2001) classifies the rationales into four main categories: theoretical, affective, cognitive, and linguistic.

THEORETICAL

Krashen (1982) maintains in his Input Hypothesis that new and unfamiliar vocabulary is best learned when learners see it as significant and meaningful. New vocabulary must be made comprehensible to learners. Music provides extra-linguistic support, increasing the amount of comprehensible input learners receive (Medina, 2002). Another reason for the use of music is related to the dual processes involved in listening comprehension: top-down and bottom-up (Schoepp, 2001). In bottom-up processing, sounds are built into words, sentences, and meaning. In top-down processing, the listener uses background knowledge to understand meaning. Both are activated when popular songs are used in the classroom (Cullen, 1999; Schoepp, 2001). Furthermore, the lyrics of popular songs contain many vague referents, unspecific in terms of time, place, or identity of their chief protagonists. This absence of specificity allows students to attach their own meanings, feelings, and experiences to the songs they hear, in the same way that they can utilize language as a framework for self-expression (Murphey, 1989). Finally, the fact that song-like vocalizations precede language in babies underscores the connection between music and language learning (Murphey, 1989).

AFFECTIVE

In his Affective Filter Hypothesis, Krashen (1982) maintains that optimal learning takes place when a positive attitude is present. Negative emotions lead to a strong affective filter that can block language acquisition (Medina, 2002). Music is an effective way to evoke positive emotions, thereby weakening the affective filter. Music also activates other emotions such as exhilaration, nostalgia, and melancholy. Research on the affective domain has shown that when emotion is attached to learning, the likelihood of retention is increased. Emotional memories tend to be long-lasting (Price, 1998). Students' natural interest in popular music makes it a powerful motivator which can potentially engage unmotivated students and reconnect them to the learning process. Additionally, the inspirational power of music has made it a standard feature in the commercial world – in advertising, restaurants, shopping malls, and movies. Its benefits should be extended to the EFL classroom.

COGNITIVE

Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988) cite “automaticity” as an important component of language fluency. They define automaticity as “a component of language fluency which involves both knowing what to say and producing language rapidly without pauses” (p. 473). They acknowledge the role of music in facilitating automaticity. Music also activates the imagination and releases creative instincts in a way that no other artistic medium can. Music adds a right-brained dimension to what is essentially a left-brained activity. Students learn better when language is approached as a whole-brain activity which allows them to operate from both cerebral hemispheres. Furthermore, Gardner (1993) expresses the concern that although everyone is born with a broad range of intelligences, education has traditionally focused primarily on verbal-linguistic and mathematical-logical intelligences. Popular songs offer unlimited opportunities to cultivate the musical intelligence, thereby expanding the range of intelligences being utilized. In addition, psychological research indicates a strong link between music and rote memorization, an essential component of language learning (Medina, 2002). From a pedagogical standpoint, music can be used for differentiated instruction. In mixed ability classes, students can complete activities designed for different levels of ability while listening to the same song.

LINGUISTIC

Popular music abounds with examples of colloquial English. Since students are likely to encounter this kind of informal language most frequently among native speakers, such exposure is essential (Schoepp, 2001). Schoepp also points out that since popular music is a high interest activity for young people, there is a strong likelihood that they will seek out songs outside the classroom, thereby receiving extra reinforcement of language patterns. Murphey (1989) cites the "song-stuck-in-the-head" phenomenon in which a song often remains in the brain long after class. Because every language has unique rhythm, pitch, and intonation, music helps students become aware of the prosodic elements of language. It is also often more important to understand the general gist of discourse than to understand every word. Many popular songs, because of the nature of their arrangement, allow students to wrestle with this task. Much of language learning and comprehension is about predicting and constructing meaning in this manner. Popular music also offers authenticity in the language learning classroom, which in turn affects motivation. When students see that the structures, idioms, and grammar they are studying are actually used by icons of popular culture, this can have a positive impact on motivation and recall (Saricoban & Metin, 2000). Finally, learning a language is also about gaining insights into the minds and culture of its speakers. Popular music affords students greater access to the rich and varied cultures of the English-speaking world. Making a target culture more accessible to students also serves to de-mystify it, and helps students realize that there are more cross-cultural similarities than differences.

Suggestions for Using Popular Music in the EFL Classroom

For the purposes of simplicity, suggestions for the use of popular music in the EFL classroom have been divided into the following categories: listening and speaking, writing and reading, grammar, collocations and vocabulary. However, each activity incorporates many of these skills in combination, allowing for the possibility of designing integrated lessons.

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Listening comprehension activities include true/false statements, open comprehension questions, dictation, sequencing lyric strips, gap fills, and musical bingo. Popular songs, because of their emotive impact, can provide a powerful springboard for speaking and discussion, especially when songs are used that deal with difficult or controversial topics. A good example is "Dirty Laundry" by Don Henley, which deals with media sensationalism. Other speaking activities include conversations between the singer and the person to whom the song is addressed, or between two singers in a duet. Many songs offer students the opportunity to practice paraphrasing lyrics as well as converting direct to reported speech, and vice versa. If songs are selected that typify the accents of different English-speaking regions, students can practice the pronunciation of a variety of dialects. For example, the song "I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)" by the Proclaimers provides an excellent example of a strong Scottish accent.

WRITING AND READING

Similarly, popular songs that deal with controversial topics can serve as a springboard for writing activities. “We Didn't Start the Fire” by Billy Joel is a fast-paced commentary on the world's political problems, past and present, and provides a multiplicity of thought-provoking topics. Students may be encouraged to write their own lyrics for simple songs such as “Sailing” by Rod Stewart. This song, in particular, is suitable for beginner-level students who need to practice simple sentence structures. Students can also be encouraged to write new endings to songs, or to write letters to singers based on their songs. Popular songs offer the same variety of reading activities as regular text, but with extra-linguistic support and a lower affective filter (Krashen, 1982 Medina, 2002). Narrative songs such as “Cat's in the Cradle” by Harry Chapin are particularly conducive to reading comprehension activities. Students listen to and read lyrics simultaneously before answering comprehension questions. Because of the emotive impact of music, student responses to higher-level questions can be considerably more insightful than in a conventional context. Other reading activities include spotting mistakes and finding antonyms/synonyms of given words. “Yesterday” by The Beatles could be used for reinforcement of short and long vowel sounds students would identify long and short vowel sounds on a lyric sheet, and then listen to the song to confirm or revise their predictions.

GRAMMAR, COLLOCATIONS, AND VOCABULARY

The number of grammar lessons that can be based on popular songs is unlimited. “I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For” by U2 could be used to practice the present perfect tense; “The Day before You Came” by Abba offers reinforcement of past modals; present tense can be the focus when using “Sacrifice” by Elton John. Similarly, opportunities for practice in collocations, expressions, and idioms abound. A good example is “New York, New York” by Frank Sinatra (see Appendix A). Songs with specific themes can be used to reinforce and expand vocabulary. “Friday, I'm in Love” by The Cure can help students practice days of the week; “Wonderful World” by Sam Cooke (or James Taylor) offers practice in the names of school subjects (see Appendix B). Finally, “If I Had a Million Dollars” by Barenaked Ladies can be used for shopping terminology and vocabulary extension activities.

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING SONGS

An important consideration in song selection is the clarity of lyrics. There is a danger of losing the affective advantage of popular music by selecting songs with obscure lyrics. Student frustration with a difficult listening task strengthens the affective filter, and any potential gains are lost. However, it is sometimes beneficial to use songs with obscure lyrics, since it allows students to practice getting the essence of the meaning. For example, sequencing lyric strips only requires understanding the “essence.” Another consideration in song selection is the target language structure. It is generally known that in order for learning to occur, the concept or idea must be heard many times. Therefore, songs that provide a lot of repetition of the language structure are best. It is also important to choose lyrics that are well suited to the age and cultural context of the learners. Incorporating the musical interests of the learners is another consideration, although it is also beneficial to expose students to musical selections that are outside their interest area. A practical consideration is where to find lyrics. Many CDs come with song lyrics, and lyrics can also be found online quite easily. Another option is to enlist students to contribute songs and lyrics for the classroom, thereby increasing learner autonomy. Finally, it is important to consider the length of the song. Since most songs will need to be played at least two or three times, songs that are over four minutes long may not be practical.

CONCLUSION

The practical effectiveness of popular music as a language learning tool is clear, but its value goes beyond the practical. Popular music can inspire and motivate educators so that they, in turn, may inspire and motivate their students. Using music in the classroom goes beyond the theoretical, the affective, the cognitive, and the linguistic, and has the potential to offer a language learning experience that transcends the mundane and moves teachers and students in the process.

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Selected Resources

ESL Through Music: **www.caslt.org/research/music.htm** (A great starting point - provides links to many of the sites listed below.)

ESL Through Music: **www.forefrontpublishers.com/eslmusic** (A useful source of articles, materials, lesson plans submitted by teachers, books, and CDs.)

ESL Lounge, Songs for English Teaching: **www.esl-lounge.com/songstop/shtml** (A good source of free song lyrics and activities.)

Teaching Language with Music: **http://gs.fanshawec.on.ca/tlwm** ("ESL Song Directory" available for download files are available with the understanding that they will be used for educational purposes only.)

Teaching With Songs: **www.isabelperez.com/songs** (30 songs complete with activities.)

Song Lyrics: **www.songlyrics.com** (An excellent source of song lyrics, with music available for download after a 14-day free trial.)

APPENDIX A

New York, New York (Frank Sinatra)

Write the following phrases into the bingo chart below. There are 12 phrases and 16 boxes, so you will need to write some phrases twice. Then cross them off as you hear them in the song.

• brand new start	* head of the list	* the very heart of it
• king of the hill	* vagabond shoes	* longing to stray
• spreading the ne	* I'll make it anywhere	* top of the heap
• city that doesn't sleep	* cream of the crop	* little town blues

APPENDIX B

Wonderful World

Don't know much about _______________.
Don't know much ______________.
Don't know much about a ______________ book.
Don't know much about the ____________ I took.
But I do know that I love you,
And I know that if you love me too,
What a wonderful world this would be.

Don't know much about _____________.
Don't know much _________________.
Don't know much about _____________.
Don't know what a _________ _________ is for.
But I do know one and one is two,
And if this one could be with you,
What a wonderful world this would be.

Now, I don't claim to be an A ___________,
But I'm trying to be.
For maybe by being an A ___________ baby,
I can win your love for me.

Don't know much about _______________.
Don't know much ______________.
Don't know much about a ______________ book.
Don't know much about the ____________ I took.
But I do know that I love you,
And I know that if you love me too,
What a wonderful world this would be.

Cha, cha, cha, cha, cha, cha, cha, cha, cha, ____________,
Mmmmmmmmmm ______________________
Wa, wa, cha, cha, cha, cha, cha, cha, cha, ____________ book,
Mmmmmmmmm _____________ I took. Yea.
But I do know that I love you,
And I know that if you love me too,
What a wonderful world this would be.

Bringing Extensive Reading Into the Korean Classroom

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ABSTRACT

Extensive reading is one of the most effective ways to develop a second language in an EFL environment. Unfortunately, few students and educators in Korea are aware of what extensive reading is and the impressive benefits it brings. Furthermore, teachers often lack direction as to how to promote extensive reading habits in their students. After a brief description of extensive reading and its benefits, this article details one way to introduce extensive reading into the Korean classroom. Several surveys were conducted in order to determine if this methodology made a lasting impact on the students' reading habits after the course finished. The survey data suggests that by introducing extensive reading to students and giving them the opportunity to become familiar with the practice, a significant percentage of students can be positively affected.

INTRODUCTION

Lack of exposure to English is one of the key reasons why the results of English instruction in countries like Korea are generally disappointing. Many scholars argue that extensive reading is the most practical and efficient way for students in an EFL environment to receive this crucial input and reach intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency. Unfortunately, very few students (or teachers) in Korea are aware of what extensive reading is and what it can do for their language development. In this article, after giving a brief overview of what extensive reading is and can do for students, I will discuss one way to introduce extensive reading practices into the Korean classroom and then report on how effective this practice was in influencing students' reading habits after the course was finished.

WHAT IS EXTENSIVE READING?

A simple definition of extensive reading is just reading a lot at a fairly easy level. The following is a summary of the main principles and features of extensive reading (see Day and Bamford, 1998, for a more detailed description).

READ EASY BOOKS

Students should be able to comprehend the text without the need of a dictionary. Generally, students should already know roughly 95-98% of the vocabulary in the text (see Nation, 2001). Graded readers (simplified texts) are the best source of texts tailored to match student levels.

READ A LOT

Day and Bamford (2002) recommend one graded reader of the appropriate level per week, while Mason (2005) recommends 100-150 pages a week (about two graded readers). This kind of reading requires at least 20 minutes a day, and perhaps as much as 40 minutes a day for most readers.

READ FOR ENJOYMENT

Texts should be chosen by the students and read primarily for enjoyment. Students read just like "real readers" do: reading only texts that readers want to read. Extensive reading discourages comprehension tests and lengthy reading summaries as these practices are unnatural (few people take comprehension tests after reading their morning newspaper, for example) and serve only to take the pleasure out of reading. If the student understands and enjoys the book, the reading is considered to be 100% successful.

KEEP READING

Though some studies on extensive reading have shown measurable results in as little as a few months (i.e., Hafiz & Tudor, 1989), the benefits of extensive reading only become truly impressive after the practice has been sustained for at least one year.

Benefits of Extensive Reading

Extensive reading has a strong impact on nearly all language skills. Krashen (1993) surveyed 53 studies comparing students in traditionally taught classrooms with students engaged in free reading courses (students spent most of their class time reading self-selected, easy books). He found that in 26 of those studies (see Table 1) there was no difference between the groups, meaning that students learned just as much from simply reading books of interest as students receiving explicit instruction. In 24 of those studies, students engaged in free reading practice actually outperformed traditionally taught students. Note that students engaged in extensive reading for at least one year were almost always better than traditionally taught students and were never worse.

Table 1. Extensive Reading vs. Traditional Instruction

Study Duration	Positive	No difference	Negative
Less than 7 months	7	13	3
7 months to 1 year	9	11	0
Greater than 1 year	8	2	0

(Krashen, 1993)

It is important to keep in mind that these studies usually cover more than just reading skills. Eskey's "book flood" studies (1987) showed improvement in *nearly all* language skills, particularly in regards to reading and writing with some students improving in writing skills at three times the rate of traditionally instructed students (who actually practiced writing more!). A host of studies (i.e., Tsang, 1996; Mason & Krashen, 1997; Mason, 2004) have confirmed that reading alone increases writing skills just as well if not better than explicit writing instruction and practice. Extensive reading practices have also been found to correlate positively with speaking ability (Huang & van Naerssen, 1987; Hafiz & Tudor, 1989), vocabulary, (Coady, 1997) grammar acquisition (Lee, Krashen, & Gribbons, 1996Stokes, Krashen, & Kartchner, 1998), and even TOEFL scores (Gradman & Hanania, 1991). Perhaps even more importantly, extensive reading is a very enjoyable way to study a language and contributes strongly to developing positive attitudes toward language study (see Mason & Krashen, 1997; Day & Bamford, 1998).

Do Korean Students Read in English?

To get an idea of how much Korean students read in English, I conducted a survey (N=60) on incoming freshman students in Sogang University.

Table 2: Survey on Reading Habits of Incoming Sogang Freshman Students
How much time do you spend reading in English in your free time?

More than 3 hours a week	1	(1.67%)
2-3 hours a week	13	(21.67%)
1 hour a week	15	(25.00%)
1 hour a month	21	(35.00%)
0 (Almost never)	10	(16.67%)

Considering that extensive reading demands at least 20 minutes of reading a day, these results suggest that very few Korean students (23%) are reading enough in English to receive any significant benefit. Furthermore, it is very questionable whether those 14 students were reading materials that were of the appropriate level for them, as most indicated that they were reading authentic materials such as newspapers and magazine articles that are clearly beyond the acceptable difficulty levels considered necessary for extensive reading.

These results are not surprising. Kim and Krashen (1997) found that Korean students do not read much in English due to traditional classroom practices that emphasis grammar, drills, and the dominance of complicated and boring reading materials in the classroom. They also note that few educators are aware of extensive reading practices and benefits.

Action Research: Effects of Introducing Extensive Reading and Graded Readers Into the Korean Classroom

Kim and Krashen (1997) have the following recommendations to help English teachers in Korea promote extensive reading practices in Korea:

1. Inform students and teachers of the benefits of extensive reading.
2. Give guidance on what books to choose (books of interest and of appropriate difficulty level).
3. Give L2 readers easy access to a wide variety of books.
4. Help students overcome ineffective reading strategies and habits.

One can argue that the best way to promote extensive reading is to open a special extensive reading course in which the students spend most of class time simply reading and discovering the benefits directly themselves (see Day & Bamford, 1998). However, for many teachers this is not a viable option. The following is a series of brief lesson plans that teachers can implement in existing English language classes to help students become familiar with the practice and hopefully encourage them to continue the practice as a part of their independent study. After describing these lesson plans, I will show the results of several surveys which indicate how successful this experiment was in changing the students' reading practices.

Step 1. Introduce Extensive Reading

Students first took a poll on their current reading habits (shown earlier in Table 2). We reviewed the poll results and then I gave a short reading assignment on the benefits of extensive reading, followed up by a brief PowerPoint lecture. The main goal was to show how this enjoyable practice can be far superior to the usual "hard study" that most students do. I consider this to be quite critical as students need to be convinced of the benefits of extensive reading to be truly motivated enough to engage in the practice in any kind of lasting way.

Step 2. Introduce Graded Readers

The next step is to give students some familiarity with graded readers and guidance as to what level of graded reader suits them best. In the following class, I brought in a box of graded readers from our library that matched the general levels of the class. Most graded reader series (i.e., Macmillan Graded Readers, Oxford Bookworms, Penguin Readers) have six difficulty levels. For freshman students, I have found that levels 3 and 4 are generally suitable. Each student was able to look through the books and find one that looked interesting. After the students selected their books, I gave them ten minutes to quietly read in class.

After the students read, I had them answer the following questions:

1. What level is your book?
2. Was the book easy enough to enjoy?
    A. It was very easy. I almost never saw a vocabulary word I didn't know.
    B. It was easy. I saw a few new vocabulary words, but it was still easy to understand.
    C. It was OK, but sometimes I couldn't understand.
    D. It was a little hard. There were too many new vocabulary words.
3. Did the story seem interesting? Would you like to continue reading it?

To the second question, answer “B” indicates that the level of the book is appropriate for the student. Students who answered “A” were encouraged to try a book of a higher level. Students who answered “C” or “D” were encouraged to read a lower level book.

Step 3. Give Reading Assignments

Students were instructed to locate a graded reader of the appropriate level on their own and finish the book within two weeks, mostly as homework. Our department has its own collection of graded readers that are available to the students. Many students, however, simply purchased their graded readers from major bookstores (costs range from 3,500-6,000 won). The following week I had the students bring their graded readers to class to ensure students had an appropriate book for their level.

Step 4. Organize Book Reports

After the two week period, the students formed small groups of four and gave a brief oral book review report on their graded reader. The students then later posted their book reviews on our class web site.

As most of the reading was done as homework, the above activities only took up a total of about 70 minutes of class time.

Results: Affects on Students' Reading habits

The primary goal of the extensive reading activities was to develop extensive reading practices in the students that will continue long after the class has ended. To measure the success of this goal, I conducted two surveys during the semester and a follow up survey three months after the course had finished.

The first survey was conducted at the beginning of the course. The results were previously shown in Table 2 (and again in Table 4 below). I conducted a second survey (Table 3) at the end of the course to get an idea of how many students in my courses would continue to do extensive reading.

Table 3. Survey on Future Reading Plans

Will you continue to do extensive reading on your own?

Definitely, I have already started a new book.	4 (6%)
Yes, I plan to start a new book soon.	31 (52%)
Maybe, but I don't plan on doing it right away.	22 (37%)
Probably not.	3 (5%)

Recall from Table 2 that only 14 (23%) students indicated they read more than one hour a week at the beginning of the semester. The follow-up survey indicates that the extensive reading introduction and practice has increased this percentage to 58% of the students, while 37% seem to be undecided and only 5% have remained resistant.

Naturally, what students say they will do and what they actually do may be very different things. To get a better idea of the students' actual extensive reading practices after the course ended, I conducted a third survey on a portion of these students. Of the original 60 students, I was able to survey 21 students who returned to my English course in the fall semester (Table 4). Admittedly this is not an ideal number of returning respondents to make any strong claims, but a look at the survey results does give some useful indications of how some of the students responded in practice.

Table 4: Comparison of Pre-treatment Survey and Follow-up Survey
How much time do you spend reading in English in your free time?

	Beginning of the semester (N=60)	Second follow-up survey (3months after semester finished: N = 21)
More than 3 hours a week	1 (1.67%)	3 (14%)
2-3 hours a week	13 (21.67%)	6 (29%)
1 hour a week	15 (25%)	5 (24%)
1 hour a month	21 (35%)	3 (14%)
0 (Almost never)	10 (16.67%)	4 (19%)

According to these results, whereas only 23% of the students were reading enough in English to receive significant benefits to their language development at the beginning of the course, about 43% of the respondents continued to engage in extensive reading three months after the course had finished.

Though a slight majority of the students remained largely unaffected, a significant number of students have changed their reading habits. Considering the impressive benefits these students can expect to achieve, these results are encouraging. This research also can provide a base upon which to attempt further experimentation and improvement.

It is not just what the students learn in the few short months they are in our classroom that is important, but the skills they take with them after the class is finished that will determine how far they progress in the language. Introducing extensive reading into the classroom and helping students get familiar with the practice is one crucial way to give our students the knowledge and tools they need to succeed in language learning.

The Author

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Select Bibliography of Internet Resources

http://www.erfoundation.org
http://www.extensivereading.net
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ExtensiveReading/
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TESOL_ER/

The Great Homework Debate

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Abstract

Teachers are reluctant to assign homework tasks to elementary school-aged English language learners for various reasons. However, effective homework tasks can be assigned to English students with satisfying results for students, parents, and teachers. Not only do the student's language skills improve, but the foundations of life-long learning skills are also laid. This paper details a pedagogically sound methodology that is effective, efficient, and easy to use and is fun whilst retaining academic integrity.

Introduction

If homework is boring you are not doing it right! When working with junior language students, all learning must be exciting. It simply goes against the nature of young learners not to absorb knowledge as a sponge absorbs water. Holt (1983) says:

> The child is curious. He wants to make sense out of things, find out how things work, gain competence and control over himself and his environment, and do what he can see other people doing. He is open, perceptive, and experimental. He does not merely observe the world around him. He does not shut himself off from the strange, complicated world around him, but tastes it, touches it, hefts it, bends it, breaks it. To find out how reality works, he works on it. He is bold. He is not afraid of making mistakes. And he is patient. He can tolerate an extraordinary amount of uncertainty, confusion, ignorance, and suspense. ... School is not a place that gives much time, or opportunity, or reward, for this kind of thinking and learning. (p. 287)

Your job as a teacher, therefore, is to understand the nature of the beast you are working with, and work "with" it. Holt also suggests this understanding must be based on faith, and writes:

> This faith is that by nature people are learning animals. Birds fly; fish swim; humans think and learn. Therefore, we do not need to motivate children into learning by wheedling, bribing, or bullying. We do not need to keep picking away at their minds to make sure they are learning. What we need to do – and all we need to do – is to give children as much help and guidance as they need and ask for, listen respectfully when they feel like talking, and then get out of the way. We can trust them to do the rest." (p. 293)

This paper suggests that setting, checking, grading, and monitoring homework can be exciting. If you are excited, your students will be excited too, and if you set homework you must be prepared to do some homework yourself. After all, is not teaching really leading by example? Through homework a child may begin to realize their independence as a learner to increase, broaden, and discover new things independent of any other person, but this is no easy task. It is a responsibility laded upon the facilitator, as these early homework experiences lay the foundations for the attitude the young learner will carry on into future study. So how do we motivate, set, check, grade and monitor homework?

In this paper, the five points discussed are motivation, assigning homework tasks, checking homework, grading homework, and monitoring homework. Motivation is best if it is intrinsic. How does one develop the young learner's intrinsic enthusiasm for knowledge? Assigning or setting homework tasks in the language learner's class must be concise and clear. How does one make homework tasks clear and error-free for students? How does one provide enough information for independent study without taking up precious classroom teaching time? Checking homework is absolutely necessary, if it is not checked the smart student will soon start to ponder the validity of doing homework at all. How can checking of homework be fun and stimulating, and provide anecdotal, formative, or summative assessment? Grading of homework may seem like a novel idea, but in relation to a variety of skills, it is quite pertinent. Grading gives guidelines to the students on progress and direction. It may be reassuring or not, but either way, it is a signpost giving valuable information to students, teachers, and parents. So how can grading be incorporated into homework checking? Monitoring of homework is a quick way of recording students' attempts and efforts, but how can teachers meaningfully incorporate this into class teaching time and checking? Some of these areas overlap; however, each will be looked at individually below.

MOTIVATION

Motivation is most effective if it is intrinsic, and homework by nature develops students' intrinsic motivation skills. However, to get to this point, many elementary school students may need to be extrinsically motivated, simply because by this stage, many students have been subjected to stresses and pressures regarding learning and are becoming wary of the demands a teacher may make of them. Hunt (2005) quotes Albert Einstein as saying, “It is a very grave mistake to think that the enjoyment of seeing and searching can be promoted by means of coercion (para. 15) and goes on to say, When a one-year-old falls down while learning to walk, we say, 'Good try! You'll catch on soon!' No caring parent would say, 'Every baby your age should be walking. You'd better be walking by Friday!'” (para. 15). Unfortunately, by elementary-school age, many students have been subjected to this approach regarding formal school education, particularly if that education is administered in a behaviorist paradigm.

The New Zealand Curriculum (N.Z. Ministry of Education, 1993), document lists several essential skills, of which two are (a) self-management and (b) work and study, which suggests that the student who has well-developed intrinsic motivation achieves better results, both academically and personally. Intrinsic motivation can be developed through scaffolding, taking the student from where they are at, which could be with no developed intrinsic homework skills, to the point at which they are studying independently because they want to. While intrinsic motivation is developed as an essential skill, extrinsic motivation tends to be the result of behaviorist teaching and learning practices, and as Li (1999) suggests, throughout Asia and notably in Korea, this teaching and learning paradigm is still very strong, causing homework tasks to frequently be viewed as something a student must do to satisfy the teacher. Whilst this does not reflect many Western teachers' pedagogical philosophies and practices, the behaviorist approach, which Korean students and parents understand, can be taken advantage of in the EFL classroom, and if managed well, the students will begin to develop their own reasons for doing homework.

ASSIGNING

As homework is done independently, it must be satisfying for the student. One way to ensure student satisfaction is to assign tasks that are achievable. In the language class, such tasks are those that are measurable and independently assessable. Such topics of content for homework for language learners can include:

- Spelling
- Handwriting
- Exploring Rhetorical Concepts
- Dictionary Skills
- Written Genres and Forms
- Listening
- Reading
- Vocabulary

All of the above skills can be quickly modeled in the classroom by the teacher and practiced in a rote or repetitive fashion by the student. These skills are easily assessable by the student and teacher. These tasks also, while necessary for developing language skills, can take up too much time in the classroom, which is more efficiently and effectively used for developing oral and aural language skills.

A simple routine format for assigning homework is to plan for five to ten minutes of classroom time for modeling and explaining the homework assignment requirements (STEP, 2000). A form with an example of the homework task provides the student with a model they can refer to as well as a brief detail of the expectations of the teacher (see Figure 1).

Each student has a copy of this chart glued to the inside of their homework notebook. The chart sets out the date, models the task, and indicates the teacher's expectation, in this case, the amount of repetitions written in brackets. This chart provides the student with immediate feedback for personal checking of the assigned homework and enables them to self-monitor their progress.

Homework tasks are more effective if they compliment classroom tasks. The content for the tasks on the homework chart of Figure 1 has been taken from the *Wake Up* series of elementary grade textbooks, and the daily oral activities practiced in the classroom are expanded in a logical fashion.

Figure 1. Homework Chart

Homework Record

Name:______________________________ **Level:** _______________________________

Class Times: _________________________ **Teacher/s:** __________________________

*** P sign = Parents Signature, T sign = Teachers Signature.**
*** 1 = Completed, 2 = Incomplete, 3 = Not Attempted.**
*** Summative Grade Assigned: 10 Completed with no errors, 6-9 Completed with errors, 5 Incomplete with no errors, 1-4 Incomplete with errors, 0 Not completed. Remark = Anecdotal/Formative Assessment Grades can be awarded for incomplete or Not attempted homework turned in within ten teaching days of assigned date; however, each teaching day reduces grade by 1 point.**

Date	Homework	S sign	P sign	T sign	1* 2* 3*	Grade* and Remark
4/7/05	UPPER CASE LETTERS BIG ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ (x 3)					
5/7/05	lower case letters little abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz (x3)					
6/7/05	"My name is Jasmin." (x3)					
7/7/05	"Hello." (x3)					
8/7/05	"Hello. My name is Jasmin." (x3)					
11/7/05	"What's your name?" (x3)					
12/7/05	"How are you?" (x3)					
13/7/05	"I'm fine thank you." (x3)					
14/7/05	"Goodbye." (x3)					
15/7/05	1".Hello. My name is Jasmin. What's your name?" " I'm Susan." "Goodbye Susan." "Goodbye Jasmin." 2."Hello. How are you?" "I'm fine thank you." "Goodbye Susan." "Goodbye Jasmin." (x3)					
18/7/05	Sit down. Stand up. Listen. Repeat. (x3)					
19/7/05	Look here. Be quiet. No talking. (x3)					
20/7/05	Put your hand up. Open your book. Close your book. Pencils out. (x3)					
21/7/05	Writing. Drawing. Coloring. (x3)					
22/7/05	Cutting. Pasting. Singing. I am writing. I am drawing. I am coloring. I am cutting. I am pasting. I am singing.(x3)					
25/7/05	Desk. Chair. Pencil. Eraser. (x3)					
26/7/05	Notebook. Student book. Homestudy book. Audio cassette. Story book. (x3)					
27/7/05	Scissors. Color Pencils. Glue. (x3)					
28/7/05	O red O orange O yellow O green O blue O purple O white O black O gray(x3)					
29/7/05	1 red pencil. 2 orange scissors. 3 yellow notebooks. 4 green desks. 5 blue chairs. 6 purple glue sticks. 7 white erasers. 8 black color pencils. 9 gray audio cassettes. (x 3)					
Final Result						

CHECKING

There needs to be time set aside at the start of each class to review and check homework. Checking homework is a twofold process. It is important that each student feels their homework is considered as a valid task, so some form of personal acknowledgement must be part of the checking process (Glosser, 2005). Equally valid is correction of errors. Due to the repetitive nature of homework tasks, errors, if not found, can become established, and hinder the students' progress (Tyson, 2003). The second part of the homework checking process is to give students an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge. When homework is "checked" in this manner, it challenges the student academically after the homework is done, thereby acting as a motivator. But as some of the activities for checking are presented as "games," students need to know the content of the game to play it successfully. This also acts as a motivator for the student, as they desire to participate in the games and chants to show off their skills. Any method that overtly checks students' homework employs the product-oriented teaching and learning approach that is recognized in Korea and other Asian countries (Pennington, Brock, and Yue, 1996).

Some simple activities that have been effective in checking homework include the following.

CHAIN DRILLS

Chain drills are suitable for practice in the alphabet, phonics, spelling, sentence structure, and copied written work. A student may say a letter such as "A," the next student says "B," etc. until the alphabet is completed. With a phonics assignment, the first student may say, "phone – ph=fi"; the second student, "phone – o=oh"; the third student, "phone – n=ni"; the fourth student, "phone – e=no sound." Spelling tasks can be chanted with the first student calling, "Phone - give me a 'p'" (and everyone repeating "p"); the second student calling, "Give me an 'h'" (and everyone repeating "h"); the third student calling, "Give me an 'o'" (and everyone repeating "o"); the fifth student calling "Give me an 'n'" (and again, everyone repeating "n"); and the sixth student calling, "Give me an 'e'" (with everyone repeating "e"). In having the whole class chant at intervals, they are being kept involved in the task.

Another form of these chants that works well is to spell the words to the tune of "Bingo," the whole class sings the main body of the song, and in a round robin drill, each student gets to fill in the gap of a letter or letter blend or phonic sound or a word (e.g., "Old MacDonald"; see Figure 2). Sentences and paragraphs can be checked in chain drill fashion in the same way, with each student participating with a different word. To make this checking fun, it is possible to incorporate points and teams; each student or team starts with, say, ten points, with a point being deducted for every error made. In elementary through middle school classes, the students like to "punish" each other for losing, and a soft plastic, squeaky, hammer which the winner administers to the loser's head, hand, or bottom, is effective and provides hilarity. Such activities avoid the routine of the teacher being the sole provider of rewards and punishments, and are a pleasant relief from candies and sticker charts, which may place a financial burden on the teacher to maintain their use.

Another method of checking spelling is “Partner Hangman,” in which the teacher provides a series of pre-photocopied hangman games with dashes and a dotted outline of a hangman and a clue. Students compete with each other in pairs; one student has the correct answer, the other student guesses letters. Then, they swap roles with another word. This can be done as a whole-class activity (see Figure 3). Other games, such as Chinese Checkers, in which homework words are written on the hexagonal spaces and the player has to move all their men across the board, saying each word as they land on it (moves are made according to the number on the roll of a die), Bingo Cards (a whole-class activity), and Concentration (a card-pairing game in which the cards are laid face-down on the desk), all utilize the words or short phases given for homework and function as a fun way to check homework knowledge.

Sentence structure can be checked by chain-drill utterance of the sentence by each student – the teacher then writes on the board, at random, the words needed for the sentence, and the students write the sentence correctly in their notebook. This can also be achieved by a card game where students are given cards with the words from the sentence and then have to play a game in the manner of "Last Card" to correctly make the sentence or sentences they studied for homework.

Figure 2. Charts for Spelling, Vocabulary, and Sentences

Chart for Spelling (To the tune of “Bingo”)
Our teacher knows a word and “phone” is that word, oh!
P – h – o – n – e
P – h – o – n – e
P – h – o – n – e
And “phone” is that word. Oh!

Chant for Vocabulary (To the tune of “Old McDonald”)
For our homework we have written
Words, words, words....
And in our notebook there's a word
Words, words, words....
With a blue, blue here!
And a blue, blue there!
Here a blue!
There a blue!
Everywhere a blue, blue!
Words, words, words!

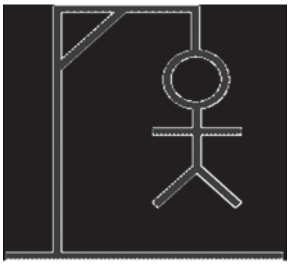
For our homework we have written
Words, words, words....
And in our notebooks there's a word
Words, words, words.
With a red, red here!
And a red, red there!
Here a red!
There a red!
Everywhere a red, red!
Words, words, words!
With a blue, blue here!
And a blue, blue there!

Here a blue!
There a blue!
Everywhere a blue, blue!
Words, words, words!
Etc....

Chant for Vocabulary (To the tune of "There was an Old Woman")
There was a student who heard a word
Maybe they learned the word they heard?
To learn the word
They wrote and heard
(Sally) said.........and.........and.........(Today)
To learn the word
They wrote and heard
(Sally) said.........and.........and.........(Today)
(Janet) said.........and.........and.........(Is)
To learn the word
They wrote and heard
(Sally) said.........and.........and.........(Today)
(Janet) said.........and.........and.........(is)
(Logan) said.........and.........and.........(Wednesday), etc.

*This chant can be used for individual word recall or sentences (e.g., *Today is Wednesday, yesterday was Tuesday, tomorrow is Friday*). With the addition of a new word, another verse is added.

Figure 3. Individual, Paired, or Class Hangman



a b c d e f g h I j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Clue: "I'm hungry. I want some..........."

Score: ________________
Student A: The Guesser!   Student B: The hangman!
Hangman image from www.fun-with-words.com (n.d.)

WORD JIGSAWS AND LETTER TILES

Word jigsaws and letter tiles can be ways for students to reconstruct the words they have studied in homework. For junior learners, divide a sheet of A4 paper into ten equal rectangles and cut it so that you have ten rectangles. Then, write a word in each rectangle. Finally, cut the rectangles into regular shapes by snipping across the word two or three times. As students' letter recognition, spelling, and word recognition develop, the jigsaw task can become more challenging, until finally, students are putting together words made from individual cut-up letters. The jigsaw method is also effective for written work such as sentences and paragraphs, and written genres such as lists, directions, reports, memos, letters, stories, etc.

PROGRESSIVE ALPHABET OR SENTENCES

To check handwriting, a progressive alphabet or sentence can be made around the classroom. Thirteen pieces of A4 paper, halved and lined so each contains two letters, is passed to a student, who writes 'Aa.' The paper is passed to the next student, who writes 'Bb.' Continuously, the paper is passed from student to student until the alphabet is complete. The finished alphabet is then judged for correctness of letter shape. Students peer-assess the frieze and again student-administered punishments can be devised for the poorest letter quality. Using the sentence "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dogs" is another method of checking the alphabet. Students can write each word in a speech cloud, and the words can then be assessed. As these activities produce friezes or quotes which can be used as wall charts in the classroom, they provide decorative and student-owned language resources for the classroom, which can be regularly renewed, by new learners entering the class and established learners in need of reviewing their handwriting skills. One method of rewarding handwriting is to give a "pen license" to those students who have mastered the skills of making the letter shapes (see Figure 4). This license allows the student holding it to use a pen while other students must use a pencil. Licenses can be made in the form of certificates or ID cards, with a small ceremony accompanying the granting of transition from pencil to pen. Younger students especially enjoy this.

Figure 4. Pen License

Pen License For

....

For Perfect Written English in Pencil

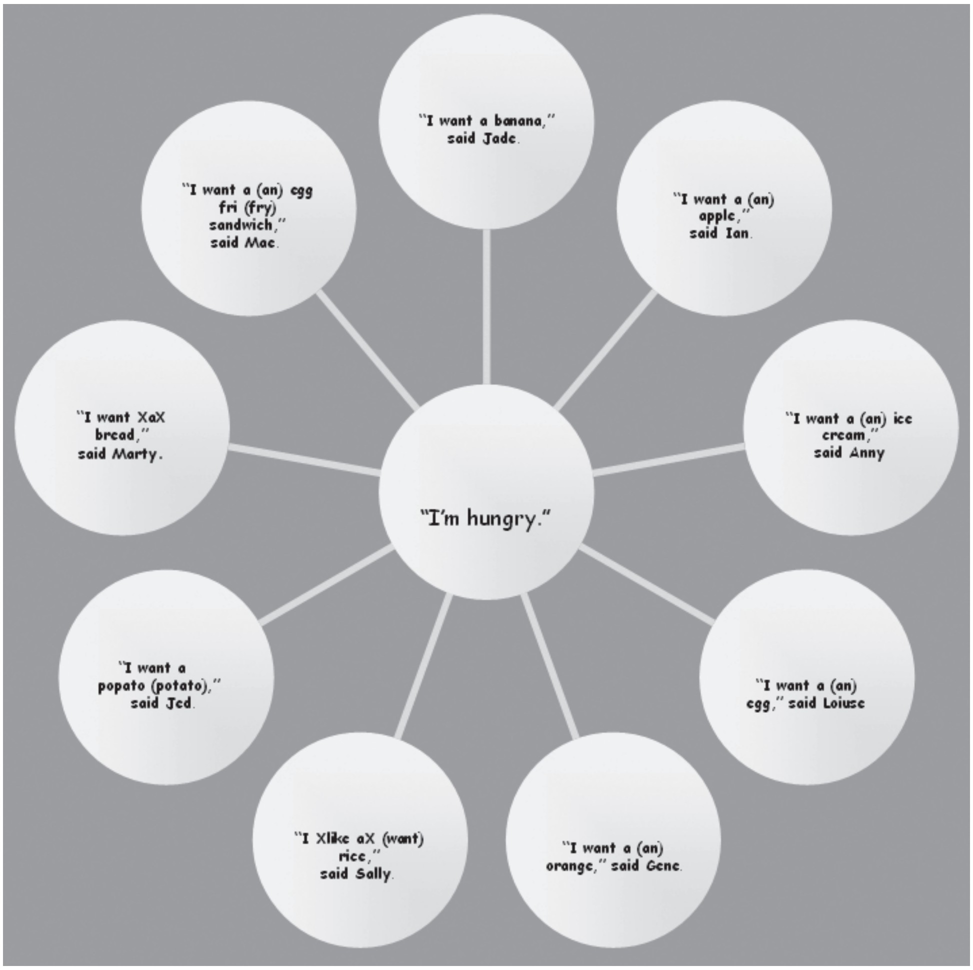
This License will be reviewed on:...

Signed: *Date:*

CLASS MIND MAPS

In exploring rhetorical concepts and other language challenges that require the student to develop ideas, a class mind map can be made from individual mind maps that the students have worked on at home. A simple elementary-level mind map could be "I am hungry." In assigning the task, the teacher provides a worksheet with the sentence "I am hungry" contained within a cloud. Coming from the cloud could be five, or other suitable number of, arrows – each indicating that some thought must be made regarding the sentence within the cloud. The arrows could be attached to thought or idea bubbles rising from a head. Within these bubbles, words other than those within the cloud, pictures, or symbols can be made to indicate what the word-thought-meaning association might be. Students will return to class with a vast array of meanings and drawings. However, if each student has completed all five, they can contribute these by cutting and pasting their ideas to a large mind map, which can be discussed as it is being constructed for appropriateness of idea or suggestion. The result is ideas become discussed, explained, and expanded. The mind map can be put on the wall in the classroom as a reference for the various meanings of the language used and explored, and as a reference for ways and means of thinking about language (see Figure 5 for a mind map of "I'm hungry").

Figure 5. Mind Map for Idea and Thought Collection and Analysis: "I'm Hungry."



Note: In the classroom, draw freehand cloud, speech, or thought bubbles from a smiley sketch face of each student with their name beside it, radiating out from a central cloud which contains the main idea. The students contribute ideas from their homework activity. They must say something different from the students before them. (The Xs in the circle mind map indicate that the adjacent words are not appropriate, and the words in brackets are the correct forms.)

CHECKING DICTIONARY SKILLS

Checking dictionary skills can be fun. Provide each student with a dictionary or vocabulary list, or use a book or part of a book in which the words are contained, and tell the students to look up a word such as "hat." The first student/team to locate the word gets a point. To make the game more challenging, require the students to write the word on a small piece of paper and relay-run it to the teacher, who checks it and gives them the next word. To make the game even more challenging, require the students to collect the letters (from a box containing the letters of all the words being checked), then spell the word, and glue it to a piece of paper or in their notebook. To further advance this task, students can be asked to write or say the words that come immediately before and immediately after the word they are looking up. In dictionary skills games and tasks, request that students write the page number they located the word on. This will help avoid misunderstandings. As well as these game-type activities, worksheets which require the student to search for the word and then write down the page number and the meaning, or amount of syllables, or the pronunciation symbols are a means of checking that dictionary skills have been developed through homework.

GRADING

Grading of homework adds validity and purpose for the student. As is evident from the checking activities, assessing homework can be formative, summative, or anecdotal. Going back to the Homework Chart (Figure 1), there are two vertical columns for grading homework. The first column is a summative grade given on the amount of homework attempted. The second column is a grade given on the summative quality of the student's work with space for a formative grade or anecdotal comment on the style and talent, ability, or problems the student is demonstrating through their homework. The horizontal row gives an overall grade for the month's homework. This grade is what goes on the monthly report to parents.

Formative grades and anecdotal comments could include evidence of the student's handwriting problems or speech difficulties, their repeated lack of punctuation, or copying errors. It is through these that tasks can be set for in-class work or as homework activities that address the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffold the student to their next level of understanding. Provided homework tasks are well modeled by the teacher prior to being attempted by the student, independent study can be just as effective as classroom study in scaffolding a student's learning from one level to the next. In some cases, the fact that the student is studying independently can accelerate, deepen, and broaden their knowledge and understanding as they progress from one level to the next (Cooper, 1994). How this can occur is discussed in the next section, which is on monitoring.

Reports that go home to parents must indicate a grade for homework. In this way parents can see that homework is taken seriously and that their child's overall grade may be affected by poor performance in homework tasks.

MONITORING

Monitoring of homework is a valuable means of providing an incentive to students and parents. It acts as a reminder and sets a standard that indicates clearly what is expected of the student in terms of homework.

In the classroom, homework completion charts can be set up, with various colored stickers awarded as homework tasks are completed. At the end of each month, a Homework Certificate or prize can be given to those students who have successfully completed all homework tasks on time. In-class charts can spur students on by creating an atmosphere of healthy competition.

By using the Homework Chart (Figure 1), parents are able to take an active role in monitoring their child's homework, and from general, casual observation, it appears that most Korean parents take their child's homework tasks seriously. Also on this chart is a column for the student to monitor their own progress. In taking an active role as both the doer and monitor of homework, the student is forming independent study habits and life skills. These can inspire the student towards becoming intrinsically motivated regarding their homework. Once a child has developed intrinsic motivation for doing homework, they will frequently explore and voluntarily expand on the tasks set by the teacher. In many incidents I have encountered, students as young as seven or eight who have developed these skills will come to class early, bringing with them examples of their expansion of the homework task, telling what they have discovered as a result of a homework activity, or e-mailing or writing letters using their newfound knowledge. This progress in learning has been facilitated as much by independent study at home as by any classroom study. In many cases, independent study gives the student more time to absorb, reflect, and explore the concepts they are learning.

The final monitor is the teacher. At this point, the teacher can add to anecdotal information about the support the student gets from home regarding homework as well as giving the student immediate feedback on the problems they may be having. The information gained from formative assessment with anecdotal assessment gives the teacher a solid base to deliver lessons that are directly building on what students have demonstrated that they do know, and to scaffold them through what they have demonstrated that they do not know.

SUMMARY

The benefits of doing homework are in no way doubted. However, implementation of a workable homework schedule can be daunting. This paper suggests a methodology for approaching homework that is easy to implement, is student-centered, and provides students, parents, and teachers with results. The methods suggested take the onus off the teacher for total responsibility of the student's education and models ways that education can become the responsibility of the student and parents in a personally rewarding way. As well, the method demonstrates how motivation can be built into the activities at every stage. Finally, the method shows how homework helps provide information for effective classroom teaching and assists the teacher with providing information for student achievement reports and writing assessment.

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The Development of Critical Thinking Skills Through Debate

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Abstract

Over the past several years, the development of critical thinking (CT) skills has become an important aspect of education in both a first and second language environment. English educators have an opportunity, and arguably a duty, to blend CT into their language classes, in order to provide students with skills that will prove increasingly valuable in today's business world. This paper will show how CT skills can be built up incrementally, even for learners with relatively low linguistic abilities. It will report on a program designed and taught by the author at Kanda University of International Studies in Japan, which took an innovative approach to the issue, blending the steps required for the effective solving of problems with those important for successful debate, thus giving the course both a cognitive- and language-based focus. It took students through a six-stage process, showing them how to clarify the nature of a problem, how to gather and organize appropriate data, how to evaluate the worth of that data, how to analyze the data to draw conclusions, how to express those conclusions clearly and purposefully in the form of a debate, and finally how to appraise one's performance for future improvement. End-of-course evaluations revealed the learners felt they had made advances both to their cognitive and their language abilities, and had enjoyed both the theme of the course and the specific topics of the debates.

What is Critical Thinking?

Until the 1990s, critical thinking was generally discussed in the realm of first language education (e.g., Ennis, 1962; McPeck, 1981). More recently, however, second language theorists and practitioners have also begun to take an interest in the concept, leading to serious debates over both what the term “critical thinking” means and how it might be taught in a second language context. Needless to say, there is no single accepted definition, and the sheer variety of interpretations can sometimes make it hard for a teacher to know how to make a start in introducing it to their classes. Looking, for the moment, at the purely cognitive side, we have Stahl and Stahl's (1991) definition: “Critical thinking is the development of cohesive and logical reasoning patterns” (p. 28) Chance's (1986) view: “[Critical thinking is] the ability to analyze facts, generate and organize ideas, defend opinions, make comparisons, draw inferences, evaluate arguments and solve problems” (p. 7) and Paul, Binker, Adamson, and Martin's (1989, p. 12) interpretation: “[Critical thinking is] the art of thinking about your thinking while you are thinking in order to make your thinking better: more clear, more accurate, or more defensible” (p. 12).

As different as these definitions may seem, there is now quite broad agreement on what cognitive skills are necessary for becoming a successful "critical thinker." Six key competencies have been identified:

Interpretation:	the ability to understand and identify problems.
Analysis:	the ability to examine, organize, classify, categorize, differentiate, and prioritize variables.
Evaluation:	the ability to assess the credibility, significance, and applicability of sources of information necessary to support conclusions.
Inference:	the ability to formulate hypotheses or draw conclusions based on the evidence.
Explanation:	the ability to explain the assumptions that lead to the conclusions reached.
Self-regulation:	the ability for self-examination and self-correction.

Although these terms do themselves appear a little vague and all-encompassing, it is possible to break them down into workable and learnable skills, designing activities that will help students practice and develop them.

Critical Thinking and Japan

Critical thinking has made a late entrance to Japanese educational thinking, driven by the recently expressed concerns of large companies worried about the quality of their human resources. In the halcyon days of the bubble economy, with booming profits and lifetime employment, employers were happy to provide most of the skills training themselves. Cooperativeness, eagerness, enthusiasm, a willingness to work hard, sound judgment, broad general knowledge, and a good educational background were seen as the most attractive features of a new hire (Nakamura, 1992; JETRO, 2004). The perfect white-collar worker was "green" enough to be easily socializable but smart enough to pick up the various skills needed to carry out their jobs effectively. In-house training was long and thorough, with new employees encouraged to copy the methods of senior colleagues without questioning why things were done the way they were (Yoshimura & Anderson, 1997). This was reflected in education, where students were far more often taught "what to think" rather than "how to think" (e.g., McVeigh, 2002).

Now, however, change appears to be on its way. The demands of global competition coupled with the economic downturn in Japan appear to have led to a re-examination of the role of general education. Companies are beginning to express their dissatisfaction with the overall standard of graduates and the amount of on-the-job training they have to provide (Murdo, 1995). Words such as "creativity," "initiative," and "individuality" are now frequently heard as desirable attributes for graduates, the old values no longer deemed sufficient to drive an economy dependent on innovation and new ideas. As the influential business group Nippon Keidanren (2003) put it: "Corporate employees must develop sophisticated judgment and problem-solving skills based on a broader perspective than before. Young people also need the creativity and reformist approach to create new business models that take an 'outside the box' approach" (p. 14).

It leaves Japan at a very interesting crossroads. Critical thinking skills provide people with the ability to gather, judge, analyze, and collate information for the solving of problems – competencies that are highly valued in businesses and organizations, but which can also lead to subversion. For every definition of critical thinking stressing its cognitive components, there is another which emphasizes it as a weapon for social change. Smith (1990) is a prime example: "Critical thinking skills: understanding the meaning of a statement, judging ambiguity, judging whether an inductive conclusion is warranted, and judging whether statements made by authorities are acceptable" (p. 5). If students have the ability to evaluate conclusions drawn from data, they also have the capability to assess the pronouncements of their superiors, be they business leaders or government ministers.

These two aspects of critical thinking are not distinct and divorced. If we help our students develop the cognitive skills listed above, we also give them the tools to critically examine the society and world in which they live. This is a form of liberation, and arguably, an important aspect of our roles as educators.

TEACHING CRITICAL THINKING THROUGH DEBATE

OVERVIEW

The course this paper reports on sought to recognize this dual nature of critical thinking by developing the cognitive skills necessary for business success while simultaneously encouraging the students to look in depth at issues affecting their society and environment. For this reason, debate was thought to be a suitable medium, as it allowed the students to prepare for the discussion of serious topics while gradually building up the skills necessary to do it successfully. It also gave the course a linguistic focus, centered on the language of discussion and agreement – again, functions that the students would find pertinent once they entered the world of work.

Twenty students were enrolled on the course, all third- and fourth-year students studying at Kanda University of International Studies in Chiba Prefecture, Japan. They had varying linguistic abilities, ranging from intermediate to elementary, and were split evenly between in gender. The course ran for one thirteen-week semester and met for ninety minutes twice a week.

During this time, the students prepared for and completed two debates, each lasting approximately thirty minutes. For the first debate, whose topic was chosen by the teacher, they were given eight weeks to prepare, and for the second, whose topic they could choose themselves, they had five weeks. The lengthy preparation time was considered extremely important, as it is unfair to expect students to discuss an issue critically and intelligently without giving them sufficient opportunity to understand it.

- For each debate, the students were led through a six-stage process, which echoed the six cognitive competencies detailed above:
- Identify and clarify the issue. (Interpretation)
- Gather and organize information about the issue. (Analysis)
- Evaluate that information for accuracy and applicability. (Evaluation)
- Draw conclusions from the evidence. (Inference)
- Explain conclusions logically in the form of a debate. (Explanation)
- Critically appraise and examine one's performance. (Self-regulation)

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SIX SKILLS

The topic of the first debate was *Do violent movies, television shows, and video games lead to violent behavior?* This somewhat complex issue was chosen because of the large amount that has been written on it, both in research papers and popular magazines and newspapers. Some of the supposed evidence that has been presented for either side is strong and convincing, whilst other parts can be seen as weak and contradictory. It was hoped that the students would eventually be able to judge one from the other.

In the first stage of preparation, the students were asked to discuss whether there was any part of the question they felt was unclear or ambiguous. This was a tough beginning and many students struggled, but eventually certain suggestions were made, most pertinently concerning the question of what "violence" meant. How does one define what is or isn't a "violent" movie? Must people die in order for a film to be violent? Is a war film automatically violent? How about a *Tom and Jerry* cartoon? In this way, they began to see that what might seem like a fairly straightforward issue is, in fact, not straightforward at all. They also saw that before one can go about answering a question, it is often important to define the relevant terms.

The second stage began with the students forming groups of four, within which they would eventually perform their debate. Two students took each side, either based on their genuine opinion or by playing devil's advocate. They then discussed in their team what kind of information or data they wished to gather, forming a series of questions that they felt they needed to answer. They were also given a short article by the teacher, containing relevant data, and were shown how to make notes about it by distilling it into its main arguments and supporting evidence. After this, they were given guidance on searching on the Internet and on using the electronic database of the university library. Finally, they were sent away to gather evidence that would support their side, either in English or Japanese, depending on preference.

In the third stage, they learned how to evaluate that data for trustworthiness and strength. The motto they adopted was "Be suspicious!" (i.e., be wary of taking information at face value without testing it for certain qualities). They were taught to ask questions of everything they read:

- Is the information based on fact or opinion?
- Can it be expected to be biased or one-sided?
- Is it written by an expert?
- Is it based on well-supported evidence which is up-to-date and transparent?
- Has the data collection method been sufficiently explained?
- Does it come from a reputable source, like an academic journal or a serious newspaper?

They were given practice in appraising certain items of information provided by the teacher, deciding if they felt each one was credible and why. After that, they did the same with the data they had gathered themselves, frequently asking the teacher for guidance when they felt it necessary.

The fourth stage involved planning the debate itself, which was conducted with three speeches on each side: the opening address, the attack and rebuttal, and the summation. The students were required to write the opening address in full, analyzing the information they had gathered in order to create two or three strong arguments supported by reliable data. The speech was then checked by the teacher, before being given to the opposing team, who could probe it for weaknesses for their attack. Although ideally in a debate, spontaneity would be encouraged by keeping all the speeches secret beforehand, it was felt that in consideration of the relatively low linguistic abilities of the students, preparation time for the attack was necessary if the debate were to be successful. The attack speech itself, however, was kept secret, so the students were required to defend their arguments impromptu as the debate progressed.

The main focus for the fifth stage was on presentation skills, with the importance of eye contact, voice control, visual aids, and linguistic clarity being particularly stressed. The students were required to practice their opening addresses and attack speeches in front of the teacher, so that individual advice could be given. When all the groups felt they were ready, the debates were held over two class periods.

This left the sixth, and final, stage: the critical self-appraisal of the students' performances. During the debate, three types of appraisal were carried out: teacher appraisal, audience appraisal, and participant appraisal. In each case, two main aspects were considered: the content of the debate (clarity and persuasiveness of the arguments, strength and reliability of the supporting evidence) and the quality of its presentation. Each student filled out a self-appraisal sheet and was directed to consider what aspects of their performance they had been pleased or dissatisfied with. These points would then be borne in mind for the second self-chosen debate, with improvements hopefully made.

Reactions to the Course

At the end of the course, the students were asked to fill out an anonymous questionnaire to gauge their reactions about what they had studied. Three questions were judged to be particularly important:

- Do you feel the topic of the first debate was interesting?
- Were you happy with its degree of difficulty?
- What do you feel you have learned in the course as a whole?

The first question was answered on a five-point Likert scale, from 1 (not interesting at all) to 5 (very interesting). The mean of the scores was 4.4, with the major reason for the high level of interest being the fact that they saw the topic as relevant to today's society. The second question was similarly scored on a scale, with by far the most common answer being “difficult but manageable.” Few students felt it was the "right level,"but this was not surprising considering the high degree of complexity involved in the topic. The fact that only one student professed it to be “too difficult” was quite welcome, and perhaps reflective of the amount of support that was given to them throughout the course.

As to the question of what the students felt they had learned, a variety of answers were received here. A selection of typical responses follows:

- “I think I could learn how to criticize for information we get and about peoples' opinions.”
- “I couldn't speak English well, but I became to think it's fun to speak English with various people.”

- "I try to consider a problem in all its aspects and read newspaper more."
- "I learned how to debate, write an essay, collect data and so on."
- "I think we can get the skill to gather information, and to speak more strongly, and so on."
- "I think many classmates understand a little how to make a Critical Thinking. Also I never forget 'Be suspicious!'"

Overall, the course was rated a success, and it is hoped the students gained something from it that they will find useful in their future careers.

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Student Perceptions of the Integrated-Skills Approach in Taiwan's EFL College Classes

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ABSTRACT

All freshmen and sophomore students at Cheng Jung University in Taiwan are required to take English-as-a-foreign-language courses to promote their English proficiency. The courses are offered at three proficiency levels. The purpose of this study was to determine whether students' views about English instruction changed as a result of their participation in an integrated skills course in comparison to traditional EFL courses where skills are normally taught separately. Two instructors from each of the three course levels incorporated the integrated-skills approach into their EFL classes. Data were collected from a questionnaire survey of both the students in the regular course and those in the integrated-skills approach course. The study found that all three groups of students instructed in the integrated-skills approach changed their views about EFL learning. Students at each course level thought that language learning should not merely be learning vocabulary and grammar, and translating the text from English.

INTRODUCTION

Impelled by the roles of economic globalization, English has become the most widely disseminated and ubiquitous international language in the world. In responding to global needs, the Taiwan government published a series of language policies and school curricula regarding English learning. In 1998, the Ministry of Education announced that initial English instruction would move from the senior high school level to the elementary school level starting in 2001.

Moreover, for over 40 years, Taiwan's official college curriculum has required first-year students (freshmen) in all colleges and universities to complete English language courses with particular emphasis on the development of reading. Today, some universities and colleges even require second-year students (sophomores) to take another two-credit-hour English language course. This raises the question: What language approach and teaching strategies are appropriate for college students to learn English in a meaningful and effective way?

WHAT IS THE INTEGRATED-SKILLS APPROACH?

The philosophy of integrated-skills instruction is based on the concept that in natural, day-to-day experience, oral and written languages are not kept separate and isolated from one another. Instead, they often occur together, integrated in specific communication events (Peregoy & Boyle, 2001). Whole language educators, such as Edelsky, Altwerger, and Flores (1991), Goodman (1986), and Weaver (1990) also state that language functions to serve authentic purposes, which is described as “meaningful communication.” In the language learning process, listening, speaking, reading, and writing should be treated as integrated and interdependent, inseparable elements of language. One language process should not be separated out from the whole teaching task. Weaver (1990) describes that when children engage in the complex processes of reading, writing, discussing, and thinking, they simultaneously develop language and literacy, and learn about these processes as well as through them. Harste, Woodward, and Burke (1984) explain that each time someone reads, writes, speaks, or listens, this language encounter feeds into a common data pool. In subsequent encounters with language, the person can draw on this pool. Rather than assuming that speaking, listening, reading, and writing should be kept separate, they stress that all expressions of language support growth and development in literacy.

These researchers suggest that reading and writing as well as speaking and listening should be integral parts of all language classroom activities because all these processes interact with one other. Teachers should provide opportunities and resources for students to engage and experiment in authentic speech and literacy activities.

The Purpose of the Study

This study is based on the research of six participating EFL instructors who taught students of three proficiency levels (lower-intermediate, intermediate, and advanced) based on previously attained English scores on the Joint National College Entrance Examination, incorporating the integrated-skills approach into their EFL classes in Taiwan. The purpose of the study was to determine if students' views about EFL instruction changed during the year of the coursework.

Methodology

Two teachers from each English-ability level at a private university in Tainan, Taiwan, agreed to participate in this study. A total of six teachers were involved, and their 250 business-major students agreed to serve as subjects. Students at this university were required to complete two-years of English courses before graduation: “Freshmen English Courses” and “Sophomore English Courses.” First-year students were usually placed into three different skill levels advanced, intermediate, and lower-intermediate based on a ranking of previous English scores on the Joint National College Entrance Examination.

All students enrolled in these six Sophomore English classes were given two surveys: a pre-test and a post-test questionnaire survey. At the beginning of the study, students were asked to complete the 5-point Likert pre-test survey regarding their background information and their beliefs concerning EFL learning. A total of 216 participants (65 from the advanced level, Level I; 87 from the high-intermediate level, Level 2; and 64 from the lower-intermediate level, Level III) filled out the forms, which is a 86% response rate. The post-test survey with the same items as the pretest survey was given to finish during classes in the week after the mid-term exams of the second semester. This included 56 students from the two Level-I classes (the advanced level), 79 students from two Level-II classes (the high-intermediate level), and 67 from two Level-III classes (the lower-intermediate level), which is an 81% response rate. The data was analyzed with descriptive statistics (frequencies/percentage) and chi-square tests. Chi-square tests were conducted for the comparison of pre- and post-test surveys.

Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the participants, including gender, major, year of English study, and English-ability levels from the post-test survey.

Table 1. Student Background Information (N=202) From the Post-Test Survey

Gender		Major		Years of Study		Ability Level	
Female	73	International Business	83	4 or less	10	Level I	56
Male	12	Finance	56	5-7	89	Level II	79
		Accounting	73	8-10	81	Level III	67
				11+	21		

Note. Course Level-II=advanced level, Level-II=intermediate level, and Level-III= lower-intermediate level.

Results

Table 2 reveals students' views on English learning and teaching before and after the study. At the beginning of the study, 92 percent of the students thought that the emphasis in English language teaching should be placed on the recognition of vocabulary and grammar and translation of texts this is in comparison to 7.5 percent or less who believed this after the study. The result of the independent *t* test (**p<.05*) also shows that each item of the pre- and post-test surveys differed significantly.

Table 2. Students' Perceptions of English Language Learning and Teaching Before and After the Study

Course Level		Agreements (n/P)					x^2	*p
		SA	A	M	D	SD		
1. Language learning should focus on practicing linguistic forms rather than meaning.								
I	Pretest	10.9%	50.0%	34.4%	4.7%	0	105.27	<0.001
	Post-test	0	0	1.8%	50.0%	48.2%		
II	Pre-test	27.6%	36.8%	32.2%	1.1%	2.3%	133.56	<0.001
	Post-test	0	1.3%	6.3%	36.7%	55.7%		
III	Pre-test	17.2%	50.0%	31.3%	1.6%	0	108.63	<0.001
	Post-test	0	0	9.0%	55.2%	35.8%		

2. Language learning should focus on learning a lot of new vocabulary and grammar analysis.								
I	Pre-test	9.2%	36.9%	47.7%	4.6%	1.5%	37.72	<0.001
	Post-test	0	3.6%	55.4%	35.7%	5.4%		
II	Pre-test	13.8%	48.3%	28.7%	8.0%	1.1%	66.78	<0.001
	Post-test	0	2.6%	60.3%	30.8%	6.4%		
III	Pre-test	7.8%	50.0%	40.6%	1.6%	0	54.3	<0.001
	Post-test	1.5%	4.6%	47.7%	35.4%	10.8%		
3. You think that your teacher should focus on translating the text from English to help your comprehension.								
I	Pre-test	13.8%	52.3%	27.7%	46.2%	0	62.46	<0.001
	Post-test	0	0	53.6%	33.9%	12.5%		
II	Pre-test	14.9%	51.7%	28.7%	2.3%	2.3%	79.21	<0.001
	Post-test	0	2.5%	62.0%	30.4%	5.1%		
III	Pre-test	17.2%	46.9%	31.3%	4.7%	0	48.68	<0.001
	Post-test	0	7.5%	67.2%	19.4%	6.0%		

Note. N for the pre-test survey total is 216 (*N1*=65, *N2*=87, *N3*=64), and N for the post-test survey is 202 (*N1*=56, *N2*=79, and *N3*=66).

CONCLUSION

This study provides a detailed discussion of the statistical analyses and findings based on a large sample of students with different English language proficiencies. It examines how they view EFL instruction before and after the study. The results find that in structured classes integrating the four language skills, all three groups of students changed their viewpoints about EFL instruction. Based on their prior classroom experiences, the three groups of students thought that learning new a language should focus on learning new vocabulary, grammar analysis, and text translation. On the other hand, after a year of instruction through the integrated skills approach, a majority of the students at each course level strongly believed that language learning is not accomplished mainly through memorization of vocabulary, analysis of grammar, and translation, but through the integration of the four language skills in real communicative and authentic settings. As Goodman (1986) states, "language is the key to communication" (p. 15) and "language is learned best when the focus is not on the language form but on the meaning and context being communicated" (p. 10).

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The Christian Teacher and the Secular Workplace

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ABSTRACT

Many Christian teachers teach in institutions where overt religious discussions are not welcomed. Christian teachers who teach in such environments need to carefully consider how to be faithful to their Christian identity in this context. In this workshop, participants were invited to discuss how Christian teachers should practice their faith while teaching in secular contexts. They evaluated the appropriateness of statements that expressed the relationship between faith and teaching. Most of the participants in the workshop felt that faith should govern relationships with students, colleagues, and other members of another culture. A large majority of the participants also connected faith with high quality teaching and professional development. While many participants saw that English teaching could be an act of mercy, it was acknowledged that English teaching often benefits the wealthiest members of society. The idea of building self-esteem through English lessons received a mixed response. The participants generally did not believe that it is appropriate to treat teaching as a secondary job while assigning primary importance to church-related work.

INTRODUCTION

Although some workplaces do not encourage direct religious discussion, the teacher's belief system can still have a tremendous influence on the classroom. The belief system can govern relationships with students and colleagues, and may also affect choices as integral to teaching as content selection, task design, and error correction. Stevick (1990) suggests that harmony between beliefs and practice allows the teacher to be more effective. Looking for ways to achieve this harmony, workshop participants compared and evaluated the following five general statements about the connection between faith and the English classroom:

1. “I see myself as a tentmaker. English teaching is what I do to make myself financially independent while I do Christian service elsewhere.”
2. “I believe that doing any job well brings glory to God. I express my faith when I put extra care into my lesson planning and when I pursue professional development.”
3. “Christianity calls me to be an ethical person. Practically, this means that I must be fair and compassionate to my students and considerate of my colleagues.”
4. “Since my job places me in a cross-cultural context, the biblical themes

of hospitality (Smith & Carvill, 2000) and peacemaking (Snow, 2001) are particularly relevant to my occupation. Through my work, I can promote cross-cultural understanding."

5. "English teaching itself is an act of Christian mercy. By teaching English I open up financial and educational opportunities for underprivileged students. I can also use my position to encourage and support students who have low self-esteem."

EVALUATION

Given the description in the first statement, few of the participants in the workshop considered tent-making an appropriate metaphor for Christian English teaching. A *tentmaker* is primarily a missionary who supports him or herself financially through a secondary job. This approach to working in a foreign country can undermine the worker's commitment to the profession, and Christian English teachers have drawn criticism for a perceived lack of investment in professionalism (Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2003). Several participants cautioned against applying the term *tentmaker* to expatriate teachers in Korea, claiming that this term is appropriate only for Christian teachers who work in areas where they would not legally be permitted to earn money through church-related work.

The majority of the participants favored the idea that seeking excellence in the teaching profession is an expression of Christian devotion. It was noted that this second statement about faith and teaching reverses the emphasis of the first statement, assigning primary importance to the work itself. Considering that those present were participating in a professional conference, it was not surprising to find that many of them saw professionalism as a natural outgrowth of faith. Dissenters indicated that holding this view on Christian language-teaching to the exclusion of other views might prevent a teacher from fully considering the implications of religious belief for the vocation. The resulting pedagogy might not distinguish itself from humanistic language-teaching.

The third statement received the strongest support among the workshop participants. Clearly the group set a high priority on relationships both with students and with other teachers as an expression of religious belief. Since there was general agreement about the appropriateness of the statement, little discussion ensued; however, the realization of proper relationships with colleagues and students in specific situations certainly merits further exploration, which is beyond the scope of this workshop.

The fourth statement at first drew little support. The connection between English teaching and biblical principles about cross-cultural relationships appeared to be a new area of inquiry for many of those present. It was observed that hospitality is a theme that runs through the Bible in both testaments, rooted in Old Testament law and assigned a central role in the final judgment (Matthew 25:35). As presenters of other cultures, language teachers have a unique opportunity to demonstrate attitudes toward other groups of people. In this capacity, teachers can often become advocates or lead critics of other cultures, and the resulting judgmental approach can inhibit the cultivation of a hospitable attitude toward other cultures. It was suggested that for expatriate teachers, a willingness to learn about the culture and language of the host country is a powerful model of a Christian attitude toward other groups of people.

The fifth statement, which portrayed teaching English as an act of mercy, received moderate support among those present. The first part of the statement – the Christian call to support the poor – was generally accepted by the group. It was acknowledged that much of the English teaching industry depends on the students who are wealthy enough to afford private lessons or higher education. Several participants expressed regret that they were not in a position to teach financially disadvantaged students. One participant raised the possibility of saving money from working with privileged students in order to later work for students with fewer resources and opportunities. The second part of the statement – the idea that Christian teachers ought to build up students with low self-esteem – was met with some skepticism. One teacher claimed that few students he had encountered in Korea actually had problems with low self-esteem and suggested that pride might be a larger problem. Another participant cautioned against labeling students as needing emotional support – pointing out that most people at different times will exhibit traits of both high and low self-esteem. It was suggested that low self-esteem may be an inversion of pride, also a symptom of an un-wholesome preoccupation with self. As an alternative to using language lessons to raise self-esteem, one participant recalled the adage that Christians are to both “comfort the afflicted” and “afflict the comfortable.”

Some of the participants in the workshop taught in Christian institutions and pointed out that the concept of integrating faith and teaching is as relevant for teachers in Christian schools as for teachers in secular workplaces. It was suggested that the difference between the two settings is that the Christian institution frees the teacher to set holistic teaching aims and explain the reasons behind his or her actions in Christian terms.

The discussion expanded to address relationships with people from another culture outside of the classroom. For teachers who live outside of their home country, interacting with people from another culture is a requirement of the job. It was noted that living in a cross-cultural context opens further possibilities for practicing Christian hospitality (as both guest and host) beyond the classroom. Several participants expressed the difficulty of maintaining healthy cross-cultural relationships. At the same time, the teacher's credibility as a Christian peacemaker depends on the health of these relationships.

CONCLUSION

The workshop allowed participants to reflect on broad pictures of the integration of faith and teaching. Due to time constraints, the workshop participants were unable to discuss the application of Christian principles to content selection and task design. Future inquiry into applications such as these will be necessary to advance the discussion of the integration of faith and language teaching.

The workshop emphasized that religious beliefs have practical implications for the work of English teachers. For example, a teacher who views the profession as tent-making may prefer a job that requires as little preparation and classroom time as possible, whereas a teacher who views teaching as ministry to the underprivileged may prefer a position among socially or economically disadvantaged members of the community. By considering the practical implications of their belief systems, Christian teachers can work toward achieving harmony between faith and practice.

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Learning Strategies and Styles

"Academic" Reaction Papers: Focused Training in an EAP Context

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Abstract

Students entering university are often ill prepared for the writing demands made of them and experience difficulty developing an appropriate level of writing expertise. This paper offers an innovative approach to the introduction of academic writing, one well suited to the needs of Asian students. It first identifies features of academic writing expected in a tertiary context. It examines the "reaction paper" as encountered in many North American colleges and identifies deficiencies with such papers as "academic" writing. The paper then examines an adapted version for EAP training denoted as "Academic" Reaction Paper (ARP). Specific academic features and conventions are pointed out from samples of student ARPs. Finally, a progression of ARPs building "academic" writing skills over a number of papers is outlined.

Introduction

In writing programs, there are limits on the time available to cover the variety of writing requirements students may face (Horowitz, 1986; Reid, 2001). These may include lab reports, research papers, book reports, short essays, the analysis of tables and graphs, and others. It is a situation in which "students have to adapt themselves to the variety of genres required by professors, along with other expectations, even with their limited English proficiency and limited training in writing academic English" (Shi & Fujioka, 1998, p. 128). It is then the case that, early in their careers as academic writers in English, it is useful for students to focus on developing generic skills that will hold them in good stead throughout their time at university and the varied writing tasks they may encounter. The aim of this paper is to introduce a means by which such skills can be identified, modeled, focused upon, and developed in the novice writer. In accomplishing this purpose, the authors chose to make use of the "reaction paper," not as generally understood in the North American native-speaker context, but as a writing task with a clear focus upon specific "academic" elements associated with writing in the tertiary context, one with the aim of building writing and critical thinking skills in the novice foreign and second language writer of academic English.

Asian Students and Academic Writing

Asian students are no less capable than students from any other part of the world, and the problems they encounter have much in common with other students worldwide. Nevertheless, the demands of high school and university entrance examinations, traditional methods of teaching, an emphasis on grammar and lexis at the expense of productive skills, and a Confucian educational tradition does mean that many students, while very proficient at memorization and repetition of acquired knowledge, are less proficient or aware of the need to engage with ideas and put forward their own interpretations and viewpoints, an essential requirement of academic writing in a Western tertiary context. It is with the fostering of such an engagement that the "academic" reaction paper is concerned, together with a focus upon a variety of features associated with academic writing concerns many teachers will readily identify in the work of the novice academic writer. Among the more commonly recognized problems faced by Asian students are:

1. A lack of or insufficient focus in writing
2. Presenting personal and general opinions
3. Providing insufficient evidence and support
4. Not using or making inadequate use of readings
5. Inadequately distinguishing between personal views and those presented in a text
6. Failing to address a topic in sufficient depth
7. Showing insufficient application of critical thinking skills to:
    a. Ideas in assigned readings
    b. Their own writing
8. Using non-academic modes of expression
9. Inadequate referencing of sources
10. Making little use of writing manuals and writer's reference materials

Undoubtedly second language limitations are influential in the above. Many students do need to move beyond sentence-level activities, build their lexis, develop their reading skills, etc. Additionally, there are issues of writing style resulting from first language interference (Takagi, 2001). The above list, however, indicates another and pressing need for the novice academic writer, that of understanding the requirements of a different academic culture (Reid, 1993; Jordan, 1997). The need to become familiar with the academic modes or "tertiary literacy" (Ballard & Clanchy, 1988) is required, and may differ substantially from the students' previous educational experiences and expectations. Such a culture all too frequently requires a different and often challenging attitude toward knowledge and the use of knowledge (Bloor & Bloor, 1991).

Reaction Papers

Reaction papers are a common genre of writing in US academic institutions. Also going by names such as "response paper" or "reflection paper," reaction papers require writers to firstly comprehend a source of information, be it a text or even a live performance, and to secondly record their reactions to it. Reaction papers are frequently required as a preliminary step to discussions and seminars. Nevertheless, while being a common academic assignment, there is great variation in what may be required, particularly in terms of academic register and conventions. Among the possible elements recognized by on-line sites are:

1. An emotional, informal, personal response/reaction/reflection
2. A certain level of analysis
3. A limited summary of source (sometimes not required)
4. A limited length (almost universal, 1-2 pages being the norm)
5. A fairly rigid and short time to submission
6. Multiple papers in a semester
7. One-off drafts
8. No agreement on academic features

The key feature in common is that of a personal response. Attention to academic discourse and academic form appear of secondary importance or are not stressed at all. As Swales and Feake (1986) note, "the reaction paper calls upon students to make use of their own feelings, ideas and experiences in a personal and informal style of writing"(p. 148). Recognizing the value of the reaction paper, the need to provide a summary of a source accompanied by a reaction, but also recognizing the impreciseness of reaction papers and their inability to meet the formal "academic" needs of students, the concept of the "academic" reaction paper (ARP) is presented.

"Academic" Reaction Papers (ARPs)

For Asian students of English who may be new to academic writing and/or academic modes, reaction papers can be effectively refined and adapted to provide focused training in EAP writing. The two-part aspect of reaction papers, critical thinking via interacting with and then reacting to a source, is fundamental to academia and can be highlighted as "Summary" and "Discussion" sections. Notably, by separating Summary from Discussion, the students can focus upon and develop the skills associated with each. Importantly, in the Discussion section, by being asked to provide a reaction to a source, students are required to do so. That is, students are provided with an opportunity to develop their critical thinking in a focused and limited context. The demands of a full academic essay might be very daunting for the novice writer, the need for argumentation and critical engagement with ideas lost or insufficiently attended to when confronted with the linguistic demands of a longer piece of writing. The shorter form of a reaction paper clearly divided between Summary and Discussion is an activity students can readily understand and perceive as a manageable task within their level of ability. In contrast to the informality of the generic reaction paper noted above, clear and strict conventions might be set to familiarize novice writers with a broad range of features associated with academic writing. As reaction papers are relatively short, writers can undertake a series of assignments that build up and extend thinking and writing skills over a number of papers. That is, rather than labor over one essay, greater familiarity, skills development, and practice can be achieved via multiple but shorter papers.

ARPs are used as an introductory activity for students new to the demands of academic writing. Indeed, in the case of the author's academic context, students new to writing in English. In the Summary, students are required to present the key contents of a given source, for example, an academic article. The source or sources must be read, key ideas identified and selected, and then related in an objective, non-judgmental way. That is, the student is taught *not* to provide an opinion on a source, in order to distinguish between a source and a comment on a source. The Discussion must then respond to the source, engage with the ideas, expressing an opinion of agreement or disagreement, and state reasons for that opinion. These two stages of ARPs satisfy two key demands of academia: (a) that students be able to digest and understand information and, (b) that this understanding is confirmed and a reasoned opinion held, the basis of critical thinking.

To the above, largely cognitive, exercise based on reading and the active consideration of ideas within a text, ARPs further demand that students conform to established conventions of academic writing. These conventions include aspects of presentation (title pages, font size, etc.), correct rules and formats of citation and referencing, attention to vocabulary use, structures associated with academic writing such as the use of the passive voice and the third person, the use of authors as sources and accompanying framing phrases (e.g., "X suggests that...", "Y defines..."), and a general attention to detail and a polished final product. In short, ARPs enable a teacher to highlight and provide the novice writer with practice in a variety of features that all accomplished academic writers need to be aware of and be able to make use of. Additionally, for institutions with specific requirements these are easily focused upon, as for example, focus upon MLA or APA requirements.

Below is an example of an ARP written by a student which identifies evidence of both critical thought and written academic presentation (register, structure, conventions etc.). This paper is presented in its original form (Figure 1.) and is analyzed to demonstrate such features. The paper is a sample of student work, not an exemplary model. Critical thought is identified by underlining and academic conventions as follows:

1. Cover/Title Page (Title & student/course information)
2. Header with name and page numbers
3. Subtitles
4. Standardized typed page formatting, font size, etc.
5. Paraphrasing
6. Use of quotations
7. Citations
8. Vocabulary use associated with using sources/authors (e.g., *states*, *argues*)
9. Hedging
10. Vocabulary use *upgrade* and *activate* (e.g., *big* changed to *significant*)
11. Cohesive and coherence devices (e.g., transitions, conjunctions)
12. Works Cited page

Progression

ARPs permit a focus on skills that can be developed in a graduated manner. They are versatile in that the parameters can be adjusted upwards, in terms of the level of difficulty and length, and outwards through the variety of sources required. To date the authors have assigned ARPs on audio-visual materials, excerpts from fiction, sets of short issue-specific quotations, news articles, single paragraphs, subsections within an article or chapter of a book, and full-length articles. ARPs can just as easily be required of a complete book. The level of difficulty can also be varied, not solely

Figure 1. Sample of Student "Academic" Reaction Paper

(Title Page, condensed) [1]

A Reaction to Andersen's "Cues of Culture: The Basis of Intercultural Differences In Nonverbal Communication"

XXXX Yamada
ID 999999

Section XX

Professor John Smith
ARW
Autumn 2003

Yamada 1[2]

Summary[3, 4, 5]

In his article, Andersen gives "Uncertainty" as one dimension of cultural differences, which largely[10] influences the behavior of people. He defined[8] "high levels of uncertainty avoidance" [6] and "low levels of uncertainty avoidance" (Andersen 126)[7] by people's tolerance of ambiguity. He stated[8] that people who have high levels of uncertainty avoidance try to find clear answers and people who have low levels of uncertainty avoidance apt to accept more vague[10] answers. Furthermore[11], by referring Hofstede[7](1982), he gives examples of countries higher in uncertainty avoidance and that lower in uncertainty avoidance.

Discussion[3]

Though his analysis of uncertainty as a dimension culture thought to be proper[10] and helpful for researching intercultural problems, his perceptions about Japan seems inaccurate[10]. He mentions[8] to Japan as one of "Countries with the highest levels of uncertainty avoidance" [6] (127). However, it is often said that Japanese uses ambiguous expressions and does not state clear opinion, does not show their emotion. These characteristics do not fit his descriptionof culture with high levels of uncertainty avoidance; "seek clear, black and white answers" (126)[7]. It also goes against Hofstede's description that those culture apt to display emotions (127). It seems[9] that there are some features he describe which apply to Japanese. For instance[11], he mentions to intolerance of nonconformity and codifier of nonverbal behavior (127). However, the former cannot be the mutual feature ofJapanese culture and culture with high levels of uncertainty avoidance. Since it is based on Hofstede's research of countries which including Japan as "higher in uncertainty avoidance". It is right that the feature fit Japanese culture. In addition[11], as Andersen himself says, the latter is mere a hypothesis. It seems that his recognition about Japan mostly rely on statements of Hofstede. Therefore[11], it could be said[8] that his research is not accurate enough.

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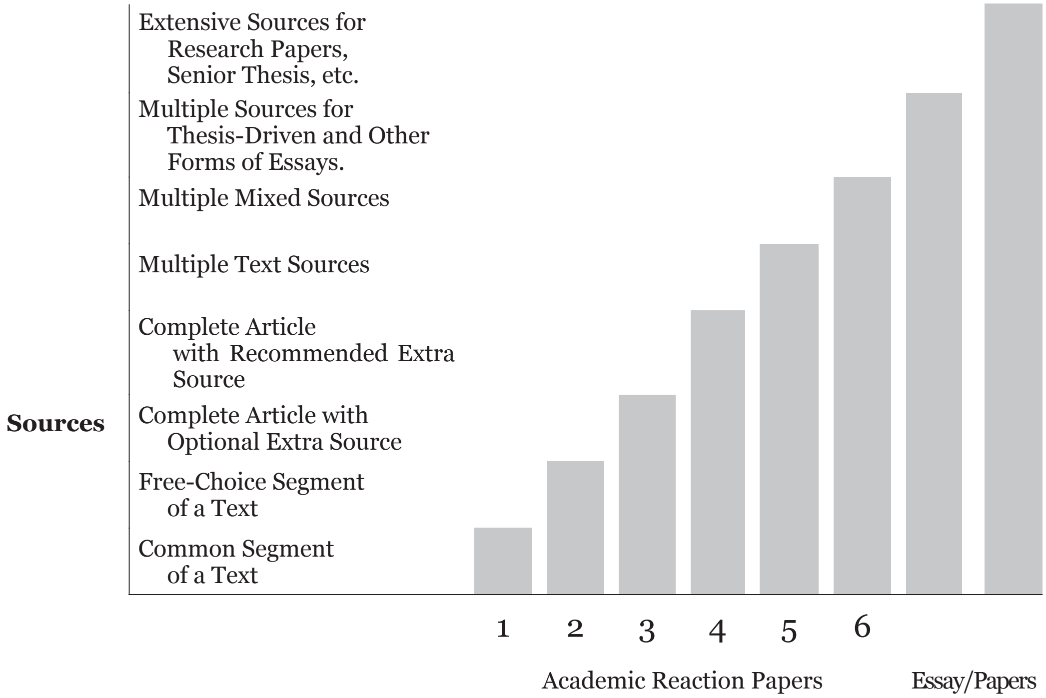
due to the text itself, but also according to the nature of the reaction asked for. Thus, students have been required to produce ARPs on (a) the work of one author, (b) works by two authors, and (c) works by three or more authors. An example of this progression is given in Graph 1 below, which details the progression of ARPs over two semesters in the authors' own academic context. This shows clearly the increasing demands made in terms of the number of sources required in each ARP.

Graph 1: Progressive Expansion of Sources in ARPs



It is perhaps valuable to note here that as used by the authors a series of ARPs are undertaken with the specific aim of building skills before students are asked to write an essay later in the academic year. ARPs could, however, also be interspersed with essays.

In addition to a progressive expansion in the nature and level of difficulty of sources as revealed above, ARPs also permit a progressive focus and expansion on academic skills and conventions. Such an expansion in the authors' academic context is presented in Table 1 below. Early requirements establish a standard in presentation, basic academic conventions, and an ability to use sources in an appropriate and critical manner. Over the course of several ARPs, these are reinforced and new items introduced. Specific modeling and instruction of items (for example, hedging in ARP 3) can be done. These lists serve as an example of the progression in the authors' context. It is possible to tailor the progression to meet specific student or course needs. For example, for science students, the ability to interpret statistics or graphical representations would be an essential requirement. Student L2 ability would also be a consideration.

Table 1: Progressive Expansion of Academic Skills & Conventions in ARPs

ARP 1 Reaction to a common, short section of a compulsory reading text.	Typing requirement, setting of formatting (margins, fonts, etc.), header and page numbering, simple title, student/subject information, basic subtitling (Summary, Discussion, Works Cited), Simple (copied) Works Cited, topic sentences, simple transitions, use of author's name, in-text citations, citation page numbers, title pages.
ARP 2 Requires students to choose and react to one of a selection of short sections of a compulsory reading text.	* **ARP1 items become standard requirements.** Works Cited. Further attention to register. Simple quotations. Use of thesaurus to improve register.
ARP 3 React to a short, full article (compulsory reading). They may include the ARP 1 or 2 reading as a second source for support or contrast. (Sample included in this paper is an ARP3.)	* **Reinforcement of and expectation of the use of the above items.** Use of authors names. Expanded use of transitions to show comparison and contrast. Simple hedging ("It could be said", "It seems",etc.). Quotations. Vocabulary to present authors' opinions (*argues*, *concludes*, *proposes*, etc.). Development of "thesis" item.
ARP 4 React to a common, full article. It is recommended they include a second source as support or contrast.	* **Reinforcement of and expectation of the use of all the above items** Need to be more concise with a longer source. Need to develop own focus for Discussion. Opportunity to include secondary source of their choice. Simple synthesis and integration of two sources in Discussion (optional).
ARP 5 React to at least 3 researched portions of text (a definition of a term, e.g., "race" or "culture").	* **Reinforcement of and expectation of the use of all above items** Need to research own sources. Need to be selective in reading (definitions only). Need to relate compulsory reading with additional text sources. Develop topic-/discussion-focused title. Synthesis of multiple sources in both Summary and Discussion. Need to create own Works Cited. Development of essay-like structure (multi-paragraphing) and thesis statement.
ARP 6 React to at least 3 selected set sources of differing genres an excerpt from a novel, a short editorial commentary, a documentary video.	* **Reinforcement of and expectation of the use of all of the above items** Awareness of and ability to use different forms of information.
Essays and Research Papers	Students are expected to turn their attention to the development of their own thesis but to continue their use of appropriate academic writing and thinking requirements learned and practiced in ARPs.

CONCLUSION

ARPs provide practice in the fundamental requirements of any academic discipline, requiring a source or sources be read, understood, and actively considered. This means not only being able to summarize a source, but also to clearly demonstrate comprehension and engagement by reacting in a logical and critical way. ARPs are then a useful tool in the teacher's arsenal, a means to focus student attention both on formal features of academic writing and upon critical thinking skills that it should be the purpose of a university writing course to foster. Arriving at university without an appropriate understanding of the requirements of academic writing, all too frequently Asian (and non-Asian) students are asked to write beyond their abilities. ARPs provide a valuable means to meet their needs, a comprehensible and graduated series of writing tasks supportive of the rapid development of writing skills in the novice academic writer.

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Refocusing "Attention" on Grammar

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Abstract

The notion that grammatical knowledge underpins communicative competence in a second language is relatively uncontroversial; yet, how language teachers provide grammatical instruction in a classroom is controversial. There have been major shifts in approach to teaching grammar: from focusing explicitly on form to focusing on meaning in communication without grammar instruction. One current trend brings grammar back into focus. Focus on Form is an approach to providing cognitively salient input to language learners in a communicative classroom. By providing certain tasks in the classroom, teachers guide learners to notice ways in which the grammar forms they are using differ from the target language. This paper discusses some of the historical shifts in grammar instruction, how we are beginning to refocus on grammar with Focus on Form, and how this approach may be implemented in the classroom

The Context of Grammar Teaching: Refocusing Attention

Although a review of methods is beyond the scope of this paper, in order to frame the discussion of how we are beginning to refocus attention on grammar, I will highlight some of the major shifts in approach to teaching grammar. For a more complete review of methods, see Brown (2000).

One of the oldest methods of teaching is the Grammar Translation Method. Many have noted that for more than 2,000 years, studying a second language involved grammatical analysis and translation of written texts (e.g., Howatt, 1984; Rutherford, 1987). In this method, classes are taught in the first language, students are given long grammatical explanations, and little attention is paid to the context of words and sentences. What the text means does not matter much; texts are simply a context within which to practice grammatical rules.

One of the earliest shifts in grammar teaching came at the end of the nineteenth century when there was a move away from grammar translation to a focus on spoken language. This shift occurred because it was clear that students knew the rules but were not able to deploy them in communication. In methods such as the Series Method and the Direct Method, communication was most important. While grammar was still necessary to express meaning, it became secondary in instruction and was taught inductively if at all.

There was varied success with these early "naturalistic" approaches. By the 1930s and 1940s, language teaching shifted back to the Grammar Translation Method. Grammar once again was the focus and was taught explicitly.

The different approaches that emerged after this period became linked to theories in linguistics and psychology, as well as some charismatic individuals. The Audiolingual Method, which emerged after World War II, was aligned with structural linguistics and behavioral psychology. This method stressed the formation of grammatical habits through spoken pattern practice or drills. Grammar was seen as a set of patterns learned inductively through repetition.

In the 1960s, psychology moved away from Behaviorism and into Mentalism or cognitive psychology. This occurred around the same time as American linguistics shifted from structuralism to Chomskyan generative systems. Grammar was seen not as a set of structural patterns but as a finite system of rules or constraints that generate an infinite number of grammatical sentences. Rather than memorizing patterns through repetition and reinforcement, grammar rules were seen to develop along certain predictable paths, and learners creatively constructed their own languages given appropriate input.

While generative linguistics developed in the 1970s,the idea that learners were social beings who learned in context emerged. Methods such as Community Language Learning, Suggestopedia, and the Silent Way were developed based upon humanistic theories. These "designer" methods (Nunan, 1989) shifted further away from meaningless drills to contextualized instruction, with grammar learned inductively. There was also a shift from a teacher-fronted, stressful learning to safe, comfortable, conducive, and learner-centered learning.

In the 1980s, Krashen took previous work even further in the Natural Approach. Based upon studies in child development and first and second language acquisition, Krashen claimed that second language acquisition progressed in stages much like the first language (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). He argued that knowing some aspect of language consciously was no guarantee that one can use it in speech. In other words, he questioned whether academic knowledge ever converts into the ability to use language. The main issue for Krashen was the distinction between acquisition and learning. Acquisition occurred only naturally, and if learners were exposed to enough input the way children are in their first language, they would acquire and be able to use the language. Conversely, learning rules academically leads only to knowledge about the language and could be used only as a monitor for accuracy. Thus, in the Natural Approach there was increased focus on meaning, with the belief that form would follow automatically. Explicit discussion of grammar was to be avoided.

By the end of the 1980s, the profession began to shift again and focus more on communication and learning processes. Teachers and researchers stopped looking for the next best method and instead began to extract some basic principles. Although not necessarily an "approach" in the earlier sense, the combination of methods and techniques, eclectic as they are, are called the Communicative Approach. In Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), language is seen as a system for expressing meaning in interaction and communication. Instruction is designed to link classroom language learning with language use outside of class. Grammar in CLT is seen as part of a larger system, and it functions in various communicative ways. The goal thus became, and still is, communicative competence (i.e., knowledge of grammar, discourse, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and strategies). Grammar is viewed as only one piece of what is needed to be competent in a language. Although teachers and texts integrated grammar into classroom activities, grammar continued to take a back seat, with the primary focus on communication, negotiating meaning and interaction.

This perception of grammar is illustrated in Larsen-Freeman's (2003) survey of English teachers provided in Table 1 (p. 9).

Table 1. Survey of Grammar and Communication

When I think of grammar, I think of . . .	**When I think of communication, I think of . . .**
Rules	Dynamic understanding
Parts of speech; verb paradigms	The four skills
Structures; forms	Meaning
Word order in sentences	Accomplishing some purpose
Memorizing	Interacting
Red ink	Establishing relationships
Drills	Small group activities
Boring	Fun

This is a common perception in Korea as well. In my experience and in discussions with many colleagues and students in Korea, it is clear that a typical context is one in which non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) teach grammar and vocabulary, while native English speaking teachers (NESTs) teach productive skills (i.e., speaking and writing). In an informal survey of teachers and students, characteristics in the first column were generally used to describe NNEST classes, while characteristics in the second were used to describe NEST classes.

Obviously, one question we need to ask is whether this is an appropriate dichotomy. There is no question that, whatever else language is, some part of it is rule-governed behavior. In producing and comprehending language, we also need competence in discourse, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and strategies; yet, without the rules, we would not have language. Most teachers and researchers agree on that. That is, grammatical competence is the foundation of communicative competence. What we do not agree on is what pedagogical use these rules are.

Historically, then, there have been competing and shifting views of whether grammar should be explained to the students and whether there is a connection between conscious understanding of a rule and the ability to use it. Grammar teaching has moved from the explicit explanation of rules to implicit learning of patterns through repetition to implicit learning of grammar by focusing on meaning and communication. However, researchers are now finding that communicative approaches may be inadequate because they neglect grammar instruction, often leading to fluent but inaccurate language (e.g., Harley, 1992; Swain, 1998). It appears that we are now beginning to shift back toward form but within more meaningful context.

Where does this leave us in terms of grammar? Where do we fit grammar into the context particular to Korea? There is an assumption among teachers and students that explicit grammar teaching does not work. This can be seen obviously in students who have had years of overtly metalinguistic instruction and yet struggle to put a sentence together. Many teachers, especially NESTs, argue that what students need is more meaning-focused input and opportunities for output. Yet, as indicated above, there is disagreement over whether implicit teaching (i.e., unfocused exposure to input) is effective. Anecdotally, a majority of NNESTs I have interviewed believe that Korean students' proficiency has not significantly increased with the use of CLT and that a return to a focus on form is necessary.

One solution may be to combine both form- and meaning-based instruction. So, where do we fit grammar in? Everywhere! We need to challenge those notions of what grammar is and how it is taught. Grammar does not need to be that first column in Table 1. Grammar can and should be taught everywhere; and it can be done using characteristics in the second column of Table 1 without even "teaching" it. That is, students can focus on form while they are working on other parts of language and communication.

Focusing Cognitive Attention on Form

The title of this presentation "Refocusing Attention on Grammar" is meant to use "attention" in two ways. One is the meaning discussed above: There has been a shift back toward form in that we as a profession are starting to refocus our classroom activities on form. A second intended meaning for "attention" is as part of the cognitive system that allows the mind to focus on something for further processing. One way to focus cognitive attention on form is the approach called Focus on Form (FonF). FonF combines insights from many of the earlier approaches in some way into grammar instruction. This approach combines formal instruction and communicative language use. In this section, I will briefly discuss Focus on Form, as well as some options available to teachers.

The term Focus on Form is based on the distinction made by Long (1991) between explicit grammar instruction (Focus on FormS with an *s*) and meaning-focused use of form (Focus on Form with no *s*). He defines FonF as "overtly drawing students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in a lesson whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication" (pp. 45-46). Long and Robinson (1998) add that FonF is an "occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features by the teacher and/or one or more students triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production" (p. 23). Thus, in this approach, learners must notice and then process the target grammar structure in a communicative way. This can be contrasted by a Focus on FormS, which describes earlier approaches in which grammar is taught in relative isolation of meaning.

OPTIONS IN FOCUS ON FORM

Although there is considerable research on this topic, discussion of empirical support is beyond the scope of this paper (for a review, see Long & Robinson, 1998 Doughty & Williams, 1998). In the following, I will briefly describe five options, adapted from Doughty and Williams (1998), that guide decisions on how to focus on form in the classroom.

Attention (Direct or Attract)

Attention is just as it sounds: paying attention to something. It is a mechanism that allows the mind to focus processing resources, much like a spotlight. Studies in psychology indicate that attention is limited, selective, partially subject to voluntary control, controls access to consciousness, and is essential for action control and learning (Doughty, 2001). Attention requires at least the following: (a) orienting to a sensory event, (b) detecting the signal for focused processing (conscious or unconscious), and (c) maintaining an alert state (Posner & Petersen, 1990). Schmidt (2001) notes that even in SLA, a field with little agreement, there is considerable agreement that attention is crucial in language learning.

In attention, there is a continuum from directing conscious, focal attention and attracting unconscious attention. Thus, one decision teachers must make in order to get learners to "notice" features of specific grammar points is whether to explicitly direct attention or to indirectly attract attention.

Learning (Explicit or Implicit)

A second option is whether learning should be explicit or implicit. Within a cognitive perspective, language learning is essentially restructuring, which involves there organization of the developing interlanguage rules to become more target-like (McLaughlin, 1990). What is thought to occur is that the learning in the classroom becomes part of declarative memory (conscious, effortful control of form). Once the forms become automatized (conscious, fluent control), they move into procedural memory. While in procedural memory, rules generally cannot be accessed consciously and very little cognitive effort is used in deploying them. It is very much like having to focus initially when learning to ride a bike (declarative) and "going on automatic" later but not being able to explain all of the details to someone (procedural).

Researchers have argued (Doughty & Williams, 1998; McLaughlin, 1990; Swain, 1998) that there are subprocesses involved in restructuring. These processes may include hypothesis testing, cognitive comparison, noticing interlanguage/target language differences (sometimes called "gaps") and noticing interlanguage deficiencies (sometimes called "holes").

One issue in grammar teaching is whether this learning should be implicit or explicit. Doughty and Williams (1998) define implicit learning as nonconscious and automatic abstraction of the rule arrived at from experience with input. It often involves attracting learner attention and avoiding metalinguistic discussion and interruption to the communication of meaning. Conversely, explicit learning is defined as conscious searching for, and building and testing of hypotheses. It involves directing learner attention to form and exploiting pedagogical grammar.

Like attention, implicit and explicit learning is not a dichotomy but rather a continuum. In using FonF activities, teachers create contexts in which both explicit and implicit learning are used to varying degrees. Thus, the aim of implicit FonF is to attract learner attention and to avoid interrupting the communication of meaning with grammatical discussion, while the aim of explicit FonF is to direct learner attention explicitly and to exploit pedagogical grammar.

Approach (Proactive or Reactive)

Another feature provided by Doughty and Williams (1998) is the choice of whether to be proactive or reactive. A proactive approach involves selecting in advance an aspect of the target form to focus on. This may seem like traditional structural approaches, but, in fact, is quite different. The traditional approach sequences learning along structural progressions (e.g., present tense, progressive aspect, past, etc.), and is based on intuition and not empirical research. It also presents forms and explanations in isolation. Proactive FonF, however, focuses on forms that learners actually need at the time.

In a proactive approach the teacher pays close attention to learner output in the form of speech, writing, and comprehension behaviors, looking for grammatical features that students require. For example, in teaching a writing course, the teacher may notice that most of the students have trouble with the past tense, especially in the difference between the past tense and the present perfect. The teacher would then select that form or that distinction to focus on. If the teacher teaches the same course each semester, he or she may begin to see consistencies in the needs of the students at that level and can then predict what forms they may need to work on in advance.

In a reactive approach, the teacher reacts to problems with form as they arise in communication. It involves the teacher noticing gaps in what the learner has produced and drawing that learner's attention to the form on the spot. When a student says, “I goed to the park,” the teacher may provide a recast (e.g., “You went to the park?”). Although Lyster and Ranta (1997) point out that recasts are most common, there are other ways to achieve this. The teacher could provide a repetition (e.g., “You goed to the park?”), question (e.g., “I'm sorry, you what?”),or elicitation (e.g., “Where did you go?”). Thus, teachers attract learner attention and create opportunities for learners to react to each other and to their own form.

Intervention (Obtrusive or Unobtrusive)

A fourth option pertains to the teacher's role. Again, there is a continuum along which to view the teacher's participation in an activity. On one end, the teacher could overtly direct students' attention to a particular grammar point and intervene directly this would be obtrusive. On the other end, the teacher could provide a task that has a covert grammar component built into it, but the teacher neither directs attention to it nor intervenes in any way this is unobtrusive.

Mode (Input or Output)

The final feature is what to focus attention on. The teacher can focus learners' attention on some input, such as a reading or listening text, or on student output, such as their speaking or writing.

Summary of Options

Table 2 summarizes the options available in focusing on form in the classroom.

Table 2. Options in Focus on Form

Attention	Learning	Approach	Intervention	Mode
Direct	Explicit	Proactive	Obtrusive	Input
Attract	Implicit	Reactive	Unobtrusive	Output

Classroom Implementation

This section will describe some types of activities that can be used to implement the above approach to grammar in nearly any course (adapted from Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ur, 1996, and others). For ease of discussion, I have classified the activities on a continuum from implicit to explicit. The other options will be incorporated along the way, as necessary.

NATURAL INPUT

The most implicit type provides learners with opportunities for practice in natural communication contexts, allowing the grammar form to emerge naturally. This is the most implicit because the teacher is assuming (hoping!) that the learner's language system will pick out the form and notice gaps with no help from the materials or the teacher.

INPUT FLOOD

This proactive, yet highly implicit, type floods the learner with as many instances of the grammar point as possible. The more opportunities there are in the input for learners to notice a linguistic feature, the more likely they are to do so. Thus, the idea is to provide exposure to the target form without directing conscious attention to it. Selecting activities for this type is very easy because whatever a teacher would normally do in a skills class or content-based class will work well, as long as the form occurs often in the input or the output. Some examples of activities may be thematically appropriate reading or listening texts, manipulating paragraphs that contain the form, discussion of materials, and producing texts based upon prompts.

TASK ESSENTIAL

This type of activity is more explicit and proactive. It is a task in which a grammatical form is essential for successful completion of the task. It goes one step further than the input flood to make sure that the learner will at least need to attempt to process or produce the form. Again, any topic or materials used in class can be turned into a task essential activity. Some examples are info-gap activities; question-and-answer sheets; quizzes; and surveys that students fill out, create, or both. One motivating activity is to create theme-based games such as “Jeopardy” or “Who Wants to be a Millionaire?” These games can be created very easily in PowerPoint by designing a main slide and hyperlinking text in the main slide. When students click on the hyperlinked text, they automatically go to the appropriate slide and answer the question. As students read the questions out loud, they receive the grammatical input; and as they answer, they produce the target form. The benefits increase when students are responsible for creating their own games based upon course materials. These activities are still relatively implicit but push learners to process and produce a form without direct discussion of the form.

ENHANCEMENT

A more explicit feature is enhancement, in which the teacher changes some visual or auditory feature of the target form. Enhancement can take various forms. Visual enhancement may involve such changes as highlighting, bolding, italicizing, or changing font style, color, or size. Auditory enhancement may involve changing pitch, loudness, or speed. This activity type is relatively unobtrusive, as the focus is on meaning. The teacher simply makes the forms perceptually salient without offering any explicit expectation as to what kind of processing should occur. Of course, there is always the chance that students will ask why the string is enhanced, and this may lead to further discussion and processing.

DICTATION

In this type of activity, students reconstruct a text that they have heard only once. As they listen, students jot down as many words as they can. They then, individually or in pairs/groups, reconstruct the text. The teacher can vary the speed, length, and complexity of the text. As with the other activities, the text can be one that students are working on in class. That is, while the class is working on rhetorical structure (e.g., topic sentences, main ideas, support details) students get opportunities to process grammar. Davis and Rinvolucri (1991) provide many motivating variations on dictation. An interesting variation involves dividing the class into groups, dividing the text into sections and placing the sections on the wall. One student in each group acts as the scribe and the others messengers. One messenger at a time goes up to the wall, reads one sentence, memorizes it and brings it back to the scribe, who writes it down. The groups thus collaboratively reconstruct the text. They then compare their text to the original.

This type of activity is more explicit and obtrusive because the processing and production of the form is very likely to occur and because the materials are constructed by the teacher to include the form. It is still fairly implicit, however, as students' attention is attracted to, but not explicitly directed to, the form. One added function is that learners discuss the language they are reconstructing, which may force them to notice the gaps and holes in their interlanguages. Thus, students not only discuss writing and reading skills (e.g., rhetorical structure, cohesion, coherence) but also grammar.

PROCESSING FLOOD

Like input flood, in processing flood learners get opportunities to process target forms. However, because it is at the more explicit end of the continuum, students are told what to pay attention to, what (rules) to notice, and maybe even why. Any of the activities described above would work well, provided they are accompanied by explicit instructions to pay attention to a particular form. Examples include highlighting a text and discussing the form, mixing up paragraphs and discussing the order of paragraphs and use of form, and having students highlight forms.

One interesting type of activity that fits here is performance. In this type of activity, there are three phases: a rehearsal phase, a performance phase, and a critique phase in which students react and focus on form. Examples include writing and performing a speech or role-play, watching a film and recreating it, and making an original film or commercial. With the availability of affordable digital video cameras and software, these productions are relatively easy to create, can be quite motivating for students, and can be saved on a CD or DVD for further use.

Evans (2005) provides an interesting variation of performance. He recorded a digital version of a television program and, together with students, analyzed phonological suprasegmental features. Students then practiced the script, recorded it, and dubbed the file onto the original video using Windows Movie Maker. In a modified version of this activity, students could record a program, use the text as a dictation, and reconstruct it. Students could then compare their text to the original script, discussing the differences and making changes. They would then practice the script and record it. The recorded file would then be dubbed back onto the original video. Students could then watch both their version and the original and compare. These types of activities provide opportunities to notice formal features in both input and output in a more explicit way.

Although a strong version of FonF would stop here, there are more explicit activities. Doughy and Williams (1998) note that FonF entails a focus on formal elements of language, but does much more. Traditional Focus on FormS, however, is limited to a focus on the form. The following types are commonly associated with traditional grammar teaching; yet, along a larger continuum, they could also be considered explicit FonF if embedded in context and communication. Indeed, current popular grammar texts such as Grammar Links (Mahnke & O'Dowd, 2005) and Focus on Grammar (Maurer, 2006) do just that.

GUIDED INTERACTION

This explicit task is designed to place learners in a pseudo-communication situation and focus attention on a form. Learners form sentences of their own based upon a set pattern but may use whatever vocabulary they wish (Ur, 1996). These are communicative activities that are often used at the end of a typical grammar unit progression. Again, this type of activity can be created using any theme or text from class. An example would be writing a movie review after an intensive study of an authentic review.

MEANINGFUL DRILL

Even more explicit are meaningful drills, in which responses are very controlled, but learners can make a limited choice of vocabulary (Ur, 1996). An example of this drill type would be providing several grammar forms used to describe movies, such as relative clauses, and asking students to use these in describing a movie.

CONTROLLED DRILL

The most explicit type is a controlled drill. In this activity, learners process and produce structures based upon very clear, closed-ended clues. A common example is a cloze task with prompts under the blanks. Students must complete the sentences by manipulating the prompts.

CONCLUSION

In FonF, the idea is to create opportunities for learners to focus attention on a particular grammar point without losing meaning or communication. The above briefly discussed what “focus” means, some of the options to consider in focusing on a form, and some ways this can be implemented in the classroom.

How does FonF fit the needs and context of Korea? As teachers, I think it helps us to think about how we can highlight features of the grammar in the input, how we can subtly direct attention to grammatical errors, and how we can slip in grammatical discussion as support for other activities. The options and activities discussed in this paper are certainly not new ideas in teaching. Most experienced teachers do this as second nature. Yet, it is important to make these assumptions and choices explicit and actively look for opportunities to do this. In other words, whether we are teaching topic and supporting sentences or cohesive devices in a writing course; main ideas, details, and word-attack skills in a reading course; or organizing presentations in an oral skills course, we should look for whatever grammar the students need and manipulate course materials and activities to not only provide opportunities to practice those skills but also grammar.

Given what we know about the shifts in grammar teaching and the desire for communicative competence, which is clearly reflected in the new iBT TOEFL and Korean Ministry of Education exams, teachers are beginning to recognize that accuracy does not necessary develop automatically while focused on communication and meaning. It is clear that grammatical accuracy is necessary as well. As a profession we are beginning to refocus our attention on grammar, yet with more balance, and to focus cognitive attention on grammar seems to be necessary. Importantly, this can be done in most language teaching contexts. If we can do this, we may benefit our students by creating more opportunities to trigger acquisition processes.

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Increasing Learner Autonomy in the Writing Class Through Experiential Learning

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ABSTRACT

An essential part in learner autonomy is the ability to learn from experiences. This includes the ability to reflect on one's experience and to find ways to make improvements so that the performance in subsequent experiences will be better. With respect to writing, this ability includes being able to analyze one's writing and to identify how one's writing can be improved so that the next piece of writing will be better. To foster this ability in students, teachers have used different activities and tools. This paper presents the results of a pilot study that investigated the effectiveness of different tools and activities used to foster this ability in learners. Different tools and activities were used in this classroom-based research, and feedback was collected from students on their effectiveness in helping them learn from their experience independently.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Learner autonomy can be defined as the freedom and ability to make one's learning. How can teachers give students this freedom and develop this ability in students in the language classroom? One way is to encourage students to play an active part in making decisions about their own learning process (Scharle and Szabo, 2000). Experiential learning is a self-directed process that does that.

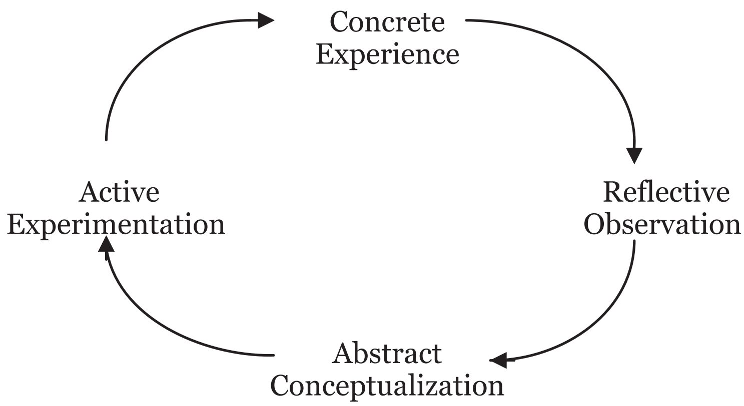
The theory that people learn from experiences owes its origin to the ideas of education activist Dewey, the perspectives of social psychologist Lewin, and the cognitive development work of Piaget. Central to their ideas on experiential learning is that learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience (Kolb, 1984, p. 38). Their ideas spawned internships, study-abroad programs, field projects, and other experiential methods of learning in education and training. Learning from one's experience became known as “experiential learning.”

While experience is important in learning, just undergoing an experience does not result in learning – the learner needs to reflect upon the experience and identify what needs to be improved (Kolb, 1984). Otherwise, learning does not happen, as succinctly reflected in the old saying, “He doesn't have 20 years of experience, but one year repeated 20 times” (p. 35).

Even though ideas connecting experiences to learning can be traced back

Experience and Education (Dewey, 1938), it was not until the 1980s that the experiential learning theory was put forth in a structured framework by David A. Kolb (1984) in his influential book *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Kolb's work is often cited in papers and books on experiential learning (Healy & Jenkins, 2000). In his book, Kolb presented experiential learning as a four-stage cycle involving four modes of learning: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (see Figure. 1).

Figure 1. Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle



The first stage, *concrete experience*, is when the learner is immersed in an experience and taking it in. The next stage, *reflective observation*, involves stepping back and observing what happened. This is followed by *abstract conceptualization*, where what was observed is interpreted and put into a larger framework of understanding. With this new understanding, the learner takes steps to improve the handling of future experiences in the fourth stage, *active experimentation*. This active experimentation then leads to another concrete experience for the next cycle of experiential learning. The learning process is thus cyclical and continuous.

Henceforth, Kolb's ideas on experiential learning, i.e., that experiential learning involves the four stages described above, will be referred to as the Experiential Learning Theory (EL Theory), and the four-stage cycle as the Experiential Learning Cycle (EL Cycle).

Let us consider the following example to illustrate the four stages in the EL Cycle. Assume that I am in a new school, and I need to look for my classroom. I do this by wandering through the hallways (concrete experience). After I get to my classroom, I reflect on how much time I took, and how tired I felt (reflective observation). I attribute these to the fact that I may have taken an indirect route to my classroom and that if I take a more direct and shorter one the next time, I would use less time and feel less tired (abstract conceptualization). I take action by securing a map of the school and mapping out the shortest route to my classroom (active experimentation). The next day, I use my map to find the classroom, and this new experience serves as another concrete experience.

In the example above, my learning was self-directed: I identified my challenges on my own, and I decided on what I could do to improve on the situation. When encouraging experiential learning in students, some guidance from the teacher may be needed in certain stages. Some students may need help at the reflective observation stage in order to notice what their challenges are. Other students may need help at the abstract conceptualization stage, for instance, with finding solutions to their challenges. Still others may need help in applying their new knowledge into action during the active experimentation stage, and others may need encouragement or advice on getting an experience. Learning is most powerful when the learner goes through all four stages of the EL cycle – concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). As such, it is important for teachers to guide students to ensure that they experience all four stages so that students gain the most out of each learning experience.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

How can the EL Theory be applied in language teaching? In teaching writing, the author has used each essay writing experience as the concrete experience that students reflect upon and learn from. When guiding the students through the stages of reflective observation and abstract conceptualization, various activities were used. Which activities did students find more effective? This is one of the research questions of the study here.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, I review the literature on the applications of EL Theory. First, a look is taken at the fields in which it is most commonly found – and these are fields outside of language teaching. Next, the literature on the applications on the EL theory in language teaching is reviewed. Finally, an overview of the literature on learning preferences is given.

APPLICATIONS OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THEORY OUTSIDE OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

Today, applications of the EL Theory can be found in various development and education fields. There are also organizations dedicated to this way of teaching, such as the Association for Experiential Education (n.d.) and the National Society for Experiential Education (n.d.). Presented in this paper are findings on how this approach has been used with school-age and adult learners.

School-Age Learners

These days, school-age children have a wide variety of outdoor education programs to choose from. EL Theory is popularly used by outdoor education organizations like the internationally established group Outward Bound (Buchanan, 1992; Fletcher, 1971). In Outward Bound programs, participants are put through a challenging outdoor experience. They reflect on this experience to gain new understanding. This new understanding is then used for planning another activity. These programs accept participants who are as young as thirteen years old (Outward Bound Australia, n.d.).

In schools, there are also examples of school teachers employing EL Theory in different disciplines. It has been used in high school English classes in Rabun Gap, Georgia, to publish Foxfire books and magazines since 1972 (Wigginton, 1985). It has also been used in service learning programs with eighth graders in Pittsburgh public schools (Stevens & Richards, 1992).

There is a paucity of literature on teachers using this approach with learners below the age of thirteen. A possible reason for this is that experiential learning involved processes, like reflection and abstract conceptualization, which may be considered beyond these learners' cognitive development. According to Piaget, mastery of conceptual reasoning occurs from the age of eleven to fourteen or fifteen (Philips & Soltis, 1991). As such, some people may feel that experiential learning is more effective with learners aged sixteen and above.

Adult Learners

EL Theory is influential in many adult development fields. One example is human resource development (Armstrong, 2000; DeSimone, Werner & Harris, 2001). In education, it is widely seen in undergraduate and graduate programs in various disciplines. It can be found in science programs such as information systems (Gackowski, 2003), as well as in humanities courses such as geography (Healy & Jenkins, 2000). It is also seen in business fields such as business management (Pearson & Beasely, 1998), and in professional training courses such as the teacher preparation programs in the School for International Training.

In language education, the experiential approach has been used in Europe to support adult learners in developing assessment portfolios and encouraging learner autonomy (Kohonen, 2000). A teacher in Pakistan has also described her experience using this approach to teach grammar points (Shafiqi, 1991). In each lesson, she guided her students through the four stages of the EL Cycle. Each lesson started with a conversation with her students. This served as the concrete experience in the EL Cycle. The topics for the conversations were chosen to elicit the grammar structure that the lesson was focusing on. For instance, for the lesson on future progressives, students were asked about their plans for the weekend. Next, students reconstructed, in writing, the class conversation they just had. This was reflective observation. They then discussed the grammatical rules behind the grammatical structure being focused on (abstract conceptualization). Finally, they applied their new understanding of the grammar structure by filling in worksheets and doing information-gap activities (active experimentation).

APPLICATIONS OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

In general, even though EL Theory is applied in various educational and development fields catering to both school-age and adult learners, it is not widely applied in language education (Christenssen, 2004). After a review, it was found that there was not much literature available about language teachers applying EL theory in their teaching. While some examples were found, they were few and far between.

The scarcity of published works on language teachers applying EL Theory in their teaching is puzzling. Many language teacher preparation programs use the EL Cycle, so many language teachers are familiar with EL Theory and the EL Cycle. As the saying goes, teachers teach the way they were taught (see Freeman, 1987). Having experienced this method of learning, one would expect some of these teachers to guide their students' learning in a similar way.

One possible explanation for this not occurring more often is that the language teacher may actually be applying EL Theory and the EL Cycle in their teaching, but are doing so without realizing it. As such, they do not describe what they do with terms such as "experiential learning" or "the experiential learning cycle." There are advantages of using the EL Cycle for conceptualizing teaching. Firstly, the cycle provides a systematic way for teachers to guide their students through experiential learning. Secondly, it directs teachers to ensure that a range of teaching methods – those that facilitate experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation – are used to cater to the different learning styles students have (Healy & Jenkins, 2000). In this way, one type of teaching, e.g., the teacher's preferred method of teaching is not emphasized at the expense of others.

METHOD

This research was conducted in the author's writing class in Kanda University of International Studies in Chiba, Japan, over a period of fourteen weeks. The participants were first-year students from the International Communication Department. Their English abilities ranged from intermediate to advanced. Each essay the participants wrote was the concrete experience that they reflected upon and learned from. A variety of learning activities and tools were used to guide the participants through the stages of reflective observation and abstract conceptualization.

To encourage reflection among the participants, two tools were used: reflection worksheets and student-teacher conferences. The reflection worksheets required participants to write down their thoughts and feelings after they completed an essay. The student-teacher conferences were one-to-one conferences where the students discussed with the author what they had reflected on and written down in their reflection worksheets. These two activities also required participants to identify how they could make improvements in the essays they had just written as well as how they can improve their essay-writing skills in general. As such, these two activities are actually a combination of both reflection and conceptualization.

To give the participants more guidance in the abstract conceptualization stage, four other activities and tools were used. Firstly, when their essays were marked, a rubric with descriptors was used to indicate their scores. These were returned to the participants with the essays so they could see how they fared in each category in the rubric. Secondly, their essays were returned with mistakes indicated with marking codes and showing what kind of mistake they were; for instance, it could be a spelling mistake, or a tense mistake. Thirdly, the participants were shown sample essays of different qualities. Students analyzed these essays and ranked them. Lastly, I conducted lessons focusing on grammar points that were a common problem in their essays.

The activities and tools used to guide the participants through the stages of reflective observation and abstract conceptualization are summarized in Table 1. These are the tools and activities that this paper focuses on.

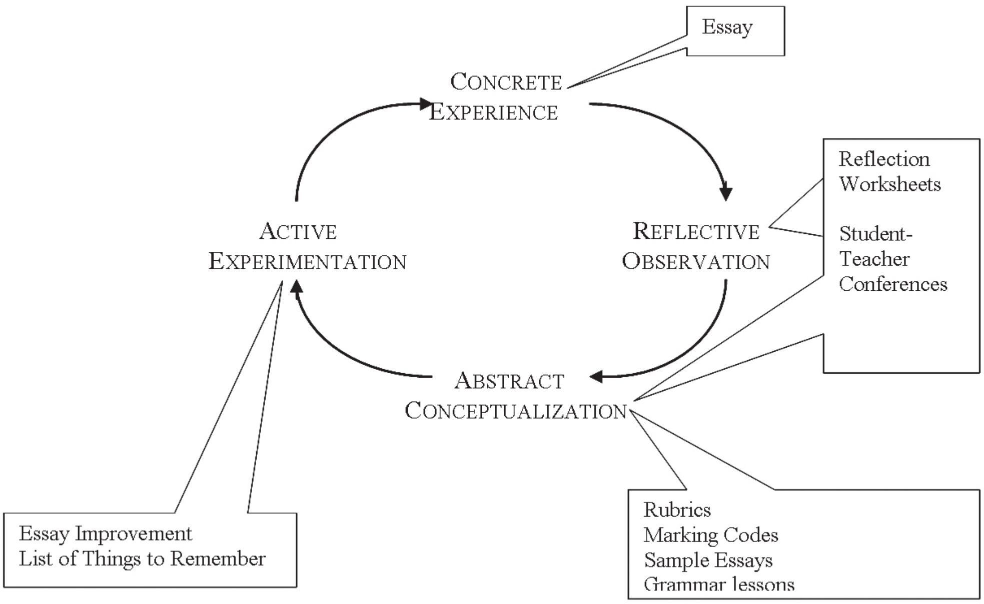
Table 1. Activities and Tools Use to Guide Participants

Reflection Worksheets	*Reflective Observation and Abstract Conceptualization*
Student-Teacher Conferences	Reflective Observation and Abstract Conceptualization
Rubrics	Abstract Conceptualization
Marking Codes	Abstract Conceptualization
Sample Essays	Abstract Conceptualization
Grammar Lessons	Abstract Conceptualization

After gaining new knowledge from the reflective observation and abstract conceptualization stages, the participants applied what they had learned from these two stages by making improvements to their essays. After that, to prepare for their next essay writing experience, they made a list of things to remember for the next essay. This list was an individualized compilation of mistakes made in previous essays that the participants did not want to make again. These two activities, making improvements to the previous essay and making a list of things to remember, served as their active experimentation. After completing these two activities, the participants would write another essay.

The tools and activities used in the writing class, and how they correspond to the four stages in the EL Cycle are summarized in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Tools and Activities Corresponding to the Stages of the Experiential Learning Cycle



At the end of the fourteen weeks, a questionnaire was used to elicit from the participants their opinions on how useful these activities and tools were in helping them become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses in writing. This questionnaire made use of a six-point Likert scale and yielded quantitative data. The questions from this questionnaire that are relevant for this paper – the ones pertaining to reflective observation and abstract analysis are reproduced in Appendix A.

The sample size this research, after eliminating incomplete or incorrectly filled responses, was twenty-six.

RESULTS

The answers from first part of the questionnaire – where my student indicated, on a six-point scale, how useful the activities and tools used were for them – were calculated for mean and standard deviation. The higher the score, the more effective the activities or tool was for my students. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of Questionnaire on Students' Reaction to Activities and Tools Used

Activities and Tools	Mean	SD
For Reflective Observation & Abstract Conceptualization		
Reflection worksheets	4.48	0.94
Student-teacher conferences	4.86	1.01
For Abstract Conceptualization		
Rubrics	5.08	0.85
Marking codes	4.68	1.16
Sample essays	4.02	0.82
Grammar lessons	5.20	1.00

The results show that the participants rated the grammar lessons as the most effective activity for them. This is followed by the rubrics, the student-teacher conferences, the marking codes, the reflection worksheets, and the sample essays, in that order.

DISCUSSION

One of the research questions in this paper involved an investigation of which activities and tools was most effective for guiding students through the stages of reflective observation and abstract conceptualization. The results show that the participants rated the grammar lessons as the most effective. This is followed by the rubrics, the student-teacher conferences, the marking codes, the reflection worksheets, and the sample essays in descending order of perceived effectiveness. It would be interesting to hear from the participants the reasons behind their responses. For this research, open-ended answers from the questionnaires and learning journals were collected. However, these did not shed light on the reasons behind their responses. For future research, another research technique, for instance focus group interviews, may be more suitable for eliciting such information.

Future research should also take into consideration the following issues. Firstly, in this classroom-based research, the sample size was too small for the results to be statistically significant. A larger pool of participants would be desirable. Secondly, the activities and tools investigated here were repeated twice or only once before responses were collected from participants. A higher frequency in the number of times these activities and tools were used by the participants would yield more reliable results.

In conclusion, in this attempt to apply EL Theory in the classroom, different activities and tools were used to guide the participants through reflective observation and abstract conceptualization. The effectiveness of these activities was investigated, and while firm conclusions are premature at this stage, this pilot study has raised issues that should be investigated in future research.

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Appendix A

FEEDBACK ON WRITING CLASS

Please circle (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6) to indicate your answer.

	Not at all ... Very
1. You reflected on Timed Essay #2 immediately after writing it. Did this help you become more aware of what your strengths and weaknesses in writing timed essays?	1....2....3....4....5....6
2. You had a conference with me after your timed essay. Did this make you more aware of what you can do to improve your essay?	1....2....3....4....5....6
3. Did the rubrics help you become more aware of what you can do to improve your essays?	1....2....3....4....5....6
4. I used marking codes to give you feedback on your essays. Was this useful?	1....2....3....4....5....6
5. You read and ranked four sample essays. Did this activity show you what you can do to improve your own essay?	1....2....3....4....5....6
6. Did the lessons on grammar (for instance, on coordinating conjunctions) help you write better in your essays?	1....2....3....4....5....6

7. Which of the above activities were most useful? Why?

8. Which of the above activities were *not* useful? Why *not*?

SLA and Applied Linguistics

Adapting to Learning Contracts: An Exploratory Case Study

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ABSTRACT

A significant number of articles and research projects in the last decade have focused on the subject of learner autonomy as it relates to the learning of English in Asian contexts. This paper is based on an exploratory study involving five students who were part of the inaugural group of first-year students studying at an English-medium university in China. Specifically, the students were observed to see how they adapted to using learning contracts as part of the learning process. In a series of open-ended interviews, the students were asked about what their learning goals were, what activities they engaged in to fulfill those goals (including any challenges or problems they faced), and how well they believed they fulfilled them. As in any exploratory study, findings or conclusions must be made tentatively. However, common themes discovered in the students' interviews are discussed and suggestions for future research are made. These are discussed in light of the research done and the literature written on issues of learner autonomy in Asian contexts, including the studies previously mentioned.

INTRODUCTION

"Learner autonomy," and the concepts and terms associated with it (such as "the good language learner," "learner training," "contracted learning," "learner independence," "learner strategies," "negotiated learning," "strategy training," "learner-centeredness," "self-access," and "self-education"), has become one of the important concepts underlying language education. It has gained such prominence that Lynch (2001), borrowing the words of Pennycook, has suggested learner autonomy "has achieved a moral status backed by dominant beliefs in liberal progressive education" (p. 390). One of the areas of the world where work on learner autonomy has produced some interesting research has been Asia. This interest in such research may not be surprising, since many teachers and researchers might anticipate that certain stereotypical aspects of Asian culture, such as the tendency towards collectivism and treating the teacher as an authority figure, may work against the implementation of such a concept in such as context.

This project was centered on seeing how a group of Asian students (Chinese) dealt with one aspect of exercising learner autonomy (designing and implementing a learning contract) in an Asian context (an English-medium university working in China). To gain a perspective on this project, it is important to see how questions involving the pursuit of the goal of learner autonomy have been addressed and researched in Asian contexts.

LEARNER AUTONOMY IN CONTEXTS INVOLVING ASIAN LEARNERS

As English language education has become an integral part of education for Asian students, a number of articles and studies in the past decade have concentrated on how learner autonomy relates to contexts where Asian learners are learning English. Some studies have focused on how to implement specific programs to encourage learner autonomy. For example, Schwarzer, Kahn, and Smart (2000) implemented learning contracts in a university ESL grammar and writing class to encourage students to use their own work as a way of learning about English writing. One of the more extensive projects involving the implementation of goals related to learner autonomy in Korea was carried out by Finch (2000), who implemented an English conversation course at a Korean university in which promotion of learner autonomy was a major component. Meanwhile, in Hong Kong, Hyland's (2000) experience in giving feedback to ESL writing students has led her to argue for increased learner autonomy in the use of feedback in writing tasks. In addition, Tan (2003), working in Singapore with students from China, has identified strategy training as a means for students to reflect on their learning processes, and to identify opportunities and resources for future learning.

Other studies have focused on the interaction between the values assumed to be inherent in the concept of learner autonomy, and the values which Asian learners may have. After working at a university in Cambodia establishing a self-access center, Jones (1995) came to the conclusion that learner autonomy is a Western concept, loaded with cultural assumptions which are not appropriate to force upon Asian students. Consequently, he concluded that Asian cultural characteristics (e.g., the tendency to work collectively) must be incorporated into such things as self-access centers. Ho and Crookall (1995), in a similar vein, have suggested that aspects of Chinese culture are direct impediments to learner autonomy, and consequently implemented an education program which promotes strategies designed to counteract those negatively viewed cultural aspects. Littlewood (1999), however, takes a slightly different approach. He makes the case that Asian learners, in spite of the influence of culture, have the same potential to develop autonomy as learners in other cultures, and suggests that autonomy can be introduced in a reactive manner by the teacher (for example, preparing them for a task they must carry out on their own). This can then be the beginning of a process where learners can move towards being truly proactive in their exercise of autonomy. Similarly, Benson, Chik, and Lim (2003), in discussing the case studies of two Asian learners of English, suggest ways in which the process of language learning can cause language learners to transcend their background cultures and become more autonomous as learners and as individuals.

THE CONTEXT AND THE STUDY

Continuing in this vein of research, it was decided to conduct an exploratory study among the inaugural cohort of first-year students studying at an English-medium university in China. The first year of study for these students involved a nine-week block of intensive work in English for Academic Purposes (EAP), followed by two ten-week blocks of a combination of EAP and content courses. In the Oral Communication and Study course during the second teaching block, they were required to enter into a Study Plan Contract (SPC) with their tutors for a period of four weeks. During this period, they were expected to carry out strategies designed to improve their English capacity in three areas listening, speaking, and study skills (a good online description of learning contracts can be found at Hiemstra (n.d.).

The role of the teacher in this process is to help students to identify areas, related to listening, speaking, and study skills, in which they wanted to improve their English ability; to translate those areas into goals (such as, "I want to improve my skills in listening to lectures" or "I want to participate in discussions more effectively"); and to identify strategies which could help them attain these goals. Since this style of learning was probably different from the styles of learning they had experienced before, it would be an important research opportunity to observe how a group of students from the first year cohort adapted to it. Therefore, a stratified random sample of six participant students was taken from the two hundred fifty students who comprised the first year cohort two from the five groups with the highest English ability (based on diagnostic test scores from the end of the first teaching block), two from the middle five groups, and two from the bottom five groups. After obtaining their agreement to participate, each participant was given an anonymous identity for the study ("Circle Dot," "Circle," "Triangle Dot," "Triangle," "Square Dot," and "Square") and had a series of four interviews during the period of the SPC. In the first interview, students were asked about their learning goals for their SPCs, how they chose those goals, how much time they spent in preparing their SPCs, and what activities they intended to do to achieve their goals. In the next three interviews, participants answered a series of open-ended questions on the activities they did and how helpful they believed these activities were. Also, in the last interview, participants were asked how well they achieved the goals in their SPCs, and if this was a style of study they would continue to follow in the future.

Due to scheduling problems, a full course of interviews was not completed with one of the participants from the low English ability groups; consequently, the interviews from the remaining five were transcribed and analyzed for common patterns and occurrences. Three research questions were created to help in the analysis of the data:

1. How well did the participants in the study adjust to the process of designing, implementing, and evaluating this Study Plan Contract process?

2. Did the participants fulfill the terms of their Study Plan Contracts successfully?

3. Did participants from the higher English level groups have more positive self-perceptions of progress in achieving the goals of the SPC?

General Findings and Answering the Research Questions

The appendices show the preparation participants made for their SPCs (Appendix A), in which areas listening, speaking, and study skills – tasks were done in each week of the period of the SPC (Appendix B), and their self-assessments of their progress at the end of the SPC period (Appendix C). As can be seen in Appendix A, two participants, “Circle Dot” and “Triangle,” did not consult with their tutors about their SPCs and anticipated spending the least amount of time on SPC-related activities. Appendix B shows that three participants, “Circle Dot,” “Triangle,” and “Triangle Dot,” had weeks when they did not do activities for one or more of the learning goals they had given themselves. Finally, Appendix C illustrates that the “Circle Dot” and “Triangle” students noted that they were not sure if, or did not believe, they made progress in the three skill areas covered by the SPC.

In terms of the research questions posited, the following tendencies were noted.

QUESTION 1

The participants did experience some difficulties in adjusting to the style of learning in the SPC. The most striking difficulty came in relation to strategies related to listening to lectures. All students had access to a CD-ROM (EASE, Vol. 1: Listening to Lectures) with exercises related to lecture listening. Most participants, with the exception of “Triangle,” used the exercises to practice recognition of various aspects of a lecture, such as lecture structure and transitional words and phrases (signposts). However, all those who did this found that the lecturers in content courses did not follow the models suggested by the practice exercises used. One lecturer, in the view of many participants, did not appear to use transitional words and phrases they would have recognized, and both lecturers had extensive outlines based on PowerPoint slides prepared for their lectures which appeared to make listening and note-making unnecessary. Some attempted to cope with this by putting handouts away, or by using them to compare with notes taken. Others believed that the handouts were needed, as they contained details which they would have missed in the lectures. Many participants also spoke of how difficult it was to follow some of the speaking strategies they had identified. One participant dealt with this by scaling back the original plan of having a 30-minute discussion in English with roommates to a 10-minute discussion, while two others decided to record themselves reading aloud. In addition, many students believed they could have used more direction from tutors on the SPC process.

In spite of these concerns, some positive tendencies were noted. All participants were able to incorporate class work they were already doing into their SPCs as strategies, with four out of the five choosing work in relation to group survey projects which were being done as part of their Oral Communication and Study and their Quantitative Research Methods modules. In addition, three of five students were able to identify new strategies which they had not identified in their original SPCs.

QUESTION 2

As intimated in Question 2, it was decided that the best way to gauge a student's degree of progress would be by getting the student's self-perception, i.e., to ask, “Do you believe you have made progress in the areas you worked on?” As can be seen in Appendix C, four out of five participants believed they made progress in study skills and in listening. Three out of five believed they did not make progress in speaking; however, given the fact that some students were able to adapt their speaking strategies successfully, it would have been worth questioning if their perception of non-progress was based simply on comparison with their original SPCs.

QUESTION 3

This question was posed because the researcher thought that a higher ability in English might make it easier for a student participating in the SPC process to understand the process, undertake it, and subsequently attain more benefit from it. This was not borne out in this study, as the two participants who had the most negative self-perceptions of their progress were a student from the top English ability classes and a student from the bottom English ability classes. The amount of time spent on SPC-related activities does not appear to be a factor in this result, either, as it appears that participants spent an average of 5-6 hours per week on activities in fulfillment of SPC goals. The types of activities done in each time period between interviews does not appear to be a factor, either, because the participant known as “Triangle Dot” had periods where Study Skills Activities were not done, yet had a positive self-perception on progress in all areas. However, it is duly noted (cf. Appendix A) that the two students who had the most negative perceptions of their progress also spent the least time preparing their SPC's, did not consult with tutors about choosing learning goals, and anticipated spending the least time on SPC-related activities.

DISCUSSION

As this was an exploratory study, any findings made must be viewed tentatively. Nevertheless, there are some observations worth noting. First, the disconnect that students perceived between the design of support materials for lecture listening and what some lecturers actually did (cf. Question 1) raises an interesting challenge for those who work in the English-medium context – namely, of whether lecturers amend their style of lecturing to help facilitate student understanding or if EAP teachers should help prepare students for “whatever may come.” Secondly, the opportunity for re-negotiation of learning strategies should be addressed, especially as this may be the first time students have attempted to direct their own learning, and an opportunity to learn from things that do not appear to work is important. As noted in the findings related to Question 1, there were instances where participants attempted to retool strategies so that there could be some possibility of achievement. However, as there was no mechanism within the SPC process to allow for re-negotiation of goals or strategies, there may have been a sense in which the potential to perceive progress on the part of the participants was hindered.

The most important observation from this study, however, may be related to the findings related to Question 3. It is difficult to overlook the fact that the two participants who had the most negative self-perceptions of progress in the SPC process are also those who appeared to spend the least amount of effort preparing for it. As this is probably the first time students in a Chinese context have encountered a style of study alien to what they have experienced before, the teacher's or tutor's role is crucially important. The ideas of Littlewood (1999) are particularly salient here. He suggests that East Asian learners are likely to react positively to “reactive” autonomy, or situations in which learners do not create or set their own directions for learning, “but, once a direction has been initiated, enables learners to organize their resources autonomously in order to reach a goal” (p. 75). Practically speaking, a teacher may give some guidance on strategies and resources that learners could use for improving language skills or fulfilling a certain piece of coursework, but it is up to the learner to decide which resources and strategies to use and how to use them. This could be a goal in itself, or it could be a first step on the way to encouraging a more “proactive” student autonomy, where the student can actually take full responsibility for his/her learning, as stated in Littlewood (1999, p. 75).

The greatest value of this exploratory study may be not so much the observations that are gained directly from it, but rather the directions for future research based on those observations. For example, in the institution where this study occurred, the first year is a “preparation year,” in which it is hoped learners will gain both the language skills and the study skills needed for future studies. Therefore, longitudinal studies which seek to track the extent to which students adopt and incorporate recommended study strategies, of which the SPC is part, would be useful. Furthermore, as China continues to develop, it would also be useful to track learners' reactions to the SPC program in future years, to see if it continues to be a novel approach to learning which must be adjusted to. This would give some indication of what progress is being made regarding innovation in the Chinese education system. Finally, since there is a suggestion in this study that the role of preparation for undertaking programs of autonomous learning (like the SPC) are important, which is supported by the ideas of researchers like Littlewood (1999), it may be useful to examine various types of teacher/tutor intervention, to see what effect they have on the development of learner autonomy, especially reactive autonomy.

Conclusion

The challenge of promoting learner autonomy in Asian contexts is a continuing one, especially as more and more Western learning institutions establish campuses in Asian countries. This exploratory study was done to examine how students adjusted to a part of the first-year program at an English-medium university in China, designed to promote the use of learning contracts as a means of encouraging learner autonomy. In this study, it was found that participants perceived some aspects of the program difficult to adjust to. More importantly, the fact that participants who spent the least time preparing for the program also had the most negative self-perceptions of progress suggests that programs promoting autonomous learning may need an element of active preparation in order to be successful. Consequently, and most importantly, it appears that, as a result of this study, further research in the area of tracking the development of autonomous learning is well warranted. It is hoped that the observations noted in this study will encourage further research in this field.

The Author

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APPENDIX A

PREPARATION WORK FOR STUDY PLAN

	Circle Dot	**Triangle**	**Circle**	**Square**	**Triangle Dot**
Time Spent on Study Plan Contract (SPC)	1+ hrs.	1½ - 2 hrs.	3 hrs.	2 hrs.	3-4 hrs.
Consultation w/Tutor?	No	No	Yes, in Tutorial	Yes, w/ Writing & Oral Tutors	Yes
Anticipated Time for SPC Tasks	1 1¼ hrs/wk	2 -3 hrs/wk	7½ hrs/wk	7½ hrs/wk	8 -9 hrs/wk

Average time spent in Study Plan Contract tasks: 5-6 hours/week.

APPENDIX B

TASKS DONE IN FULFILLMENT OF STUDY PLAN CONTRACT

Circle Dot	Triangle	Circle	Square	Triangle Dot
List. − Y Spkg. − Y S.S. − Y	List. − Y Spkg. − N S.S. − Y	List. − Y Spkg. − Y S.S. − Y	List. − Y Spkg. − Y S.S. − Y	List. − Y Spkg. − Y S.S. − Y
List. − Y Spkg. − Y S.S. − Y	List. − N Spkg. − N S.S. − Y	List. − Y Spkg. − Y S.S. − Y	List. − Y Spkg. − Y S.S. − Y	List. − Y Spkg. − Y S.S. − N
List. − N Spkg. − N S.S. − N	List. − Y Spkg. − Y S.S. − Y	List. − Y Spkg. − Y S.S. − Y	List. − Y Spkg. − Y S.S. − Y	List. − Y Spkg. − Y S.S. − N

Note. Each cell indicates whether tasks were done in each of the target skill areas in the week prior to the interview. For the third interview, it includes activities done during the Spring Festival holiday period.

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANTS SELF-ASSESSMENTS OF PROGRESS

Circle Dot	Triangle	Circle	Square	Triangle Dot
List. − Y Spkg. − US S.S. − US	List. − N Spkg. − N S.S. − Y	List. − Y Spkg. − N S.S. − Y	List. − Y Spkg. −Y S.S. − Y	List. − Y Spkg. −Y List. − Y

Y = yes; N= no; US = unsure.

Japanese-English Language Mixing: Significant Patterns from a Case Study

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Abstract

This paper describes a case study of the Japanese-English language mixing of a Japanese native speaker and an English native speaker, in a Japanese setting. The data collected was restricted to conversations between these two speakers, one of whom was the author. The analysis of this data attempted to employ three frameworks, to look at the language mixing at the level of sentence structure, the level of discourse and the level of society. It was found that no single framework could capture the complex nature of mixed-nationality-pair bilingual interaction intra-sentential code-switching seems to be constrained by both degrees of equivalence and degree of L2 ability; non-balanced bilinguals seem to become aware of and take advantage the discoursal features of their L2 which their L1 does not possess; mixed-nationality-pair, non-balanced bilinguals seem to use language mixing not just to express support and solidarity but also difference and distance from each other; and language mixing seems to assist rather than deter L2 acquisition.

Introduction and Overview

The purpose of this study is to throw light upon the language mixing behavior of the author and his friend when they communicate with each other. Specifically, key questions will be asked of this behavior, as follows: At the level of sentence structure, we will ask what constitutes the linguistic features. At the level of discourse, we will ask what constitutes the discoursal features. At the level of society, we will ask what constitutes the pragmatic, socio-linguistic features. Applicable to each of these levels, a further set of questions will be posed:

- What language choices do the participants have available to them, or in other words what resources and constraints affect their language choices?
- What choices do they make?
- Why do they make these choices?

This paper proposes to draw the answers to these questions from the research data by employing particular frameworks already tested in the research literature, each being aimed at a particular level of analysis. Hence, Poplack's (2000) typology of code-switching will be applied at the level of sentence structure, Fotos' (2001) framework of the discoursal functions of language mixing will be applied at the level of discourse, and Blom and Gumperz's (2000) analysis of social constraints govern-ing interpersonal relationships, will be applied at the level of society. We will look at these frameworks in more detail in the review of literature below. At the same time, we will take recognition of the setting-specific nature of the studies which produced the above framework, and hence beware of the potential difficulties of applying them in whole to the setting of this study, which itself has a potentially unique combination of elements. Thus, the study will draw contrasts as well as comparisons. Finally, we will attempt to draw threads connecting the three levels of analysis.

The justification of this study is provided by the apparent absence of any published study of language mixing in a context of the current type: a native English speaker and a native Japanese speaker, in Japan, and in an informal context (i.e., not in a classroom or work context). This study may be beneficial considering the growing number of relationships between such speakers resulting in children (Noguchi, 2001, p. 236) who then may be influenced by the code-switching behavior of their parents, such that it establishes language norms for them (see Romaine, 1995, p. 179).

Literature Review

DEFINING KEY TERMS

Language Mixing

For the purpose of this study we will define *language mixing* as an umbrella term referring to the use of two or more languages, either at morpheme, word, phrase, clause or sentence level, within the same conversation. This broad definition is designed to incorporate *code-switching* (hereafter referred to as *CS*) as well as *borrowing*.

Code-Switching

CS will be defined as “the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or sub-systems” (John J. Gumperz, as cited in Romaine, 1995, p. 121). It will be seen as including *extra-sentential switching* (the inclusion of tags or discourse particles of Language X before, after, between, and syntactically unconnected to, clauses of Language Y), *inter-sentential switching* (switching between clauses and sentences), and *intra-sentential switching* (switching between phrases, words and morphemes) (Slatyer, 2000, p. 14).

Borrowing

Borrowing will be defined as the inclusion in a string of speech in Language X, of Language Y items which “despite their etymology, function morphologically and syntactically as though they were” (Poplack, 2000, p. 221) Language X items. This is also known as *nonce borrowing* (Romaine, 1995, p. 153), when distinguished from the regular and integrated use of foreign words by monolingual members of a speech community.

Such foreign words are often referred to as *loanwords* (Romaine, 1995, p. 56).

Examples in the monolingual Japanese community are *green peas* (English *peas*), and *getto suru* (English *get*, though limited to the *obtain* sense of the word).

POPLACK'S FRAMEWORK

Poplack's study of the CS behavior of Spanish-English bilinguals in the Puerto Rican community in New York has been recognized as a seminal work in the study of language mixing at the level of structure (see Jacobson, 1998). In particular it represents a ground-breaking search for universal grammatical constraints on CS behavior, and also, according to Poplack (2000) herself:

> . . . a first attempt to delineate . . . what has turned out to be the fundamental distinction in language mixing: that between code-switching and borrowing. (p. 221)

Based on her data, Poplack proposed two universal constraints: the *free morpheme constraint* and the *equivalence constraint*. The *free morpheme constraint* states that “codes may be switched after any constituent in discourse provided that constituent is not a bound morpheme” (Poplack, 2000, p. 227). However, this constraint does not apply at the phonological level, but rather at the morphological and syntactical levels of the constituents. Here is a Japanese-English item which would be ruled out by this constraint:

(1) talk-*eiru*
(is talking)

The *equivalence constraint* states that CS will "tend to occur at points in discourse where juxtaposition of L1 and L2 elements does not violate a syntactic rule of either language" (Poplack, 2000, p. 228). Thus in the case of Japanese-English language mixing, non-permissible CS points would be between object and verb, and between the preposition and noun of a prepositional phrase. English is a SVO language, whereas Japanese is SOV; meanwhile, English prepositions, as the name denotes, precede the noun or noun phrase they govern, whereas, Japanese prepositions would be more accurately termed postpositions, since they follow the noun or noun phrase they govern. Hence the following items would break the *equivalence constraint*:

(2) **kare ga tabemono* ate
(he ate the food)
(3) **kare ga tabeta* the food
(he ate the food)

Likewise, the following items would violate the constraint, which maintain the same semantic significance as examples (2)and (3):

(4) **kare ga* the food *tabeta*
(5) **kare ga* ate *tabemono*

In contrast, switches at the subject-complement site would be permitted, as would switches at the adjective-noun site, since both languages follow the same word order in these respects.

FOTOS' FRAMEWORK

Fotos (2001) attempted to show how CS is used as a L2 learning strategy by Japanese EFL learners. In order to do so, she attempted to sort CS items into seven categories of discoursal functions. Fotos' results (shown here as percentages of item frequency) showed that of the above function categories, (2) emphasis had the highest representation in the data (25%), followed, in decreasing frequency, by (1) emphasis of the topic (22%), (5) separating personal feelings from factual or objective material (14%), (3) clarification (8%), (4) framing discourse and attracting attention (8%), (6) indicating that a repair of the preceding utterance will be made (7%), and (8) fillers (6%).

BLOM AND GUMPERZ'S FRAMEWORK

Blom and Gumperz's (2000) conducted a study of the language-mixing behavior of an isolated local community in northern Norway, who mixed a regional dialect with one of the standard Norwegian dialects. The study was based on the hypothesis that “social relationships act as intervening variables between linguistic structures and their realization in speech” (p. 111); in other words, the assumption that social meaning is conveyed through language choice.

According to their theory, communication is seen as a two-step process, the second step of which involves “turning referential meanings into sentences” (p. 124): the speaker relates their knowledge of linguistic repertoire, culture, and social structure to the contextual constraints of setting, social situation, and social event(each stage emerging from the previous, and successively more complex). Thus, establishing these aspects of any utterance enables the researcher to determine its social significance (see p. 123).

Narrowing their focus on the factors influencing alternations in language choice, Blom and Gumperz analyze participants' switching from the one dialect to the other. They classify such switching as either situational switching or metaphorical switching, and suggest that the linguistic clues represented by the switching, signify changes in the participants' “definition of the social event” (p.126). Situational switching occurs when there are “clear changes in the participants' definition of each other's rights and obligations” (p. 126). Metaphorical switching, on the other hand, "relates to particular kinds of topics or subject matter rather than to change in social situation" (p. 127) and is characteristic of situations which enable “the enactment of two or more different relationships among the same set of individuals” (p. 127).

The results of Blom and Gumperz's study showed that although the community was mainly homogenous, there was still constant switching between the native dialect and the national standard. Using their framework (as outlined above), the authors were able to reveal the independent variables of situation, topic, and role-relationship, as embodied in their use of the concepts setting, social situation, and social event (see Blom & Gumperz, 2000, p. 135). For example, a group of students from the local community studying at a non-local university were found to switch both situationally and metaphorically, reflecting their independence from the local community and their own in-group solidarity, and also their intellectual pursuits (they switched to the standard dialect to show their “status as an intellectual”). Further, Blom and Gumperz note that the use of both dialects by this group showed less of a distinction between them, as opposed to their use by the purely local community members (p. 133). This would suggest that there was a greater frequency of CS and borrowing in the students' speech, and it could further be argued that increasing frequency in these behaviors reflects a desire to create a new language norm for a particular group whose members do not see themselves as dominant in or socially tied to one particular language or dialect.

METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS

The participants in this study were the author (Hamish) and his friend (Miki). Hamish (31 years old) is a native English speaker from the UK, but had been living in Japan for six years and had achieved a high proficiency in Japanese (he had obtained Level 2 in the Japanese Language Proficiency Test) mainly via self-study in a naturalistic setting. He had been working in Japan as an EFL teacher. Miki (29 years old) is a native Japanese speaker and had achieved a high proficiency in English (she had obtained a score of 740 in the TOEIC test) through a combination of classroom learning and spending ten months living and working in Canada in 2001. Hamish and Miki had been friends for eight months.

DATA COLLECTION

The data consists of two conversations between the participants, totaling 45 minutes in duration. The brevity of the conversation sample reduces validity, in the sense of generalizability to all the conversing between the participants, and also in reliability. However, such brevity reflected the time constraints upon the research project. The first conversation was recorded while the participants were driving from their home to the city of Kobe for a vacation. The second conversation was recorded while they were eating dinner at the author's house. Both recordings were then tape-scripted by the author. To reduce the vulnerability to the Hawthorne Effect, the author started using his voice recorder in similar conversations between the participants prior to the two conversations used in this study. Another potential danger to reliability of the study is the author's inclusion of himself in the participant group. While this may cause bias and lack of objectivity, the benefit is primarily the access given to the actual situation in which the participants' language mixing occurs, and also the increased knowledge of the background factors (social and linguistic) of that language mixing.

DATA ANALYSIS

As suggested above, three frameworks were used to analyze the data. First, at the structural level, the turns of the tape-scripted conversations were divided into three categories: Japanese, English, and Japanese-English. Then, the mixed language turns were further analyzed for which types of language mixing they contained, using the following four categories: intra-sentential CS, inter-sentential CS, extra- sentential CS, and borrowing (see section 2.2 above for criteria for determining the type of language mixing). Using an Excel worksheet, frequency percentages for each type of language mixing were calculated, both per speaker and per language and direction of change, and overall.

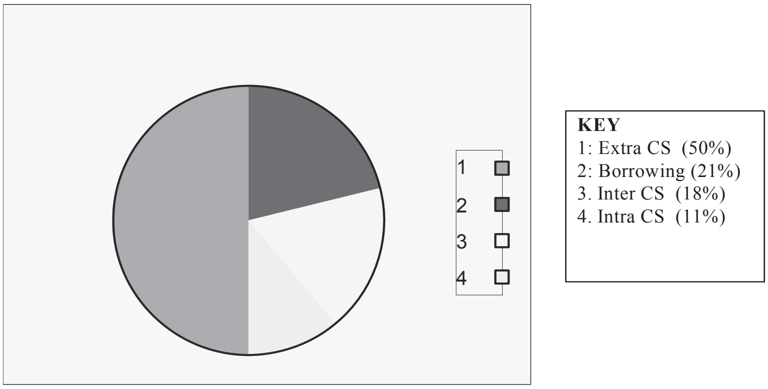
Next, at the level of discourse, the mixed language turns were assigned to the following seven categories: (a) emphasis of the topic, (b) emphasis, (c) clarification, (d) framing discourse and attracting attention, (e) separating personal feelings from factual or objective material, (f) indicating that a repair of the preceding utterance will be made, (g) fillers, and (h) compensating for lack of L2 proficiency. This process was achieved by looking at the surrounding discourse, as well as by recall by the participants of the conversation when it took place.

Finally, at the level of society, the author assessed the data as a whole in the light of the social and linguistic characteristics of the setting, the participants, and the conversation topics. He then attempted to assign social meaning to the instances of language mixing.

Results and Discussion

AT THE LEVEL OF STRUCTURE

Figure 1. Proportions of LM Types in the Data



The data in Figure 1 confirms the author's prediction that frequency of extra-sentential CS would be high, while that of intra-sentential CS relatively low. In fact, ninety percent of this extra-sentential CS was using Japanese tags, for example: *desho*, *dayo*, *yo*, *un*, *are?*, *tekoto*, *ne*, *ja*, *datte sa*, *hora*, *demo*, *dakke*, *nantoiu*, *nandarone* and *etone*. Moreover, it was practiced equally by both speakers, despite the predominance of Japanese tags.

Further confirmed is the high frequency of borrowing, relative to inter- and intra-sentential CS. Not mentioned so faris the fate of the equivalence constraint. The data in general revealed only two instances of intra-sentential CS which violated that constraint (Japanese words are in italics; English translation follows in brackets):

(10) (Miki/138) no...fish *minchi o de* deep fry...deep fry...fry...fish *minchi*...it's so: good (no...you deep fry fish mince...deep fry...fry fish mince...it's so good)

(11) (M/256) */dakara/ mi ga- are wa tsuna o* dip in...dip *janai*...soak in oil *desho*? *Vegi* oil *desho*? (so the taste...they make that by dipping...no, soaking

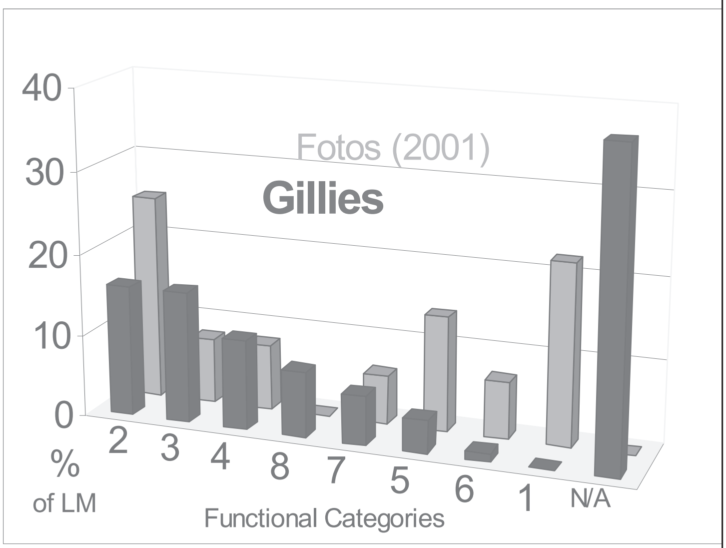
tuna in oil, right? vegetable oil, right?)

In both turn (10) and turn (11), the speaker places an English verb after a Japanese object.

The general lack, in the data, of violations to the equivalence constraint has two implications. First, it suggests that even a language pair of grammatically distant languages does not necessarily produce language mixing that violates either of the two grammatical codes. It would seem instead that in following those grammatical code constraints, the speakers employ mixing strategies which avoid code conflict, i.e., extra-sentential CS and borrowing. Second, and perhaps alternatively, the L1 dominance of the speakers constrains them from attempting the more linguistically taxing strategy of intra-sentential CS.

AT THE LEVEL OF DISCOURSE

Figure 3. Proportions of LM per Functional Category in Comparison with Fotos (2001)



Functional Category Key

1. Emphasis of the topic
2. Emphasis
3. Clarification
4. Framing discourse and attract ing attention
5. Separating personal feelings from factual or objective material
6. Indicating that a repair of the preceding utterance will be made
7. Fillers
8. Compensating for lack of L2 proficiency

The study revealed a major correlation between Fotos' seven categories of discoursal function and those represented in the data. As can been seen in Figure 3, more than 60% of language mixing instances could be accounted for within these categories. The function of Emphasis showed a relatively high frequency (16%), as it did in Fotos' study (25%). However, the functions of clarification and framing discourse/attracting attention (15.6% and 11.4%, respectively), proved to be more frequently fulfilled in the current data, than in Fotos' study (both 8%). This may be explained by the difference in L1 between the participants in the current study, which implies a greater challenge in communicating with each other, and hence a greater need to clarify, by repeating or elaborating messages in either L1 or L2, and also a greater need to guide and position the listener, by framing and attracting attention to new information especially. Below are examples of extracts from the discourse featuring the latter two functions:

(12) (M/304) *toka* you can set timer *desho*? (You can also set the timer, right?)
(Hamish/305) timer?
(M/306) *un* (Yeah)
(H/307) in the morning *tekoto*? (You mean in the morning?)
(M/308) *un* (Yeah)

Extract (12) relates to a discussion as to how Hamish can save time using his rice cooker by employing its timer function, so that when he returns from work in the evening, the rice is already cooked. In line 304, Miki uses the tag *desho* to check that Hamish understands her message about the timer function, while in line 307, Hamish uses the tag *tekoto* to check that he has correctly understood the implications of Miki's message.

(13) (M/50) in Awajishima...I mean...Awajishima residents...
(H/51) yeah
(M/52) ...can also have the Kobe number plate
(H/53) *nande*? (Why?)
(M/54) Hyogoken has Kobe *to*Himeji they only have two... (Hyogoken has Kobe and Himeji, they only have two...)
(H/55) yeah
(M/56) ...kinds of number plate *ne*? (...kinds of number plate, you see?)
(H/57) yeah
(M/58) *de*...Awajishima is eastern than Himeji *dakara* (and Awajishima is eastern than Himeji, so...)
(H/59) ahh
(M/60) *dakara Kobe namba*...and *Kobe namba* is one of the popular number plates in Japan (...so the Kobe number plate...and the Kobe number plate is one of the popular number plates in Japan)

Extract (13) relates to an explanation by Miki as to the existence of two kinds of number plate in the single prefecture of Hyogoken, while most prefectures in Japan only have one kind. This discussion was prompted by the setting of the conversation: a drive to Kobe, passing through Awajishima. In line 56, Miki uses *ne* to check for Hamish's understanding, and on receiving a positive response from him, indicates a progression in the explanation, using the discourse marker *de*, at the start of line 58. Miki then indicates the destination of the explanation, the fact that Awajishima residents have Kobe number plates, by using the discourse marker *dakara*. These instances show how Miki, while attempting to make the contents of her message clear by using her listener's L1, still employs discourse markers from her own L1 to frame the successive sequences of her message.

Finally, the author's inclusion of the function of compensating for lack of L2 proficiency, was confirmed as having a degree of significance in the data, accounting for 8% of language mixing. This can be connected with the L1 dominance of the participants.

Table 1. Language Mixing by Other Discoursal Function Categories Suggested by the Data, and Type of Language Mixing

OTHER DISCOURSAL FUNCTIONS SUGGESTED BY THE DATA	EXTRA-SENTENTIAL CS	INTER-SENTENTIAL CS	INTRA-SENTENTIAL CS	BORROWING	TOTAL	% of total language mixes
(1) Language Preference	0	2	2	16	20	11.9760479
(2) L2 Speech planning via vocalised L1	0	0	9	0	9	5.38922156
(3) Accommodation of fellow interlocutor	0	1	1	3	5	2.99401198
(4) Quoting	0	1	0	1	2	1.19760479
(5) Agreement followed by new info	0	1	0	0	1	0.5988024
				TOTAL:	**37**	**22.1556886**
NON-DISCOURSAL FUNCTIONS SUGGESTED BY THE DATA	**EXTRA-SENTENTIAL CS**	**INTER-SENTENTIAL CS**	**INTRA-SENTENTIAL CS**	**BORROWING**	**TOTAL**	**% of total language mixes**
(1) Triggering	0	4	0	2	6	3.59281437
(2) Syntactical	0	0	1	0	1	0.5988024
(3) Interference				2	2	1.19760479
				TOTAL:	**9**	**5.38922156**
LM UNASSIGNED FUNCTIONALLY	8	9	0	0	**17**	**10.1796407**

However, as implied above, a significant minority of language mixing could not be assigned to the original eight function categories. In response to this, the author attempted to distill further categories to account for the remaining instances of language mixing, including non-discoursal categories which relate to the psycholinguistic influences on language mixing. Table 1 shows these categories, and also reveals that 10% of the language-mixing instances were unable to be usefully or reliably assigned to a particular category. The two most significant categories amongst these are language preference and L2 speech planning via vocalized L1. Language preference was able to be broken down further into the following sub-types: efficiency, phonology, and humor. The following turn is an example of the efficiency sub-type:

(14) (H/205) *tekotowa* they *moratta*?(you mean they received it?)

Turn (14) is indicative of how Hamish prefers Japanese due to its economical use of words. After uttering the subject *they*, he has a choice between completing the utterance with an English verb and pronominal object, or with a Japanese verb which does not require an object which is already understood by the listener (Japanese is a pro-drop language). Hence Hamish selects the more efficient Japanese completion.

The category of L2 speech planning via vocalized L1 is best explained via an example from the data:

(15) (M/184) *de...Tsunachou no chouchou*...mayor of Tsuna Town
(andthe mayor of Tsuna Town...mayor of Tsuna Town)
(H/185) yeah
(M/186) suggest to residents...
(H/187) yeah
(M/188) to get golden bar

In line 184, there is a clear repetition in English of the initial lone Japanese sentence head. On inquiring of Miki as to why she began what was otherwise an English message, in this way, she explained that she often vocalizes her intended message, or the head of it, in her L1 as a means of planning its conversion into her L2. Hence, she produces what may be classified as an intra-sentential code-switch in the process.

AT THE LEVEL OF SOCIETY

Prior to the study, we predicted that the participants may be creating their own group norms for language choice due to the lack of established group norms for bilingual communication. The data shown in Table 4 support this, showing how the participants follow similar frequencies of the four basic options of language choice. This may also reflect their roughly similar L2 ability, and their similar roles as L2 learners. Moreover it supports Auer's (2000, p. 183) hypothesis that “frequency of language alternation is most often similar for members of the same interactional network.”

Table 2. Breakdown of Language Choices by Participant

Hamish (% of turns)	*Language choice*	Miki (% of turns)
44	L1	41
32	L2	31
13	L1>L2	15
11	L2>L1	13

We further predicted that topic may be influential on the language choices made by the speakers, especially due to the L1 dominance of the participants, and this will be represented by metaphorical switching. However, the current data failed to show topic to be a significant variable, for example, determining the language variety in which the topic is discussed. It must be noted again, though, that the data represent a very minor sample of the participants' conversing, and hence, the range of topics was restricted. The author would like to add, from his own recollection, that he often reverts to his L1 when the topic requires a complex vocabulary, such as academic or political topics. This not only reflects his L1 dominance, but also the naturalistic and informal circumstances in which he has acquired his L2 (see Blom & Gumperz, 2000, p. 119).

Finally, we predicted that the characteristics, both social and linguistic, of the interlocutors may be an important influence on their language choices, due to the difference in L1, the limited linguistic repertoire of their L2, and the circumstances in which their L2 has been acquired. The data in Table 4, showing that both participants favor their L1 in monolingual utterances, would seem to reflect their weaker L2 ability relative to their L1. Indeed, we have noted earlier in this section how the predominance of extrasentential CS and borrowing also reflect limited L2 ability.

However, it is interesting to note that the frequencies for language mixing are similar for both directions, L1 to L2, and vice-versa, and for both participants. Further, a closer look at the figures for borrowing (see Table 1) show that while Miki borrowed significantly more words from her L1 than her L2, Hamish borrowed almost equally from L1 and L2. Reliance on the dominant L1 would have suggested greater frequency of switches in the L2 to L1 direction, as well as greater borrowing from L2.

The difference in the participants' L1 was found to be expressed in terms of personal voice, accommodating the other participant, and seeking L2 assistance from the other participant.

(16) (M/410) well you gonna go to Takamatsu to study(in a low voice) *dakara sa jama shichau kara*
(...so I'll only get in your way)

Turn (16),for example, shows how Miki uses her L1 to hide behind, in combination with low volume, as a linguistic expression of her sense of potential guilt at disrupting Hamish's study by calling upon his assistance to take her to the airport. The fact that her L1 differs from Hamish's serves to make her expression more personal and hidden. It is not surprising that most of such instances were classified as inter-sentential CS, since this type of CS serves to contrast or distinguish the two languages, emphasizing difference. Indeed, we have already seen in Blom & Gumperz's study how intersentential CS was used by local community members to emphasize distinction between community identities.

(17) (M/170) ...the*nannen gurai mae*...about ten years ago the government gave *ichiokuen*...*ichiokuen de* million dollar?
(The...how many years ago...about ten years ago the government gave *ichiokuen*...is *ichiokuen* a million dollar?)

In turn (17), Miki is relying on Hamish's native-speaker ability in her L2, in order to convey her message effectively. However, since she is assuming that Hamish knows the Japanese item *ichiokuen*, and bearing in mind that Hamish is the intended recipient of her message, it would suggest that she has a personal goal of improving her L2 ability and is involving Hamish to assist her in reaching that goal. Indeed, it should be noted that Miki admitted to having sought to be first introduced to Hamish because she wished to have an opportunity to use her English, in a setting where few such opportunities exist. This kind of language support network, though its participants do not share the same L1, resembles the Chinese communities in the UK studied by Wei et al. (2000), since they point out that those communities may form "coalitions, which are effectively networks established for a particular purpose" (p. 199), one of which is to maintain a language not used by the wider community. In Miki's case, that language is English.

CONCLUSIONS

In the course of the current study, we have seen how an analysis of a single sample of language mixing data can be approached successively from the levels of structure, discourse, and society, and yield a more holistic and valid picture of that language mixing, in terms of the participants and the languages: how they interact in terms of language, both potential and realized.

In particular, we may make the following specific claims:

- Methodological: No single framework can capture the complex nature of mixed-nationality-pair bilingual interaction neither its constraints nor its potential.
- Stuctural: Intra-sentential CS seems to be constrained by both degree of equivalence and degree of L2 ability. In addition, Japanese seems to be more naturally employable for extra-sentential CS than English.
- Discoursal: Non-balanced bilinguals seem to become aware of and take advantage of the discoursal features of their L2 which their L1 does not possess.
- Social: Mixed-nationality-pair, non-balanced bilinguals seem to use LM not just to express support and solidarity but also to express difference and distance from each other.
- Educational: LM seems to assist rather than deter L2 acquisition

Finally, based on the results of the current study, we would support the notion that bilinguals, like monolinguals, operate communicatively by making an ongoing series of language choices, such choices being made at different levels of consciousness. These choices can serve a wide variety of functions as well as being motivated both psycholinguistically and sociolinguistically.

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Child-Adult Differences in Auditory Perception and Pronunciation of Korean Consonantal Stops

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ABSTRACT

This is a comparative study examining child-adult differences in the ability to discriminate and pronounce Korean sounds. The study tested the two age groups to determine whether or not there existed any significant difference in their capacity to perceive and articulate distinctive Korean phonemes as used in syllables. A group of 40 monolingual English-speaking subjects who had never been exposed to a foreign language participated in the study. Statistical tests at an alpha level of .05 were used to compare the vector of means of the two groups' auditory discrimination and pronunciation scores. Results from the t-test analyses revealed that there were no significant differences between the two groups in auditory discrimination ($t=1.49$) and oral production skills ($t=.31$). A Pearson product-moment correlation examining the possibility of a relationship between auditory discrimination and pronunciation skills indicated that there was a weak correlation for the two measures for the child group ($r=.37$), but a strong correlation for the adult group ($r=.60$).

INTRODUCTION

For more than four decades, the question of age differences in second or foreign language acquisition has been hotly debated in the linguistic and educational circles (Krashen, 1986; Olson & Samuels, 1973; Oyama, 1976, 1978). The answer to this question is perceived by many to be an important step towards developing a framework from which to generate further research on issues related to language acquisition. Specifically, a better understanding of child-adult differences in second and foreign language acquisition will enable both researchers and educators to recognize the optimal period for bilingual and foreign language education, as well as assist in the development of appropriate types of curricular and instructional approaches, methods, and strategies to teach younger and older learners.

Based on her review of age-related literature available at the time, Larew (1961) recommended without explicit explanation that foreign language be introduced to the learner as early as possible. Since then, a number of theoretical models concerned with second/foreign language development have been proposed. Yet, explicit treatment of this issue from an etiological perspective has remained inadequate as existing theories have tended to be descriptive, based on certain dogmatic concepts, rather than predictive, based on feature-specific proposals.

A fundamental difference between first- and second/foreign language acquisition from a researcher's perspective is one of complexity. While linguists attempting to describe first-language acquisition are mainly interested in "linguistic competence," research investigating the acquisition of a second or foreign language must also deal with "linguistic performance," encompassing a multitude of relevant abilities, including phonology and phonetics. The wide range of levels of competence and performance influenced by age at which the second or foreign language is exposed – onset of second language exposure (OSE) – is a main concern for second or foreign language acquisition researchers.

Over the years, linguists and psychologists have attempted to better understand age differences in second/foreign language acquisition by conducting comparative studies on children and adults (e.g., Asher & Garcia, 1969; Asher & Price, 1967; Ekstrand, 1976, 1978; Fathman, 1975; Krashen, Long, & Scarcella, 1979; Long, 1990; Olson & Samuels, 1973; Oyama, 1976, 1978; Patkowski, 1980, 1990; Scovel, 1988; Seliger, Krashen, & Ladefoged, 1975; Singleton 1989; Snow & Hoefnagel-Hohle, 1977, 1978; Thompson, 1991). What is interesting is that although there has been general consensus among researchers that adults proceed through the early stages of syntactic and morphological development faster than children (e.g., Patkowski, 1980, 1990; Snow & Hoefnage-Hohle, 1977; 1978), the issue of age differences in the development of second or foreign language phonology has remained inconclusive. Irrespective of its pragmatic or functional value in oral communication, second/foreign language phonology seems difficult to dismiss because "accent" is one of the most discernible traits, particularly for older learners developing a second or foreign language: Adults almost always seem to retain the phonetic features of their first language when speaking a second or foreign language (Asher & Garcia, 1969; Fathman, 1975; Krashen et al., 1979; Long, 1990; Oyama, 1978; Seliger, Krashen, & Ladefoged, 1975; Scovel, 1988; Tahta, Wood, & Loewenthal, 1981; Thompson, 1991).

Age-related study on the acquisition of second or foreign language phonology is complicated but interesting, apart from principles implied in linguistic theories of the past. Recent studies have shown that even children can detect mispronounced words in natural running speech (Bernthal, Greenlee, Eblen, & Marking, 1987) supporting the view that misarticulation is a prominent feature of second/foreign language learning that sets younger learners apart from older learners.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study was an attempt to understand the child-adult differences in foreign language phonology from an underlying perspective. That is, there is a myriad of conditions, such as the quality of exposure to linguistic material and the motivation to learn accent-free pronunciation, that can influence the processes. Considering that phonology, particularly pronunciation, is something that most older learners, including teenagers, have little success in bettering though conscious attempts at improvement (attempts which are likely initiated by their awareness of having a foreign accent), socio-environmental explanations seem inadequate in explaining this phenomenon. In addition, maturational constraints linked to a loss of the brain's plasticity as proposed by

Lenneberg (1967) does not provide cumulative and specific evidence for the processes involved in the acquisition; rather it explains the phenomenon based on the nature of the position that there exists age-constraints on eventual second or foreign language phonological attainment.

The purpose of this study was to test child-adult differences in their facility to pronounce foreign sounds by investigating group differences in their ability to discriminate and articulate Korean phonemes as used in syllables, and to determine whether or not pronunciation (or mispronunciation) was related to auditory perception. That is, this study was an attempt to understand the relationship of two relevant phenomena – the input (auditory perception) and the output (pronunciation) – in relation to age with external variables such as the quality and amount of exposure, motivation, attitude, etc. ruled out.

METHODOLOGY

SUBJECTS

A group of 40 subjects, all of who were monolingual native-American English speakers, in two age groups (elementary level and college level) participated in the study. Of the 40, 20 were children between the ages of 6 and 10 (pre-puberty) and the other 20 were adults between the ages of 18 and 22. There were an equal number of males and females for each group.

The minimum age for the child group was set at 6 to prevent possible problems in administering the test, such as the children not fully understanding the instructions or not being able to fully cooperate in completing the test. Since there is disagreement among nativist researchers in regards to when the critical period occurs, four from each age group (two males and two females) were selected for each age level for the child group. The mean age for the child group was 8.0 years.

The 20 adult subjects were selected from various classes in community colleges. University-level students were eliminated from consideration since most universities require a minimum of two years of a high school foreign language for admission. The adult group consisted of four subjects per age level, from 18 to 22. The mean age was 20.0 for the adult group.

Selected subjects were required to undergo a hearing screen test consisting of pure tones at 25 dB Hl (ISO) at 250, 500, 1000, and 2000 Hz to both ears. All randomly selected subjects were certified by an audiologist as having normal hearing. People with cognitive disorders and/or learning disabilities were excluded from consideration in the subject selection.

STIMULI

There were two parts to the test: auditory discrimination and pronunciation. Three pairs of Korean consonantal stops, k, t, p, with varying phonetic features, were considered. The three stops lenis, aspirated, and fortis can be characterized by the following phonetic features.

/ㄱ/, /ㄷ/, /ㅂ/	[-tension, +voice, -aspiration]
/ㅋ/, /ㅌ/, /ㅍ/	[+tension, -voice, +aspiration]
/ㄲ/, /ㄸ/, /ㅃ/	[+tension, -voice, -aspiration]

The above consonantal stops exist in English as /k/, /t/, and /p/ with variations in sound depending on its position in a syllable or morpheme. Thus, even though the phonemes /k/, /t/, and /p/ occur in English as [k], [K^h], [t], [t^h], [p], and [p^h], they are allophones of the phonemes /k/, /t/, /p/, respectively. In fact, all three stops also occur as glottalized allophones when preceded by the sibilant, *s*, as in *skate*, *stick*, and *spot*. The different phonetic values of the stops, however, are not normally recognized by English speakers as they appear as allophones. Hence, the variations are considered to be phonetic in English. In Korean, however, they are phonemically as well as phonetically distinct since phonemic substitution among these lenis, aspirated, and fortis stops would result in morphemic and lexical variation. The stops were suffixed onto the low-central vowel, /a/, high-frontal vowel, /i/ and the mid-back vowel, /o/.

To validate the accuracy of the tape-recorded sounds, the test was administered to four native speakers of Korean prior to its use in the field. Any inconsistencies noted from this validation process were corrected by re-recording the portions of the test identified as questionable.

PROCEDURE

Prior to actual administration of the test, all subjects were provided an opportunity to do a short practice test to ascertain that they fully understood the instructions, and that they were fully capable of completing the test. The randomly selected subjects, none of whom were previously exposed to a foreign language, were asked to listen to a recording of 27 syllables comprising the distinctive consonantal stops in Korean, varying in voice, tension, and aspiration. These 27 items were tape-recorded in a linguistic laboratory by a native male speaker of Korean. Following each model pronunciation, there was a three-second pause for the subjects to enunciate the item that had just been articulated. The same items were repeated followed by three choices uttered by a native female Korean speaker. (The use of a male and a female was designed to provide a clear distinction in the choices from the model pronunciations). One of the choices was identical to the model pronunciation and the other two were either lenis, aspirated, or fortis counterparts of the model item. Since the focus of attention was on the consonantal stops, all choices for a particular item contained the same vowel as the one used in the model pronunciation.

RESULTS

Two native speakers of Korean trained in phonetics reviewed the collected data. The reviewers identified the number of accurate pronunciations, as well as correct responses for the auditory discrimination portion of the test. Since there were a total of 27 items, it was possible to receive 27 points on the auditory perception test and 27 points on the pronunciation test. Unlike the auditory perception test, in which the subjects' responses could be scored objectively based on validation previously considered, the results obtained from the pronunciation test required validation from the two judges. An examination of the ratings provided by the judges revealed that for the child group, they correlated 16 out of 20 times (80%) and for the adult group, 17 out of 20 times (85%).

A t-test was used to examine whether or not the discrepancy of the scores from the two judges (inter-rater reliability) for the pronunciation portion of the test was statistically significant. The analysis revealed that there was no significant statistical difference in the way the judges rated the two groups at the alpha level of .05: the observed t-values were .15 and .11 for the child group and the adult group, respectively, with a critical value of 2.04 (see Table 1).

The pronunciation scores ranged from 19 to 26 (M 22.8; SD 2.12, Rater 1 and M 22.9, SD 2.10, Rater 2) for the child group and from 13 to 27 (M 22.6; SD 4.20, Rater 1 and M 22.45, SD 4.41, Rater 2) for the adult group (see Table 1). Thus, the range was greater for the adult group.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviation of Pronunciation Scores

	Rater 1		Rater 2	
	M	SD	M	SD
Child Group	22.8	2.12	22.9	2.10
Adult Group	22.6	4.20	22.45	4.41

A t-test comparing the pronunciation scores of the two groups revealed that there was no significant statistical difference between the two in their ability to pronounce the sounds heard on tape (see Table 2).

Table 2. Group Difference in Pronunciation

T	Level of Significance	Critical Value
.31	.05	2.04

As for the auditory discrimination test, the number of correct choices was identified and recorded for each subject based on the answer key previously developed. The scoring for the auditory portion of the test was objective since the correct response was established and validated by native speakers of Korean prior to administration. Auditory perception scores ranged from 9 to 26 (M 13.65, SD 4.46) for the child group and from 9 to 20 (M 15.45, SD 3.05) for the adult group. Although the mean score for the adult group was almost two points higher than that of the child group (13.65 to 15.45), an analysis using the t-test to compare the scores received by the two groups revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between the child group and the adult group in auditory discrimination scores at the .05 level (t=1.49 at a critical value of 2.04) (see Table 3).

Table 3. Group Difference in Auditory Discrimination Scores

	M	SD
Child Group	13.65	4.46
Adult Group	15.45	3.05

A Pearson product-moment correlation was used to measure the strength of association (r^2) between scores obtained from auditory discrimination and pronunciation skills. This examination provided a prediction based on knowledge of one of the scores either the auditory perception score or the pronunciation score. The analysis revealed that there was a relatively weak correlation between the auditory perception scores and the pronunciation scores for the child group ($\underline{r}$=.37) but a strong correlation for the adult group ($\underline{r}$=.60). Thus, it seems those adult subjects who scored high on the auditory discrimination test also scored high on the pronunciation test.

Discussion and Conclusion

The objective of this study was to compare child-adult differences in their ability to discriminate and imitate Korean sounds. Both groups showed more similarities than differences. Specifically, it was observed that scores on production (pronunciation) and reception (listening) for children were not statistically significant or different from those of the adults. Interestingly, both groups received higher scores on pronunciation ($\underline{M}$=22.69) than on auditory discrimination ($\underline{M}$=14.57) skills.

According to Thomas Scovel (1995), "recognition" is how speakers use various paralinguistic and phonetic information to recognize certain features about the sound they hear. This means that after attending to the myriad of acoustic cues, listeners attend to sounds that contain linguistic information. The results of this study suggest that the task of recognizing certain features for eventual production was an easier task compared to the task of differentiating various phonetic features for auditory discrimination. Thus, the question related to the correlational processes involved in production (intake, storage, retrieval, output) remains questionable.

The interference theory postulates that any difference between the "model" sound in a target language and the incorrect "replica" sound is due to negative transfer or interference of the first language on the target language. This postulation assumes that interference errors are caused by fine phonetic differences between the first language and the target language. Thus, language interference is thought to be the basis for causing inaccurate pronunciation on the part of the second or foreign language learner. Contrastively, it is also possible to refute that adults have physiological and developmental advantage over children, that is, that adults have superior control of their vocal apparatus, as well as a greater degree of neuro-motor control compared to children. In addition, having developed the phonology of their native language (English), adults could plausibly be able to transfer their cognitive and meta-cognitive skills to acquiring another language.

Liberman (1957) claimed that auditory perception may not always correspond with the acoustic cue because hearing was influenced by the way the sound is articulated in their first language. The implication of this proposition was that young children possess a superior capacity for discriminating and articulating foreign sounds since they have yet to develop a phonology that could distract them from perceiving sounds accurately. This study provided no evidence to suggest that children possessed distinct advantage over adults.

An important finding from this study was the fact that adults and children differed significantly in the degree to which auditory discrimination and pronunciation skills were related. Results indicated that whereas there was a weak correlation between reception and production skills for children ($\underline{r}$=.37), there was a significant correlation between the two skills for adults ($\underline{r}$=.60); that is, adults who scored high on auditory discrimination scored high on pronunciation, and those who scored low on reception scored low on oral production.

The results from this study seem to indicate that children possess no distinct advantage over adults in measures of auditory discrimination and oral production skills of Korean phonemes, and that how a word is pronounced may not necessarily be related to how the sounds are perceived, at least during the onset of second language exposure, for younger learners. The study suggests that adults have the capacity to acquire second language phonology, if exposure to a second language results in allowing the adult learners to exert more control over the second language acquisition processes. Thus, it is recommended that longer listening comprehension or silent period be provided for college students and adult learners vis-a-vis elementary-aged students of Korean to facilitate early production and speech emergence.

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The Classroom as a Living Organism: A Metaphor for the Adult Learning Environment

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ABSTRACT

Traditional education has viewed the student as an empty vessel waiting to be filled with knowledge. Unfortunately, knowledge cannot be poured into the mind of the student as one might pour water into a glass, but instead knowledge is learned, and that is best done in an interactive environment similar to that of a living organism. In this vein, the following paper will discuss the dynamics of the adult learning environment using the metaphor of a living organism and focus on the growth within the classroom, learning principles that foster growth, and examples of the application of this instructional approach.

INTRODUCTION

The Gage Canadian Dictionary states that an organism is "a complex structure made of related parts that work together and are dependent on each other and on the whole structure." This could certainly describe a functioning adult learning environment, but I would like to go further and suggest that the classroom resembles a living organism in that it adapts to a changing environment and has the capacity for growth.

How does an educator facilitate the organic nature of the learning environment? The instructor supplies the seed (the vision and preparation) that germinates on contact with the class. They then supply learning tissue to help develop the individual roles of the various participants so they may better adapt to a growing organic form. As with all seeds on germination, the general form and substance of the organism is predetermined, but the quality is driven interactively during the actual learning experience. All contribute to the energy and development of the learning organism, and all walk away with the experience of having been apart of a living exercise.

THE SEED: PREPARATION AND VISION

The instructor should be prepared before the learning experience begins. This cannot be over-emphasized. The more prepared and comfortable the instructor is for implementing change, the more available alternatives are for modifying "situations" as the need arises. There will be room for on-the-spot improvisation and adaptation, but the experience is stronger and more valuable if these are merely back-up strategies. Before beginning, try to be as clear as possible about your expectations, goals, styles of instruction, key points and themes to be covered, timetable milestones, and areas of flexibility (be prepared with a wide array of alternatives in styles of instruction to ensure greatest flexibility).

Try to learn as much as possible about your students their motivation, general characteristics, unique characteristics or needs of the group, and unique characteristics or needs of specific students. Consider the following: general layout of the learning environment, unique qualities of the learning environment, restrictions of the learning environment, and additional available resources that may be utilized. What contractual restrictions and requirements need to be considered and met? Given this information, what do you consider your best probable scenario and your worst probable scenario (realize that the learning experience will be somewhere in-between)? Do whatever can be done to prepare for the unknown.

Armed with this information, I usually develop a general outline for the program, possible methodology, and overall goals with approximate measures of achievement that I deliver prior to, or at, our first meeting. After the initial class, I develop a more complete curriculum which I make available to students prior to the next class. It is better to be more general initially than commit to a rigid program that simply doesn't match the needs or abilities of your students.

A classic example is committing to support texts or audio-visual aids before carefully considering the needs and abilities of the student. When the two clearly don't match, the instructor often attempts to adjust the needs and abilities of the students to match the support material. This is never a very effective strategy. It is far more effective to initially modify your choice of support material to match the specific needs and abilities of the students. Remember that the initial impression you give will set the tone for the course and will either allow you the comfort of coasting on the enthusiasm of the students or cause you to continually fight against a tide of indifference or antagonism.

The Tissue: The Structure of the Class and the Role of the Instructor

The instructor and students are the tissue of the learning organism. One of the strongest assets the instructor has in the learning environment is a clear assessment of the structure and strengths of the class. What is the optimum structure for interaction? Where are the strengths and weaknesses? Who interacts best with whom, and who interacts poorly? What is the pattern of the group, and how adaptable is this structure to change? Is the initial pattern of the group a desirable one? If so, then how can it be enhanced, and if not, how can it be changed into a more productive form?

In the organic classroom, the instructor plays two separate roles: (a) the class instructor developing and guiding the form of the learning experience and (b) a constant observer of the dynamics of the classroom environment. Both roles are vital if this instructional style is to be successful. In the class instructor role, the instructor must present themselves and their over-all expectations and goals in the first few minutes of the class. In the role of observer, they must carefully observe the reaction of the students, constantly looking for patterns and changing patterns.

The instructor must learn about the group and try to tie the course material to student interests and needs. The method of instruction is inquiry and development.

The instructor should try to start a flow and then blend this with the agenda presented by the group, uniting goals and desires. There should be instructor interplay with the group, building on individual strengths and weakness, and individual similarities and differences. Techniques of interaction include probing and developing questions, transference of energy and response, and paraphrasing of ideas to give direction towards the desired form.

It is valuable for the instructor to have a brief outline guide to help them remain true to their most important points and themes, but this should be general and limited in scope to allow for variation in presentation of the key themes. By having a simple agenda initially and explaining this to the group, the instructor will more likely find group support and a sense of both commitment and cooperation in meeting general goals.

Another suggestion is for the instructor to present themselves as naturally as they can and in a friendly manner. They should talk to students with respect, as they would talk to a friend or a peer. The more the learning interaction resembles a personal conversation, the more it can become a blending of minds into a functioning unit of learning. The instructor should be respectful and sensitive at appropriate times. This does not diminish their authority. Respect is more real when it is earned through mutual respect rather than assumed, coerced, or imposed. As Ford (1992, p. 128) put it, "Of all the . . . principles for motivating humans, perhaps the most important is this: Always treat people with respect." The instructor should remember to move around, be expressive, share a limited amount of themselves on a personal level, and vary from their own agenda.

As an observer, the instructor is constantly looking for patterns of interplay. These patterns can be used to adjust energy and topic flow. During the learning experience there are always crucial potential moments of learning that the instructor should make use of. At other times, they must be willing to either develop or drop a sensitive subject. Though the instructor may appear to relinquish their position of control, in reality, they should never abdicate authority and control.

It is interesting to note that when an instructor makes a very obvious mistake and exposes their vulnerability to the class, this is really their opportunity for greatest control. At this time, the instructor usually has the full attention of the class; they are off-guard and anticipating a reaction from the instructor to the situation. Whatever the instructor says or does will be the strongest impression left in the students' minds from that class. Like a good comedian, the alert instructor always has a strong comeback. This is the instructor's greatest instructional opportunity; from it they can walk away with the impression of wisdom, rather than incompetence.

The Growth: Expanding Knowledge and Ability

Growth in the organic classroom depends on principles common in education psychology generally. These principles help the instructor better understand the dynamics of the learning environment emphasizing how the student learns, how the student is motivated, and group dynamics.

LEARNING THEORY

> Behavioral theories stress such environmental factors as the arrangement of stimuli and the consequences (reinforcements, punishments) of given

> behaviors. . . . Cognitive theories acknowledge the role of environmental conditions as facilitators of learning. (Schunk, 1991, p. 8)

There are two main groups of thought on general learning theory, behavioral and cognitive. Behaviorists believe that learning comes from behavior potential, expectancy, reinforcement value, and psychological situation. Social cognitive theory also believes in the value of the learning environment, but sees the environment as a resource and incentive for learning only and that the desire and act of learning is internally generated. Cognitive theory considers cognitive development as a foundation for learning that progressively develops with time and individual growth, stage by stage. One can argue extensively, as some do, about whether the actual learning is internally or externally generated, but fortunately, the strategy for learning is essentially the same. That is a merger of external stimuli and learning resources with support for the individual's internal ability to develop and grow in the learning environment.

NEEDS AND GOALS

Students have both emotional and physical needs. These needs must be considered when developing the best environment for learning to take place. The physical needs include room temperature and ventilation, furniture layout, lighting, sound characteristics, the visual atmosphere, etc. The individual student must also be comfortable in order to most effectively learn. Energy and digestive needs are probably the most obvious. The students also have emotional needs that may involve power, control, respect, acceptance, etc. both for the student as an individual and with their peers in the class. People are hesitant and simply unclear in expressing their individual needs, so it is important that the instructor, acting as an observer, watch for subtle or indirect indications of what these needs may be through student's actions and reactions. One of the greatest needs and least tangible is a need for a sense of self-efficacy.

Students also need direction and purpose. This gives a sense of orientation and a foundation for continued growth. Direction is a methodology for learning growth and a goal you hope they will achieve. The purpose represents why they should attempt to achieve your goals. There needs to be the perception by the student that the goals are attainable and worth the effort to attain them. There also needs to be an intrinsic-extrinsic mix of short- and long-term goals. Ford (1992) highlighted this by stating "Effective functioning requires a strategic emphasis on attainable short-term goals combined with a periodic review of the long-term goals that give meaning and organization to one's short-term pursuits" (p. 99). It is best to keep the goals relatively simple with minimal conditions attached. The goals should be logical products of the learning the instructor and students hope will take place.

MOTIVATION

Learning theory tells us how people learn; motivation tells us why. The best way to motivate students to learn what is mutually beneficial to the student and the instructor's learning objectives is through a merging of goals with incentives and disincentives. Rewards tend to be stronger motivators than punishment, but often the most effective motivators are a mixture of both. Instructor beware; both rewards and punishments must be tangible or perceived as tangible to be effective.

Some instructors go as far as to initiate a learning contract with students. This can work if the benefits of the agreement for the student are clear; if the benefits are not, the contract will not be fully honored. Be careful not to focus only on achieving specific goals as a motivator. Task-based assessment of learning tends to show ability rather than actual understanding, and fixed goals limit the student's progress when their actual understanding may potentially exceed the established goal milestones. You can negotiate actions, but not actual learning, which depends on self-motivation.

More general, long-term social goals tend to be better motivators than more specific, short-term goals. The problem with the general, long-term goals is that the student must truly believe they are obtainable and that they are of significant value to them in comparison with the effort necessary to achieve the goal. Both strategies hold value, but I would suggest negotiating minimal goal expectation, embellishing the value of long-term goals, and then using two very powerful motivators to drive the student to exceed minimal expectations in understanding and ability. These motivators are modeling and self-efficacy.

MODELING

Schunk (1991) suggests that in modeling "people perform actions they believe will result in rewarding outcomes and avoid acting in ways they believe will result in negative outcomes" (p. 108). Students look to fellow students and their instructor, and the relationship between students, and between students and the instructor as classroom models. Each individual decides what outcomes appear as a reward or undesirable and will model their actions accordingly with the anticipation that they will result in a similar outcome. This is particularly true with children and becomes less strong as a motivator as students become older and develop a stronger sense of self-efficacy. Also, outcomes can be viewed from very different viewpoints in regard to the value of the outcome as rewarding or not. An effective way for the instructor to use this method of motivation to enhance the learning environment is to attach the general sense of pleasure and comfort as outcomes for desirable actions and discomfort and a sense of loss to undesirable actions; this tends to be more universally clear than direct rewards and punishments.

Young children and adults model people they would like to be in character and prestige. If they perceive the instructor as such a model for them, they are more likely to find motivation in the instructor's pleasure, acknowledgement, or mere presence. This does not usually apply to more experienced and established adults, who tend to be more responsive to mutual respect and general friendliness as both traits tend to be a more important part of their view of what is important in life.

SELF-EFFICACY

> Self-efficacy fosters mastery of experiences which, over a period of time, provide self-satisfactions conducive to growth of interest . . . Perceived self-efficacy is defined as people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances. It is concerned not with the skills one has but with judgments of what one can do with whatever skills one possesses. (Bandura, 1986, pp. 243, 391)

Self-efficacy is the internal growth of the self, focusing on ability and confidence in one's abilities. The more self-aware we become, generally, the more we tend to strive for greater self-efficacy, and we are a generation of increasing self-awareness. The desire for greater self-efficacy is a powerful driving force when there are clearly achievable and desired goals for success. Self-efficacy is less of a motivator when the student already has a strong sense of self and ability. In this case, it is most effective to treat such students more as peers in the learning environment with more direct involvement in the instructional component of the learning environment. Fortunately, with a strong sense of self-efficacy usually comes a strong sense of self-motivation when the goals are desired by the student. As Bandura (1986) puts it, “One's self-regard often outweighs the inducements of money, social recognition, and physical comfort in determining how one behaves” p. 250).

FEEDBACK

Motivation can only be effectively maintained if the instructor has an effective method for feedback. Rewards, incentives, and disincentives affect performance but alone do not maintain effective motivation. Feedback should also include a clear assessment of what has been achieved and a recommitment to the remaining program and over-all goals. Assessment comes from evaluating performance and achievement up to that point in time. Evaluation usually comes from a combination of general observation by the instructor and some measure of achievement such as a knowledge or ability examination.

Evaluation can also be peer evaluation and self-evaluation but these should be secondary to the instructor's evaluation of the student. Peer evaluation allows for a more interactive assessment, and self-evaluation tends to be a more genuine motivation for the individual student. Bandura (1986) states, “People's self-reactions to their own performances constitute the principal source of reward” (p. 240). Self-evaluation can be a great source of motivation, but to be effective, the students must be given clear measures, for the evaluation and the abilities being measured should relate directly to the students individual performance goals. Although the student best understands their own abilities and commitment, generally they are not experienced evaluators and their personal evaluation may be tainted by factors unrelated to the activities within the classroom environment.

This is also a time to re-evaluate over-all goals and the general direction of the program. If the classroom is truly a living organism, the outcome can't be completely anticipated. In life, we all strive for what we consider to be a happy and satisfying life, but whether this will be fully achieved or not, we cannot know. We can only assess our lives at a given time and strive for our current opinion on what happiness is as an ultimate goal. The organic classroom works in a similar way. The instructor can plan, assess the process at given times, re-evaluate, and commit themselves to striving toward an ultimate goal, but cannot really know the final outcome until the program is complete, and even then, there may be residual effects.

EMOTIONAL COMPONENT

> Vicarious arousal is an integral aspect of human empathy. Empathy with the suffering of others helps to facilitate altruistic acts and to curb interpersonal aggression. (Bandura, 1986, p. 307)

> Sympathy from teachers, excessive praise, unsolicited offers of help, and ego-focused learning environments can sometimes foster low-ability, self-ascriptions. (Graham, 1991, p. 15)

In a living classroom, the instructor must always be aware that they are working with living, feeling people and there is always an emotional component. Emotions are the fertilizer for growth. The right mixture in the right amount can foster maximum individual growth, but in the wrong combination, it can be very detrimental and deter growth to the point where the individual student may shut-off completely as a participant in the organic learning environment. It is also important to remember that the optimum combination and amount varies with each individual, depending on individual needs, and their reaction to various stimuli.

How can the instructor know the appropriate emotion stimulus for the individual student? They can't; they can only judge from experience and observation, and adjust the emotional environment accordingly. Emotions, like fertilizer, can be explosive, so be careful in applying and distributing emotional stimuli. The wrong emotional environment can stifle the organic classroom to a point where it may never recover, regardless of how much effort is put into resuscitating it.

GROUP DYNAMICS

> Perceived collective efficacy will influence what people choose to do as a group, how much effort they put into it, and their staying power when group efforts fail to produce results. (Bandura, 1986, p. 449)

Individuals are a unique balance between individual identity and the desire for group association. Up to this point we have considered individual motivation and self-efficacy, but individuals are only the parts of an organism. What makes the organism functional is how these parts work together as a collective. Group composition and dynamics are as unique as any other living organism. There are common traits with other similar groups, but the growth is always unique. Just as the brain controls the over-all growth and development of the body, the instructor can facilitate the growth and development of the group.

Like the human body, the individuals in a learning group rely on the general health of the group to foster their own individual growth as a student. The instructor should provide a structure for the group to build on and access the informational materials they will need for learning growth. The instructor also acts in the role of a doctor or health advisor, monitoring the group's health by advising, prescribing, healing wounds, giving treatment, rehabilitating, and applying radical surgery when necessary.

Interacting as a group allows for individual and group bonding. This is a very powerful incentive as we all have a strong desire to bond with others, but an equally strong disincentive when it counters the desire for individual identity, and explosive when the emotional composition is not in balance.

EXAMPLES OF APPLICATION

The following three personal examples give an idea how the "organic classroom" style can be practically applied. In each, there are unforeseen complications that are resolved through adaptation and use ofthe collective strengths of the group to achieve success and growth.

In the first situation, I was asked to instruct a group of foreign exchange students from Indonesia. After being introduced, the coordinator exited, and left me as the only one who spoke or understood English and this with eight hours of instruction ahead of us. Demonstration with physical intervention and correction was the primary mode of instruction. They observed my movements, modeled, and then extended the expression into actions. By the end of the lesson, the students were teaching each-other in their own language, and I was facilitating their learning by modifying their movements and physical skills. I did not understand the context of what they were saying, but I could see in their actions and interactions that they understood the main points and themes of the lesson. There was a follow-up evaluation, which also confirmed that learning had taken place (an evaluation in their language with the results translated and forwarded to me).

The second situation involves a group of dental assistants. When I arrived I found that they were a close-knit group that not only enjoyed a common profession, but also socialized together. They had brought an exotic smorgasbord lunch and were very comfortable in each other's company (more interested in each other's company then being instructed). The next eight hours were a continuous flow of questions, paraphrasing, and redirecting. It was a drawn-out dialogue where the introduction and flow from one theme to the next appeared to be directed by the students, as if they were at the family table discussing current interests for eight hours with a break for lunch in the middle. Not only was it an enjoyable group experience, but they also learned, in detail, the main themes of my agenda.

The final example involves the instruction of teaching techniques in a weekend seminar for adult instructors. At the last minute, I developed a bad case of tonsillitis and could not speak above a whisper. Rather than cancel the class, I had the students sit in a close group and talked in a quiet voice. Once again, I relied on actions to direct the instruction of themes. The desire for information motivated the students to develop complex inquires where my role was one more of confirmation rather then the direct supplying of information. The quiet tone of the lesson made them unusually attentive and involved. My teaching style gave a practical illustration of the value of student-driven instruction where the majority of the effort for learning is generated by the students.

SUMMARY

In this paper, I have presented the metaphor of the classroom as a living organism, not to illustrate a new style of instruction, but to emphasize an attitude towards the learning environment involving the instructor, the curriculum, and the students. The reference to learning principles assist the instructor in understanding the influence they have in fostering the growth of their learning environment. If the adult learning environment promotes the growth and development inherent in the each individual through the collective growth of the learning group, similar to that of a living organism, then I believe it offers the most conducive environment for individual cognitive growth.

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Voices From a Junior High School Classroom in Korea

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ABSTRACT

In an EFL setting like Korea, where there is often no immediate need for practical English skills, neither perceived nor required, students are unlikely to maintain a strong motivation for studying the English language. This purposeless and meaningless nature of the subject seems problematic because students may see learning English as a goal per se rather than being the means of international communication in this globalized 21st century. This paper presents a pilot needs analysis of Korean junior high school students in an attempt to take a systematic approach to national curriculum development by reflecting the learner needs. Based on its significant findings, the paper highlights the pedagogic implications of the needs analysis. A larger-scale and thorough undertaking of needs analysis at a national educational policy level is also proposed.

INTRODUCTION

The dominant role of the English language in current international trade and computer communication has made a considerable impact on English education in Korea. To enhance Korea's rapid economic growth and internationalization, the national curriculum has been innovated on a periodic basis. Notably, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was first adopted in the 6th National Curriculum (1992-1997) to foster students' communicative competence (Richards & Rogers, 1986), with native English speaking instructors being assigned to educational environments in 1995 (Ministry of Education, 2005). The current 7th National Curriculum, put into effect in 2001, emphasized much greater development of student oral English fluency. The new national curriculum demanded that English teachers in schools teach English in English, not in Korean, which has been the conventional teaching medium. This attempt has brought about fervent debates and studies (e.g., Kim S.-A., 2002; Kim S.-Y., 2002; Son & Lee, 2003; Liu, 2004) of its efficiency in Korean school systems. In addition to CLT within a functional and grammatical syllabus, the 7th National Curriculum also features the adoption of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT; Kwon, 2000; MOE, 2005).

It is questionable, though, to what extent these innovations and renovations in the curriculum reflect the students' needs and desires in learning English. Obviously, learners do have a variety of needs for the language and look for opportunities to study it. Surprisingly, it turned out that few, if not none, of the studies conducted have attempted to investigate Korean secondary-level students' needs for learning English, which would imply that the national curriculum in Korea has hardly attempted to involve its target students in the process of curriculum development. As Richards (2001) well pointed out, in many countries, the introduction of English in elementary or secondary school is based on what curriculum planners consider best for students to study at school. Learners are not consulted as to whether they perceive a need for such knowledge.

The present study thus attempts to answer the question "What is it that Korean secondary students actually or potentially need to do with English?" As a matter of fact, the inclusion of language learners as sources of information about their present or future communicative needs is a complex and sensitive issue (Chaudron, Doughty, Kim, Kong, Lee, Lee, Long, Rivers, & Urano, 2002). While learners are not always very sophisticated judges of their own needs, it is expected that the learners have significant potential to provide well-informed expertise regarding their educational context. Since the objective needs of Korean students' English learning are presumed quite obvious given the societal importance of English skills, it is considered worthwhile to investigate each individual learner's subjective target needs (i.e., wants) for studying English.

Theoretical Background

Interest in needs-based design of language programs has been increasing over the last few decades, in conjunction with a shift toward learner-centered education (Miller, 2001). Traditionally, the starting point in language curriculum development was language analysis, that is, what was easily teachable and learnable. This kind of analysis was based on criteria such as word frequency or grammatical difficulty (Richards, 2001). During the 1970s, communicative views of language teaching began to be incorporated into the curriculum design as part of the development of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Nunan, 1988; Richards, 2001). The central question for proponents of this new view was "What does the learner want/need to do with the target language?" rather than "What are the linguistic elements that the learner needs to master?" (Savignon, 1983). Several researchers have pointed out the inadequacy of outsiders' intuitions and the value of insiders' perspectives in needs assessment and curriculum development design for language teaching (Jasso-Aguilar, 1999).

Defining Needs Analysis

Needs analysis has become an integral part of systematic curriculum building (Brown, 1995), yet to date, the concept of needs analysis has been defined in several ways and in different forms serving a variety of purposes. Brindley (1989) noted that whereas there is some disagreement over the definitions of needs analysis, the various views fall into two broad categories. One category involves a narrow, product-oriented view where needs analysis is used to determine learners' current and future language needs. The other category is concerned with a broader, process-oriented view where needs analysis tries to identify affective and cognitive variables. Brown (1995) has offered one of the most comprehensive definitions of needs analysis:

> The systematic collection and analysis of all subjective and objective information necessary to define and validate defensible curriculum purposes that satisfy the language learning requirements of students within the context of particular institutions that influence the learning and teaching situation. (p. 36)

While this definition appears to be broad enough to reconcile most of the definitions proposed by other researchers, it is rather too vague to be of practical use for a specific situation. Berwick (1989) observed that operational definitions of needs analysis change with each situation.

In addition to defining needs analysis, it is also important to identify goals or purposes as the first step in conducting a needs analysis (Richards, 2001). Richards posited three comprehensive purposes for needs analysis. The first purpose is a mechanism for obtaining a wider range of input into the content, design, and implementation of a language program. The second purpose involves identifying general or specific language needs that can be addressed in developing the goals, objectives, and content of a program. Lastly, the third purpose is to provide data that can serve as a basis for reviewing and evaluating an existing program.

What Are Needs?

It is clear that identifying the target language needs of any group of learners plays a key role in a systematic curriculum design. Then what do we mean by needs? What kind of information should a needs analysis tell us? In fact, like the concept of needs analysis, there is no single accepted definition of needs. Researchers have tended to define needs according to their own particular focus in one area of education or another, thereby generating multiple definitions (Miller, 2001). Brindley (1989), for instance, included a wide range of terms to refer to needs: wants, desires, demands, expectations, motivations, lacks, constraints, and requirements. Needs analysis thus includes the study of perceived and present needs as well as potential and unrecognized needs (Richards, 2001). Along a similar line with Richterich (1972), Brindley provided a helpful dichotomy in terms of the types of information in needs analysis: objective needs versus subjective needs. Whereas objective needs can be diagnosed by teachers analyzing learners' personal data and information about their language proficiency and patterns of language use, subjective needs are generally hard to determine because they have to do with “wants,” “desires,” and “expectations” (Brown, 1995).

Later, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) made a distinction between target needs (i.e., what the learner needs to do in the target situation) and learning needs (i.e., what the learner needs to do in order to learn). Particularly, analysis of target situation needs is concerned with language use, which provides information about “what people do with language” (p. 63). Target needs consist of necessities, lacks, and wants. While necessities and lacks are considered as objective target needs in which the actual learners play no active role, *wants* also deserve attention, given the importance of considering subjective target needs. As Richterich (1972) claimed, a need is fairly dependent on a person because it is people who build their perceptions on the basis of data relating to themselves and their environment. Richards (2001) agreed that what is identified as a need relies on judgment and reflects the interests and values of those making such a judgment. Based on this notion, it is quite possible that the learners' perceived wants conflict with the perceptions of other interested parties such as curriculum developers, administrators, and teachers.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

Thirty-eight male students, aged 15-16, in their 9th grade of junior high school in Korea participated in this study. The participants have been exposed to English for about six years, since the 3rd grade of elementary school. Their English proficiency level varied from beginning to intermediate. Currently, they are participating in English classes three hours a week, according to their middle school curriculum.

MATERIALS

According to Long (2005), a complete needs analysis involves comprehensive information gathering via various methods and from various sources such as structured or unstructured interviews, participant or non-participant observation, and survey questionnaires. While the importance of using diverse methods in a needs assessment is recognized to foster reliability, validity, and usability of the results (Brown, 1995), the present study employed only a survey questionnaire due to a geographical restraint in carrying out this study.

The survey questionnaire contained four sections and was formatted in three pages. The first section, one page, in the form of an open-response question, asked the participants to brainstorm and describe their most important needs for studying English. The space remaining below the question was left empty in order to provide participants with a space to jot down any ideas they may wish to, and at the same time, to distance participants from the items in the following section so that they would not be influenced by them. As a follow-up to Section 1, Section 2 asked for the most likely reasons for learning English as a closed-response question. It comprised twenty-two items that were to be rated on a Likert scale ranging from “1” meaning “not important” to “4” meaning “very important.” Section 3 asked the participants to rate, on the Likert scale, their preferred teaching methods with “1” meaning “not at all” and “4,” “very much.” A total of thirteen items were provided. The last section was open-ended, asking for additional comments that participants might suggest concerning their needs for English and preferred teaching methods.

PROCEDURE

After having gone through several revisions, the final version of the questionnaire was translated into Korean and pilot-tested online with three 11th-grade students in Korea. The three students also participated in an unstructured preliminary interview online. Then, after a final revision, the questionnaire was sent to an English teacher in a boys' junior high school in Korea who volunteered to administer the survey. The questionnaire was administered during one of the teacher's classes, and the participants were given detailed instructions before the survey administration. The participants were given sufficient time, approximately 10 minutes, to complete the questionnaire. The survey results were sent back to the researcher and analyzed. The teacher who administered the survey in Korea was later interviewed via email, mainly about the participants' background information.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Section 1 of the questionnaire asked students, in an open-ended question, to describe what they would like to do with English. A variety of responses were gathered, which were categorized into four areas: everyday, academic, professional skills, and travel. Somewhat unexpectedly, a majority of the students (53%) showed a tremendous interest in travel abroad, jotting down remarks such as I would like to travel abroad and I think that English will prove useful for me to be able to communicate with people and get to know their culture. This seems to be reflective of the young students' curiosity and fascination toward exploring foreign countries. Table 1 below presents the needs ranked by frequency of responses.

Table 1. Needs Ranked by Frequency of Responses [Section 1]

Responses	Skill Area	Frequency (N=38)	%
Travel abroad	Travel	20	53%
Be able to talk with foreigners	Everyday [Speaking]	12	32%
Play computer games	Everyday [Reading]	9	24%
Watch and understand movies	Everyday [Listening]	8	21%
Make foreign friends	Everyday [L / S]	7	18%
Chat online with foreigners	Everyday [Writing]	6	16%
Listen and understand pop songs	Everyday [Listening]	6	16%
Show off English speaking skills	Everyday [Speaking]	5	13%
Interpret	Everyday [L / S]	3	8%
Watch and understand TV programs	Everyday [Listening]	3	8%
Understand information on the Internet	Everyday [Reading]	3	8%
Get a well-paying job in the future	Professional	3	8%
Read English books	Everyday [Reading]	3	8%
Get a good score in English tests	Academic	3	8%
Understand English brand names	Everyday [Reading]	2	6%
Get a job requiring English knowledge	Professional	2	6%
Work abroad	Professional	2	6%
Study at a good college	Academic	2	6%
Have an in-depth English knowledge	Academic	1	3%
Shopping abroad	Travel	1	3%

Thirty-two percent of the students desired an ability to talk with foreigners (e.g., giving directions). Generally, English for everyday skills were considered more important than academic and professional reasons. The students expressed major interest in improving their listening, speaking, and writing skills. Since today's young generation has easy access to Western culture through multimedia such as the Internet, enjoying movies (21%) and pop songs and music videos (16%) is a significant part of their pastime activities. Their interest in diverse foreign cultures is likely to grow rapidly. Eighteen percent of the students wanted to have foreign friends, and sixteen percent responded that online chatting would be a good way to connect with foreigners. As the participants in the study were all male students, about one fourth of them stated the need to learn English in order to enjoy computer games, though it was not an item suggested in the following closed-response question.

It was interesting to observe that while a majority of participants considered "travel abroad" as their main reason to study English in the open-ended question, their priority on traveling was set back behind the academic and professional reasons in Section 2, shown in Table 2 below. "To get a good score on the entrance exam" and "to have a well-paying job in the future" ranked first with a response frequency as high as 89% on the scale-response question in Section 2. This is in contrast to the low rate of response in the previous open-ended question. It appears that the participants' strong academic and professional needs for English were triggered by their perception of the force of circumstances in the Korean society where graduates of a prestigious university have a wider opportunity to succeed. The fact that a majority of students did not come up with the academic and professional needs for English in the initial open-response question may indicate that those needs are not their intrinsically motivated needs, but extrinsically motivated by strongly perceived social pressure. Following the academic and professional reasons, the students showed considerable interest in improving their speaking skills to be able to communicate with foreigners (87%). They were also highly interested in computer-based activities like searching for information on the Internet (82%).

Table 2. Ratings of Item Responses Ranked in Order of Importance [Section 2]

Item #	Questionnaire Item (Target English Uses)	Points (/ 152)	%	Rank
17	…get a good score at the entrance exam.	135	89%	1
18	…get a good job with a high salary in the future.	135	89%	1
8	…talk with foreigners.	132	87%	3
19	…have a job requiring knowledge of English.	127	84%	4
16	…get a good grade in this English class.	126	83%	5
7	…read and understand information on the Internet.	124	82%	6
22	…travel abroad.	122	80%	7
3	…watch and understand TV programs or movies.	106	70%	8
14	…get information about other countries.	102	67%	9
4	…read and understand newspapers.	101	66%	10
12	…understand American culture.	97	64%	11

6	…read and understand novels.	98	64%	11
13	…understand British culture.	96	63%	13
10	…make friends with native speakers of English.	94	62%	14
9	…chat online or write an email to my key-pals.	91	60%	15
5	…read and understand magazines.	91	60%	16
20	…study abroad.	89	59%	17
21	…work abroad.	88	58%	18
15	…learn foreign languages because it is fun.	85	56%	19
1	…listen and understand pop songs.	85	56%	19
2	…listen and understand radio programs.	85	56%	19
11	…understand and use slang.	75	49%	22

The scaled responses were further analyzed according to the percentage of respondents at each scale point for each item. It was observed that the students' biggest concern was their future career. It was assumed that the students, being all male, felt a huge responsibility to make a good living, given that Korea is such a male-dominated society. Seventy-four percent of the participants thought that getting a good job with a high salary in the future was very important. Needs for academic purposes, such as achieving high scores on tests, was followed by career-oriented needs. The need for everyday skills unrelated to schoolwork (e.g., understanding slang, pop songs, movies, and radio/TV programs) overall ranked low. The participants' lack of interest in improving spoken English is well reflected in their answers to Section 3 (see Table 3), which asked for students' preferences in teaching methods.

Table 3. Ratings of Item Responses Ranked in Order of Importance [Section 3]

Item #	Questionnaire Item (Teaching Methods)	Points (/152)	%	Rank
1	…explain grammar explicitly in Korean.	120	79%	1
8	...use various games and activities in class.	116	76%	2
9	...have me work on computer and Internet in class.	112	74%	3
5	...correct all of my errors when I speak or write in English.	111	73%	4
10	...employ more visual / auditory teaching materials.	106	70%	5
3	...translate English into Korean.	103	68%	6
12	...invite native speakers into class 1 - 2 times a month.	94	62%	7
7	...ave me engage in more pair / group activities than individual work.	79	52%	8
11	...Let me learn English in a language lab.	78	51%	9
13	...give me more chance to speak w/ native speakers in class.	75	49%	10
2	...explain grammar explicitly in English.	72	47%	11
6	...give me more chance to speak in English in class.	69	45%	12
4	...speak more in English than in Korean.	62	41%	13

It turned out that seventy-nine percent of the students felt a strong need for enhancing grammar skills rather than speaking skills. They wanted the teacher to focus on delivering explicit grammar instruction in Korean, not in English. A majority of the students felt extremely negative or uncomfortable towards an increased use of English by the teacher rather than using Korean. Seventy-three percent of the students were concerned with accurate language usage rather than fluent language use. Whereas sixty-two percent of students demonstrated curiosity and anticipation about meeting foreigners in person, half of the students expressed fear of engaging in communicative interaction in English. Apparently, such a negative attitude toward English use in the classroom may lead teachers and curriculum developers to reconsider the efficacy of implementing the government's new policy of “Teaching English through English.”

It is productive to speculate on the reasons that would deter students from being spoken language-oriented. An interesting observation is that while all of the three participants in the pilot study (i.e., high school students) showed great motivation in improving their speaking skills, the junior high school students in the main study put little emphasis on communicative competence. What would this difference imply? It was speculated that the junior high school students' low interest in communicative classroom activities was due to their lack of exposure to the spoken language and conversation classes. In fact, the current 7th curriculum requires every high school to allocate one hour of class time a week to a conversation class whereas junior high school has no obligation to offer a conversation class. Consequently, the junior high school students may well be afraid of speaking in English because of their limited opportunities to use spoken English.

Insofar as the current curriculum aims to foster students' communicative proficiency based on CLT and TBLT approaches, it is important for curriculum developers and teachers to try to seek out the most effective and timely ways to help students with enhancing speaking skills. Teachers should play a key role in raising students' awareness of English as a means to communicate and not as a set of rules to memorize or an ultimate goal to achieve. Striking a good balance between form-focused instruction and communicative activities is highly advisable (e.g., Fotos & Ellis, 1991; Fotos, 1994; Lee, 2002). The learning environment should help students gain confidence in their use of English as a means of communication.

As many students want to engage in a computer-based classroom activity (74%), the teacher may consider adopting technology in a motivating manner to promote conversational interaction among students or between a teacher and students (Gonzelez-Lloret, 2003; Skehan, 2003). The results of the survey showed that students were not familiar with pair or group work. This might reflect today's societal phenomena that teenagers lack socializing skills. Due to the decline in birth rate as well as the boom in use of the Internet and computer games, students spend more time alone, which results in the lack of a sense of community and partnership. A systematic approach to the TBLT curriculum would prove beneficial in resolving this problem: It would provide students with an abundance of opportunities to cooperatively engage in English conversation.

Conclusion

This paper originated with my concerns as a secondary school teacher and gave me a valuable opportunity to think over various issues related to the English curriculum in Korea. I hope that this undertaking will develop into a detailed understanding of students' needs and shed some insightful light on the national curriculum design process. The study does have limitations, for example, the sole dependence on a questionnaire rather than the multiple resources and methods for triangulation. A small sample size and the inclusion of male-only participants in the needs analysis might also reduce generalization of the results. Nevertheless, the pedagogical implications that can be drawn from the current study are significant. The examination of students' actual or potential needs for English will provide curriculum developers and teachers with useful and insightful “subject information,” and thus assist them in designing more motivating and beneficial English instruction. Involving learners in the curriculum design process is part of the humanistic approach to education. In the words of Nunan (1998):

> Humanistic education is based on the belief that learners should have a say in *what* they should be learning and *how* they should learn it, and reflects the notion that education should be concerned with the development of autonomy in the learner. (p. 20)

A needs analysis is an important procedure to confirm or correct the impressions of teachers and curriculum developers (Miller, 2001). Brown (1995, p. 20) relates that while “it *is* logical to make the learners the focus of any sound needs analysis” so that they may play an active role in their learning process, “teachers, administrators, program developers, societies, and even whole nations have needs that may also have a bearing on the language teaching and learning situation.” It is assumed that while there is general agreement among these different groups, there are some differences as well. Education is an interactive process, and the fewer gaps in needs between the students and the education providers, the better the curriculum will fulfill the expectations of all who are involved. In this light, I would propose a large-scale and thorough undertaking of needs assessment at a national educational policy level. On a smaller scale, a class teacher can take informal needs analyses as part of one's ongoing responsibilities. The needs analysis should be a continuous process, one in which the conclusions drawn are constantly checked and re-assessed (Brown, 1995; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). I believe that this rigorous and systematic approach to curriculum development will be conducive to Korean students in learning the English language, as it is both purposeful and meaningful. Ultimately, it could make a tremendous contribution to improving English education in Korea.

The Author

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Assessment

Standardizing a University-Level English Proficiency Exam

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Abstract

Being an English medium university, the METU School of Foreign Languages administers an English Proficiency exam (EPE) to about 7,000 students every year. Students succeeding in this exam are exempted from a one-year English program; however, the ones failing have to attend the one-year English program before starting their freshman year. Since EPE results are used to make important decisions, it is important that the EPE be a standardized exam. Another means of being exempted from the one-year English program is obtaining the required score on internationally recognized English tests, such as TOEFL, IELTS, or UCLES exams. The equivalence tables of these exams honored by the METU Senate have been announced to candidates. However, it was felt essential that the equivalence table be based on hard data. This is how the "METU EPE Standardization Studies" started in October 2004. In addition to carrying out detailed statistical analysis of the EPE for standardization, a randomly selected population took the TOEFL exam in June 2005, and their TOEFL scores were correlated with the EPE scores. In this paper, the authors present the stages gone through in the standardization studies of the EPE, and also the stages gone through during the EPE-TOEFL calibration studies. Apart from explaining the stages in the standardization and calibration studies, the authors share the results obtained in both studies. It is expected that this form of presentation will give better insight to academicians who are planning to carry out similar test standardization and calibration studies.

Introduction

Testing is an essential component in language teaching, and it is imperative that tests be objective, reliable, and valid, especially when critical decisions are based on test results. In order to assure these criteria are met, standardization, which can be achieved through detailed statistical analysis, is needed. In this study, the stages, as well as unprecedented cases which arose during the language test standardization and calibration studies carried out in the Department of Basic English (DBE) at the Middle East Technical University, will be presented. Since the results obtained would be unique and of importance only to the institution, the major focus will be on the procedure followed. It is expected that this type of presentation will give better insight to academicians who are planning to carry our similar test standardization and calibration studies.

BACKGROUND

Being an English medium university, Middle East Technical University, School of Foreign Languages, administers an English Proficiency Exam (EPE) four times a year to about 7,000 students. Students succeeding in this exam are exempted from a one-year English program; however, the ones failing must attend a one-year English program before starting their freshman year.

DESCRIPTION OF EPE

The English Proficiency Exam (EPE)is designed to assess the language competence of mainly undergraduate and graduate students who are to study at METU. In addition to language use, it covers three language skills: reading, writing, and listening. The EPE is administered in two stages on different days. Stage 1 consists of 70 multiple choice questions in two sections: Language Use (40 questions / 20 points) and Reading Comprehension (30 questions / 30 points). This section of the exam comprises half of the total test (50 points). A test taker must obtain a minimum of 50% achievement (24.50 points) in Stage 1 in order to qualify for Stage 2 of the exam. Stage 2 consists of two sections: Listening Comprehension (30 points) and Writing (20 points). In the Listening Comprehension section, there are two parts: "while-listening," which consists of multiple choice questions, and "note-taking." In the Writing section, the students are expected to write a paragraph on an assigned topic.

RELIABILITY STUDIES

The first step in standardizing the English Proficiency Exam at METU was to find out whether the EPE was a reliable test or not. Reliability is an indication of the consistency of scores across evaluators or over time. An assessment is considered reliable when the same results occur regardless of when the assessment occurs or who does the scoring. There should be compelling evidence to show that results are consistent across raters and across scoring occasions.

In order to evaluate reliability, several statistical analyses were carried out on four EPEs, which were administered in January, June, August, and September, 2004, and were assumed to be parallel tests. Since there are two question booklets for the EPE (A and B booklets) with the same questions in a different order, it was essential to merge A and B data. After the completion of the merging process, the means and standard deviation values for the whole tests and subtests were calculated.

The June 2004 EPE has been analyzed with respect to both IRT and CTT. When results obtained from both analyses are compared:

- There were few problematic test items according to classical item analysis whereas several test items are problematic according IRT analysis.
- The correlation between student scores coded as 1 and 0 (1 = correct answer, 0 = wrong answer) in CTT and IRT coding was found to be very high: 0.96 in Stage 1 and 0.97 in Listening 1.

The ITEMAN (Item and Test Analysis) program, which is a much simpler analysis, was used to examine the item discrimination and difficulty indices of each test item. Factor analysis was then applied to combine a number of test items to form a smaller number of factors. The idea was to identify a limited number of factors that were relatively independent of each other. Test items loaded under one factor were examined for their ability to label the skill being tested.

Several correlation studies were carried out for the tests, and internal reliability of each test was measured using Cronbach Alpha to be sure that internal consistency reliability was adequate. Finally, inter-rater reliability, which must be established among the judges to maintain consistency, was tested for the writing section of each exam.

To sum up, based on the findings obtained, the EPE can be considered a reliable test. However, it should also be noted that reliability increases as the number of test items and test takers increase.

Validity Studies

The second step of the standardization process concerns validity. A valid test is one that measures what it intends to measure. The validity of a test can be interpreted as the accuracy of specific predictions made from the scores obtained. In other words, it is an indication of how well an assessment actually measures what it is supposed to measure. The method of criterion-referenced validation is described as external validity as it relates to studies comparing students' test scores with measures of ability in further courses. The question considered for the external validity studies was “Is the EPE a useful predictor of a student's ability to cope with academic English in their departments?” This step of the study focused on two aspects: “To what extent can the EPE predict GPA scores?” and “To what extent can the EPE predict Freshman English Course (ENG101) scores?”

ENG 101 is a 4-credit freshman-year course that aims to develop reading and writing skills. As stated in the course booklet:

> The course reinforces academic reading skills (finding the main idea, skimming, scanning, inferring information, guessing vocabulary from context, etc.) through reading selections on a variety of topics. It also aims at developing critical thinking, which enables students to respond to ideas in a well-organized written format. Other reading-related writing skills such as paraphrasing and summarizing are also dealt with.

Correlations were computed for all students who were successful at any of the four EPEs (January, June, August, and September) and who started studies in their own departments, including the ones exempt from ENG 101. The correlations between the EPE and ENG101 and the correlations between the EPE and GPA for these students were found to be 0.654 and 0.385, respectively, which were statistically meaningful (see Table 1).

Table 1. Correlation for Students Exempted From ENG 101

Correlations

		EPE	GPA	ENG101
EPE	Pearson Correlation	1,000	,385**	,654**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,	,000	,000
	N	1851	1851	1760
GPA	Pearson Correlation	,385**	,000	,579**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,	,000
	N	1851	1851	1760
ENG 101	Pearson Correlation	,654**	,579**	1,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,
	N	1760	1760	1760

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The same study was then carried out only for students who were not exempt from ENG 101 (the students whose EPE results were between 59.50 and 75.00). Although correlation values were lower, 0.319 and 0.232, respectively, they were still statistically meaningful (see Table 2).

Table 2. Correlation for Students Not Exempted From ENG 101

Correlations

		EPE	GPA	ENG101
EPE	Pearson Correlation	1,000	,232**	,319**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,	,000	,000
	N	1317	1317	1229
GPA	Pearson Correlation	,232**	,000	,662**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,	,000
	N	1317	1317	1229
ENG101	Pearson Correlation	,319**	,662**	1,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,
	N	1229	1229	1229

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In order to confirm whether the EPEs are parallel, correlations were also computed individually for January, June, August,and September exams and similar results were observed. Finally, regression analysis was conducted and it was proven that EPE scores can be used to predict ENG101 scores.

Based on the analyses, it could be stated that certain indicators are obtained about the validity of EPE. However, it is important to note the limitations mentioned below:

ENG101 grades are as AA = 4, BA = 3.5 etc., which causes a slip in the data during analysis. For example, while AA represents the range 90-100 (width = 11), BA represents the range 85-90 (width = 5) and FF represents the range 0-49 (width = 50). Data loss due to such slip affects correlations negatively. Since it was not possible to include the students who failed in EPE, this has also caused data loss. This creates a negative condition, especially in the computation of regression equations.

CALIBRATION STUDIES

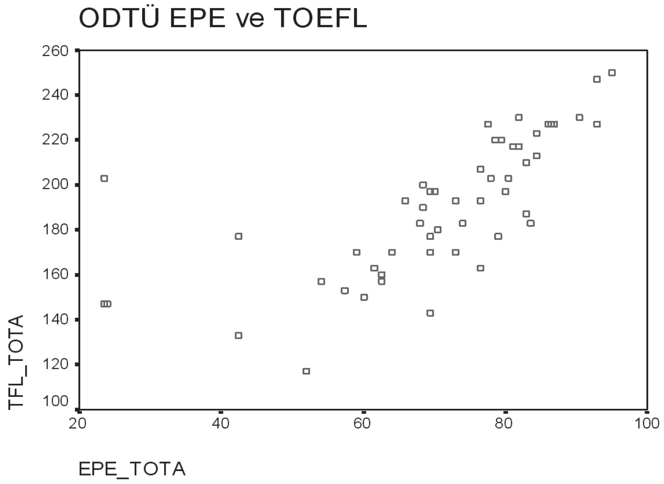
One means of being exempted from the one-year English program is by obtaining the required score on an internationally recognized English test, such as the TOEFL, IELTS, or UCLES exam. The equivalence tables of these exams honored by the METU Senate are announced to candidates. Therefore, the final step of this study was designed in order to confirm that these equivalence tables are reliable. First, EPE scores were correlated with TOEFL scores, and secondly, EPE scores were calibrated with TOEFL scores, considering the minimum TOEFL score required by other national and international universities to be exempted from English Preparatory School, and also considering the expectation of the Department of Basic English (DBE) management and staff in favor of increasing the TOEFL scores in the existing EPE equivalence table. Together with correlation, regression analysis was carried out for the predictability of TOEFL scores based on EPE scores in this study.

The reason why TOEFL was considered as a parameter for standardization purposes in this study is that it is widely considered to be a reliable and valid test, and it has already become a prerequisite for admission into many colleges and universities. Another reason is the similarity of EPE to TOEFL in terms of the areas of English language proficiency that it measures.

As the Department of Basic English is a very crowded institution, and the population is divided into sub-populations, stratified random sampling was used. Sixty DBE students were selected through stratified random selection from all three DBE student groups, namely Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate and Upper Intermediate groups. When random selections were being carried out, the students who were unlikely to qualify to take the June 2005 EPE were excluded in order to keep data loss at a minimum level. The TOEFL entrance fee was paid by the School of Foreign Languages and all the students in the study were expected to take the EPE after the TOEFL exam. They took the TOEFL in mid-May 2005 and EPE in mid-June. However, the sample size was reduced to 52 for data cleaning purposes.

In order to measure the validity of EPE, the June 2005 English Proficiency Exam was correlated to TOEFL, and EPE-TOEFL correlation was measured both on the basis of subtests (language, reading, listening, writing), and the whole test. Before carrying out correlation analysis, a scatter plot showing the distribution of grades was studied, and 4 students were noted to be outliers (3 of whom did not qualify for EPE Stage 2) and therefore excluded in the correlation of the related components (see Figure 1; TFL_TOTL = TOEFL total, EPE = English Proficiency Exam total).

Figure 1. Scatter Plot of Distribution of Grades



The means and standard deviations for the whole test and sub-tests were as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviation for Tests and Sub-tests

	MEAN	S.D.	N
EPE TOTAL	74.32	11.14	52
TOEFL TOTAL	190.87	32.74	52
EPE LANGUAGE	13.23	2.41	52
TOEFL LANGUAGE	19.52	4.02	52
EPE READING	23.42	3.93	52
TOEFL READING	19.96	3.36	52
EPE LISTENING	24.99	3.95	52
TOEFL LISTENING	17.77	4.39	52
EPE WRITING	12.67	3.32	52
TOEFL WRITING	3.56	0.89	52

Correlations regarding sub-tests and whole tests are shown below (also see Table 4):

- A high correlation (0.867) was noted between EPE and TOEFL for the whole test.
- A moderate correlation (0.539) was noted between EPE and TOEFL for "language use" sub-tests.
- Correlations slightly above moderate were noted between EPE-TOEFL and EPE-IELTS "reading" sub-tests, 0.727 and 0.625, respectively.
- A correlation slightly above moderate (0.686) was noted between EPE and TOEFL "listening" sub-tests. A moderate correlation (0.509) was noted

between EPE and IELTS “listening” sub-tests.

- A low and statistically meaningless correlation (0.244) was noted between EPE and TOEFL “writing” sub-tests.

Table 4. Correlations for Tests and Sub-tests

	CORRELATIONS
EPE TOTAL VS TOEFL TOTAL	.867*
EPE LANGUAGE VS TOEFL LANGUAGE	.539*
EPE READING VS TOEFL READING	.727*
EPE LISTENING VS TOEFL LISTENING	.686*
EPE WRITING VS TOEFL WRITING	.244*

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

When EPE and TOEFL correlations are analyzed, all correlations except the “writing” sub-test are noted to be at moderate to above-moderate levels, which contributes to the validity of EPE.

Regression analysis was carried out for the validity of EPE, and the predictability of TOEFL scores was tested on the basis of EPE scores. Tables 5 and 6 show that TOEFL scores can be predicted on the basis of EPE scores, which is considered to be a statistically meaningful prediction.

Table 5. ANOVA Test

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	of	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	32534,785	1	32534,785	139,018	,000[a]
	Residual	10765,528	46	234,033		
	Total	43300,313	47			

a. Predictors: (Constant), EPE_TOTA
b. Dependent Variable: TFL_TOTA

Table 6. Coefficients

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	21,141	14,685		1,440	,157
	EPE_TOTA	2,307	,196	,867	11,791	,000

a. Dependent Variable: TEL_TOTA

The equation below is obtained for the prediction:
(TOEFL score) = 2.307 × (EPE score) + 21.141

Using such calculations, Table 7 displays how using the newly calculated TOEFL equivalence figures vary from the existing METU equivalence table.

Table 7. Variation Between Existing Equivalence Table and Newly Calculated Figures

	EXISTING EQUIVALENCE TABLE	FORMULA APPLIED
EPE	TOEFL	TOEFL
60 – 64.5	173 – 189	160 – 170
65 – 69.5	190 – 196	171 – 182
70 – 74.5	197 – 212	183 – 193
75 – 79.5	213 – 236	194 – 205
80 – 84.5	237 – 249	206 – 216
85 – 89.5	250 – 266	217 – 228
90 – 94.5	267 – 279	229 – 239
95 and above	280 and above	240 and above

Considering the score-interval of the existing equivalence table, the frequency per each interval is presented in Table 8. From this table, it can be concluded that the EPE disperses examinees better than the TOEFL.

Table 8. Frequency per Interval, Compared Between Existing Equivalence Table and Newly Calculated Figures

EPE	N	TOEFL	N
60 – 64.5	5	173 – 189	7
65 – 69.5	9	190 – 196	4
70 – 74.5	6	197 – 212	11
75 – 79.5	9	213 – 236	12
80 – 84.5	10	237 – 249	1
85 – 89.5	4	250 – 266	1
90 – 94.5	3	267 – 279	0
95 and above	1	280 and above	0

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from this study that the TOEFL scores in the existing equivalence table will need to be lowered to be calibrated with the EPE although the DBE management and staff were in favor of increasing the TOEFL scores in the existing equivalence table so as to match with EPE scores. Furthermore, when the passing grades of other national and international universities are studied, it is noted that a minimum TOEFL grade of 213 is required for exemption from English Preparatory

School.

Since this study did not produce the expected result of supporting an increase in TOEFL scores in the existing EPE equivalence table, it has become important to study the difficulty and reliability of the June 2005 EPE. Regarding the test population, the June 2004 EPE test-takers were thought to be parallel to those who took the June 2005 test. A detailed statistical analysis (including item analysis and Cronbach Alpha) of the two tests was carried out. It was found that the June 2005 EPE was an easier test than the June 2004 EPE, which may be a possible explanation for the unexpected findings.

Regression studies show that TOEFL scores can be predicted based on EPE scores. Although the obtained TOEFL scores are lower than the ones in the existing EPE-TOEFL equivalence table, considering the mean and reliability of the June 2005 EPE when compared to the June 2004 EPE, increasing the TOEFL threshold score may be worth implementing. Considering the results obtained in all three steps of this study, the EPE can be claimed to be a defensible test. However, it is advisable that similar studies be carried out on other EPE versions to verify that the test quality is sustained.

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Group Testing: Student-Designed Tests

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ABSTRACT

In this study, which took place in a university in South Korea, two classes of students (sophomores and juniors) designed review tests for each unit of their course textbooks. It was hypothesized that involving students in every stage of the evaluation process would encourage greater comprehension of the concepts in the textbook in addition to helping students to set goals and reflect upon achievement. Results confirmed these expectations, with students typically gaining a great deal from the group decision-making format, allocation of responsibility, and promotion of intra-personal and inter-personal responsibility. This paper describes the process of writing, implementing, and marking a student-designed test and describes a video of the group test-making process, taken during the same semester.

INTRODUCTION

Recent years have seen an increasing amount of attention to learner autonomy, cooperative learning, management of affect, and promotion of learner responsibility in second-language learning literature (Arnold, 1999; Benson & Voller, 1997; Cotterall, 2000; Gremmo, 1995). Contemporary language-testing theories and practices have also acknowledged the need to broaden the scope of language assessment to include cognitive, affective, and social learning. Examples of this trend are authentic assessment (Kohonen, 1999) and classroom-based assessment (self- and peer-assessment, portfolios, learner journals, language conversations, etc. Richards, 1999). Such advances and the compelling pedagogical justifications behind them have, however, passed largely unnoticed by the proponents of high-stakes testing. This is especially evident in Korea, where the summative, multiple-choice, university entrance test continues to turn every third-grade high school English lesson into a test-preparation class, and where test-related student suicides are an annual event (Soh, 2003). The fact that this situation is not confined to Korea – Herbert (1983, p. 30) cites "competition pressures" as prominent factors in the alarming rise in suicide rates among young people does not make it any more acceptable, but rather points to a malaise prevalent in education systems around the world.

In view of this situation, along with the wealth of literature supporting self- and peer-assessment as a valid educational goal (for example, Achara, 1980; Blanche, 1988; Blue, 1988; Cram, 1997), the purpose of this study was to examine whether English teachers might develop enhanced confidence, motivation, and attitudes to learning in their students by involving them in the entire process of test design. It was also hypothesized that the cooperative-learning context in which this test design would occur would promote intra-personal responsibility, as well as inter-personal responsibility, along with long-term autonomy and awareness of learning strategies. If this were shown to be the case, then test preparation might become an indirect, non-threatening means of developing meaningful life skills in students.

Any test that is used in any English class must have a definite purpose, since tests are intrinsically threatening and can cause undesirable levels of anxiety and worry, which can harm the learning process. Traditional, low-order-thinking (memory-based), multiple-choice, "trivia"-based tests have the inevitable outcome that students who are relatively unsuccessful in recalling rote-learned lexis items, who have learning styles incompatible with high-stakes tests, and who have worked out some time ago that they were not going to get a good score, simply give up trying to learn: "Those who believe they will lose may see little point in trying hard" (Kohn, 1992, p. 56). High levels of stress and internalization of failure also result from this evaluation system, since "when emphasis is placed not upon the demonstration of competence, but upon winning, then the competitor eventually 'comes to believe that he is defective and deserves to fail'" (Walker, 1980, p. 250). This process "of coming to equate losing with being a loser . . . is a gradual process, but it is taking place at any given instant in our playing fields and classrooms, our offices, and even our homes" (Kohn, 1992, p. 109).

When we consider, however, that the prime educational goal of assessment is to inform the learners of their achievements, and to help them in further (realistic) goal-setting, then it can be seen that testing need not be so stressful and can occur informally in many forms. In fact, language performance can be satisfactorily evaluated in a non-threatening, student-centered manner.

There are times when more formal assessment is required, of course. Some examples are placement tests, proficiency tests, and end-of-semester tests. These are usually required by the educational institution, and teachers have no option but to prepare and administer the tests. This presentation described a study carried out in a university in Korea, in which students were asked to make the final test for their courses "English Teaching Methodology" and "Classroom-Based Assessment." Students discussed how to make a test, how to choose test formats, and how to use the test to assess growth in a non-threatening manner. For the purposes of showing the process and the product, the test based on *How to Teach English* (Harmer, 1998) is used here, and rather than considering the various issues in isolation, matters relating to the "what," "why," and "how" of test design are addressed as they appear in the examples.

Test Design

Students who experience test-making are practicing a particular type of self-assessment, and thus developing cognitive and linguistic skills. By making a review test based on a chapter of a course textbook, students apply critical thinking skills to the content of the chapter. When deciding what should be tested, and how it should be tested, they are understanding the content and working with it. Just as the best way to learn something is to teach it to someone else (within their ZPD), so it can be said that comprehension, problem-solving, and critical thinking are enhanced by writing a test. It can therefore be very interesting to ask students at any level and any age to write the end-of-term test, or simply the regular review tests for each chapter of the school textbook. When doing this, it is important to give them a framework within which to work. This might be a template of the school test or some examples of test types.

There is another side to this issue, which is that high-stakes tests are intrinsically competitive and that teamwork and the ability to work with others is never evaluated by them, despite the fact that it is an important factor for employers when hiring new staff. It has been shown that "working together to achieve a common goal produces higher achievement and greater productivity than does working alone [and] is so well confirmed by so much research that it stands as one of the strongest principles of social and organizational psychology" (Johnson & Johnson, 1991, p. 40). Therefore, if we can encourage students to study together and to see each other as collaborators rather than as competitors (even in the testing situation), it is quite likely that they will achieve improved individual test scores in the more traditional testing environments.

THE TEST

As mentioned above, it is important to give students a framework within which to work, however free the format night be. Such a framework involves organization and accurate, comprehensive test-design signposting. The first point to note in this test (Figure1) is that it is well organized (face validity), and that all the demographic information, including space for the final marks (out of 100), appears on the cover page.

Figure 1. *How to Teach English* Test: Cover Page

My Name:		**Date:**
Group Members:		

Open-book, group test
of the course textbook:
How to Teach English

- There is only one test-book for each group.
- Complete the test-book cooperatively.
- Everyone in the group will receive the same mark for this test.
- Pay attention to the instructions for each question.
- If there are no instructions for a question, decide (in your group) what to do.

• When you do the grading, write the score for your section here:					
Part 1	**/20**	**Part 2**	**/20**	**CH 2**	**/4**
CH 5	**/24**	**CH 6**	**/12**	**CH 10**	**/10**
CH 13	**/10**	**Total**		**/100**	

Secondly, we can see that it is a group test. While most required tests are individually-based, we must remember that collaboration is a more effective learning tool than competition (see above). It makes sense, therefore, to “practice what we preach” by testing students in groups. Students taking this test have thus experienced all the factors involved in collaborative test design (brainstorming of goals and procedures, allocation of responsibility, accountability for assigned tasks, etc.) and are now experiencing collaborative test-taking. There will be cases in which some students rely on other group members excessively, but there will be more instances in which students who have grasped the value of working together will produce excellent results. Some groups will work through the questions together, producing a consensus result, while others will allocate different questions to different group members, who will report back to the group when they have finished. In this sense, the test is not only evaluating course content (collaboration and social skills), but is promoting those skills and offering a further opportunity for development. There are always ways of obtaining individual scores, but very few means of finding out how effective students are at working together. It should also go without saying that this test would not be the only measure by which student performance would be judged. (In this case, the designing, administering, taking, and marking of the test was worth 20% of the grades for the semester.) A video of this group test can be viewed at: www.finchpark.com/videos/alt_assess/index.htm.

Thirdly, Figure 1 is an open-book test, and thus minimizes the attention to memory that dominates most formal tests. By allowing students to access the required information in their textbooks, the test questions can focus on higher-order thinking skills, and can ask students to perform tasks with the information, rather than just repeating it. Information is accessible in many media in the 21st century, and to reward students only for their memory skills is to ignore an important fact of life that we need to know *how* to find and use information.

Fourthly, the test has no time limit, and there is only one test booklet for each group. This format encourages real group-reporting skills, and simulates real-life situations more accurately than normal tests. Students are free (and have the responsibility) to turn in the best effort they can manage together.

Lastly (in terms of the cover page, Figure1), students are encouraged to discuss test-taking strategies and to make a plan for this test. In other words, a real-life situation is being simulated the planning meeting.

Although open-book tests in general promote higher-order thinking skills, Part 1 of the teacher-designed test (Figure2) tests factual knowledge. This might seem a contradiction, but it is also a learning opportunity. Groups of students who have not acquired these basic terms while reading the book will need to find them in order to complete the page, whereas those who know these terms will be able to fill them in and thereby save a great deal of time.

Figure 2. ***How To Teach English*** **Test: Part 1**

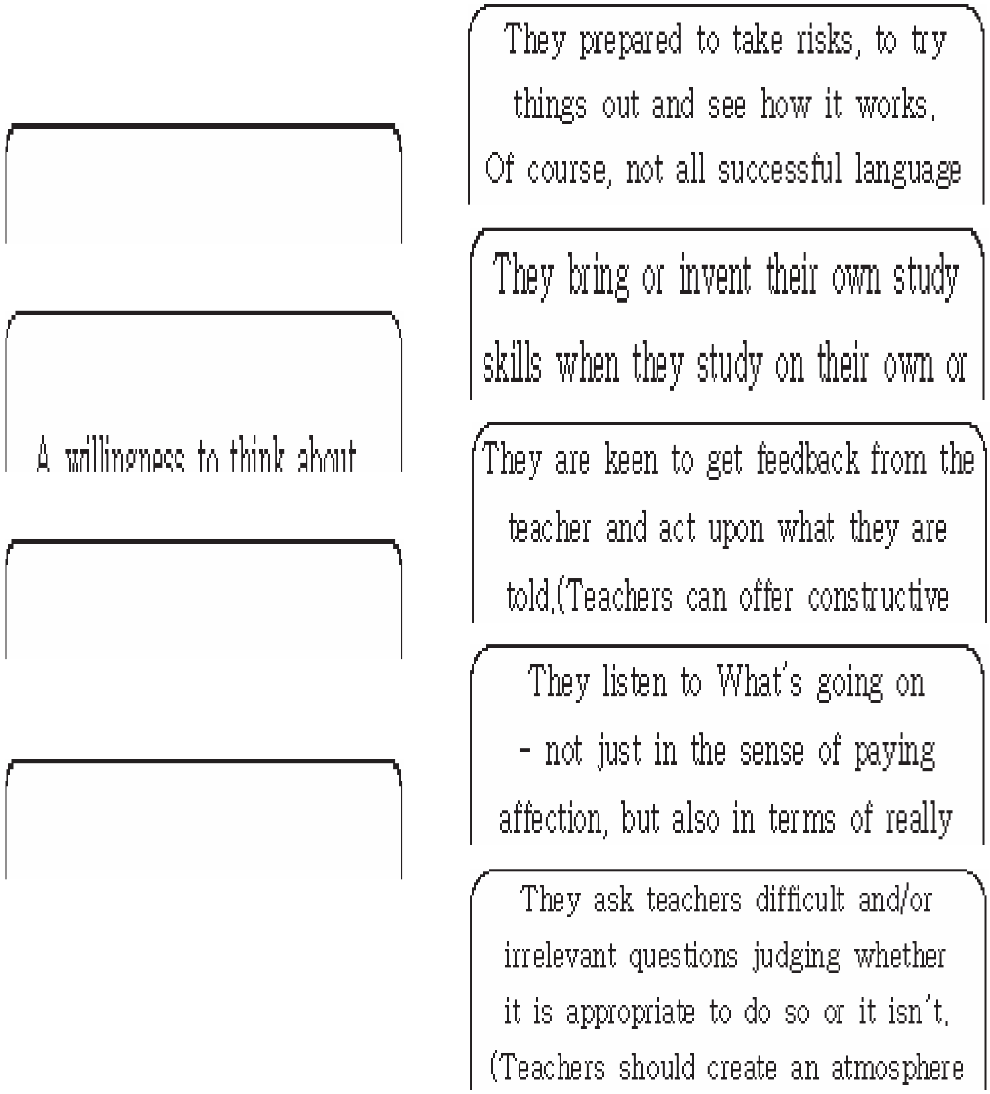
- **Part 1: Simple Information**

1. (Chapter 1)	What is *TTT*?	(1 point)
2. (Chapter 1)	What is *STT*?	(1 point)
3. (Chapter 2)	What is *instrumental motivation*?	(1 point)
4. (Chapter 2)	What is *integrative motivation*?	(1 point)
5. (Chapter 2) Fill in the names for student levels: Beginners		(1 point)
6. (Chapter 3)	What is *proximity*?	(1 point)
7. (Chapter 3)	What is *appropriacy*?	(1 point)
8. (Chapter 4)	What does *ESA* mean?	(1 point)
9. (Chapter 4)	What does *PPP* mean?	(1 point)
10. (Chapter 4)	What does *CLT* mean?	(1 point)
11. (Chapter 4)	What is a *discovery activity*?	(1 point)
12. (Chapter 5)	What is a *complement*?	(1 point)
13. (Chapter 5)	What is a *particular preposition*?	(1 point)
14. (Chapter 5)	What is a *determiner*?	(1 point)
15. (Chapter 5)	What is a *paralinguistic feature*?	(1 point)

Figure 3 shows an activity from one of the student-designed tests. This is one of the activities designed by a group working on Chapter 2 of *How to Teach English*. As we can see, this is a matching exercise, though it is not a simple one-on-one exercise, since there are fewer boxes in the left column. There can be a problem in marking matching exercises, since one mistake causes at least one other choice to be wrong. Test-designers therefore need to be aware of this, and should be careful in the allocation of marks.

Figure 3. Student-Designed Test of *How to Teach English*: Chapter 2

31. Some learners seem to be more engaged with a progress of learning and take advantage of what's going on more than others. They possess some common characteristics. Match the items on the right to the items on the left (using lines). (4 points)



It is also worth noting that there are some grammar mistakes in the top right-hand box: "They [are] prepared to take risks, to try things out and see how it [they] works [work]." This is mentioned here, not as an exercise in error correction, but in order to illustrate an important point, i.e., that test questions (especially in high-stakes tests) must be grammatically correct and semantically unambiguous. If the grammar is open to question, then test-takers can justifiably complain about the question and ask that it be cancelled. If the question words support more than one interpretation (semantically ambiguous), then test-takers can demand that their version of the answer be accepted. Writing test items thus requires a great deal of rigor. It is easy to write "What-am-I-thinking?" questions, only to find that students have understood the question in a different way. Test questions must be re-read, piloted on sample test-takers, revised, and re-revised, until there is no possibility of misinterpretation.

Figure 4 shows a feedback page. This is very helpful for test-takers and test designers. For test-takers, it helps them to organize their thoughts about their learning needs, based on the ease or difficulty they experienced while completing the test. If we remember that assessment is primarily intended to give information to students, then it follows that even this test must help students to formulate new learning goals. For the test designer, this feedback sheet provides important information, not only regarding the achievements and abilities of the students, but also their perceptions of the test and the relative validity and usefulness of the test items.

Figure 4: *How to Teach English* Test: Feedback

1. How did you feel about this "teamwork" test?	
2. Did the test tell you about your learning process?	
3. Did the test help your language skills?	
4. Did the test help your creative-thinking skills?	
5. Did the test help your critical-thinking skills?	
6. Did the test raise your social consciousness?	
7. Did the test help you in any way?	
8. What was the purpose of the test?	
9. Did the test encourage collaboration?	
10. How could this test be improved?	

RESULTS

There is little space here to perform detailed analysis of the results of this study. Instead, it must suffice to say that it has been proceeding for two years, that four groups of students have so far experienced this test-design format, and that the results, as measured by the questionnaire in Figure 4, along with classroom-observation of the test-making and test-making process, have been positive. An advantage of the tertiary learning environment is that once the pilot course has been taken, the information about course procedure disseminates very quickly, so that subsequent students enter the course already conversant with the requirements and expectations. So it was that the second year's student-designed tests proceeded quite smoothly, with none of the testing-culture-shock of the first year. Students were quite happy with the fact that they were expected to design an open-book, higher-order-thinking test for their peers, and that they were going to mark the results of that test.

It is interesting that the four tests taken to date have shown little difference in terms of grade results. Each test was allocated 20% of the final grade, and of this, 10% was given to the test-design process, as observed and evaluated by the teacher. Only 10% was given to the actual results of the test, but it has been noticeable that most students have scored in the 90s (out of 100). One could put this high scoring rate down to peer-pressure and "friendly"marking, but the writer has observed that students do not want to score badly on tests written by their peers, and that they study the textbook intensively in order to avoid this. It has also been noticeable that the test-design process (also 10%) has been characterized by effective collaboration, group decision-making, and considerable out-of-class, self-directed "homework." Finally, students have commented on the questionnaire (Figure 4) that the test-design process raised their awareness of assessment methods and purposes.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this open-book, group test uses a number of test formats and asks a variety of questions of the test-takers. There are no language performance tasks, no listening activities, and no explicit speaking activities (the business-meeting format of this test, resulting from group discussion of goals and allocation of tasks is in itself a speaking/listening activity, and teachers can use this opportunity to observe students using the target language), but the test has done its job of getting students to review the material in the textbook. It has also carried out its role in a non-threatening manner, using collaboration rather than competition, and simulating a real-life, report-writing situation.

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The Relationships Among Test-Taker Variables and CBT Reading Scores

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Abstract

The use of computer-based tests (CBT) in language testing has been proposed. Although many studies confirmed their equivalence to paper-and-pencil tests, most ignored individual differences of test-takers. Recent studies have focused on three test-taker variables (anxiety, attitudes, and familiarity) because they can affect test performance. However, there are very few studies which investigate the relationships among these three variables and CBT reading comprehension. Therefore, this correlational study was conducted to examine such relationships. The data were collected from undergraduate Thai students using a questionnaire and a reading comprehension CBT. Pearson correlation and multiple regression were employed in the data analysis. The findings in this study indicate both significant and non-significant relationships among the variables and the CBT scores. There was a significant negative relationship between attitudes and anxiety. The CBT scores meaningfully correlated with attitudes and with anxiety. The relationships among computer familiarity and other variables were not conclusive. Finally, the implications, limitations of the study, and potential directions for future research are discussed.

Introduction

In this era of globalization, English is certainly an international language playing a crucial role as a common language for international communities. In countries where English is a foreign language, such as Thailand, reading is a very useful and practical skill for learning English. In Thai schools, students start learning to read in English in their very first English course. They read from a few words to longer sentences, and gradually whole texts. At the end of the English reading course, testing and evaluation is usually conducted For this, the most common format of language testing is a paper-and-pencil exam, such as the multiple choice test, the cloze test, etc. This format of language testing has been traditionally used to measure students' achievement in their language learning.

Nevertheless, computers have been used in language testing since the 1980s, initially as an adaptation of traditional paper-and-pencil tests because of their ease of marking and immediate delivery of scores to the test-takers. Later, Item Response Theory techniques were incorporated into computerized testing, also called computer adaptive testing. The GMAT, GRE, and TOEFL are examples of exams making use of computer adaptive testing.

In Thailand, the use of computers in the language classroom is mainly for instructional purposes. If computerized testing were employed, it would increase the utilization of the existing computers. However, if the mode of language testing becomes computerized, test-takers with different characteristics might think and react to this new mode differently. Test-taker characteristics related to computerized testing might affect the elicitation of their language used during the testing. The affected test scores, thus, can not be claimed to represent the true abilities of the students. In order to minimize those extraneous variables of the test scores, we need to identify those characteristics and observe if they are significantly related to the test scores.

Test-Taker Variables

Many studies have confirmed the equivalence or the comparability of the modes of testing (Mead & Drasgow, 1993; Young, Shermis, Brutten, & Perkins, 1996; Choi, Kim, & Boo, 2003). However, these studies of score equivalence between CBT and paper-and-pencil (P&P) tests largely ignore individual differences of the test-takers. Studies have suggested that there are three individual differences or characteristics that have potential effects on test scores: computer anxiety, computer attitudes and computer familiarity (Shermis & Lombard, 1998; Taylor, Kirsch, Eignor, & Jamieson, 1999; Desai, 2001; Kenyon & Malabonga, 2001; Goldberg & Pedulla, 2002; McDonald, 2002).

There are studies on the relationships among the three characteristics (Busch, 1995; Bradley & Russell,1997; Whitley, 1997; Chua, Chen, & Wong, 1999; Beckers & Schmidt, 2003; Mizrachi & Shoham, 2004) and also on the impact of those three characteristics on test scores (Lee, 1986; Russell, 1999; Sawaki, 2001). However, very few studies investigate the relationships among these three test-taker characteristics or the relationships among these variables and CBT reading comprehension scores in particular. The relationships, if found, can provide significant explanations of the students' success or failure in taking computer-based reading comprehension tests.

Therefore, it is important to investigate the relationships among these three factors and the CBT reading comprehension ability of the test-takers. This study, thus, aims to investigate the relationships among the three test-takers' characteristics and their relationships with the CBT reading comprehension ability.

Research Method and Procedure

This study is a correlational research investigation which aims to determine the relationship among three test-taker variables and the reading comprehension CBT scores of students with high, average, and low language proficiency. Therefore, correlational analyses were employed to calculate the data.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The instruments employed in the study are the Computer Anxiety, Familiarity, and Attitudes Rating Scale (CAFARS) and the Reading Comprehension Computer-Based Test (RC-CBT).

CAFARS, a P&P questionnaire, consists of two parts. The first part asks for necessary general demographic information which includes the participant's name, identification number, gender, etc. The second part is designed to determine the participant's level of computer anxiety, computer familiarity, and computer attitudes in the form of 30 questions using Likert-type scales. Twenty minutes was allotted to complete this part.

The RC-CBT takes 60 minutes. There are 36 multiple-choice questions, consisting of four passages ranging from about 200 to about 500 words. The texts are taken from magazines, journals, books, and newspapers. The topics are in business, economics, and general social issues.

Both instruments have gone through a validation process. The research tools were piloted with 30 students who had similar characteristics with the participants of the main study. The reliability of the CAFARS was assessed by using Cronbach's alpha formula via SPSS 11.0 for Windows. The calculated Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was 0.648. An item analysis was conducted to improve the validity and reliability of the RC-CBT, and Cronbach's alpha formula via SPSS 11.0 for Windows was employed to obtain the reliability coefficients. The calculated Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was 0.893.

PARTICIPANTS AND DATA COLLECTION

Ninety fourth-year EFL students were randomly selected and assigned to three groups of language ability, high, average, and low, according to their previous performances in the basic English courses.

In the process of data collection, the objectives and significance of the study and reasons for using the tools were explained to the participants. They were asked to answer the CAFARS and the RC-CBT carefully and were assured that their personal information would not be disclosed. Students completed the paper-and-pencil CAFARS in 20 minutes and completed the RC-CBT in 60 minutes.

Demographic data of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Data

Student Groups	Male	Female	Age Range
High Ability	14	16	20-26
Average Ability	12	18	20-27
Low Ability	15	15	20-28

DATA ANALYSIS

The data were analyzed in two steps for each of the three groups of students. Firstly, descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation, and range of score for each variable were carried out. Secondly, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated via SPSS 11.0 for Windows to indicate the relationships among the three variables from the CAFARS, and also the relationships among the three variables and the participants' performance from the RC-CBT and the CAFARS.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics for each variable of the high ability group are presented in Table 2. Computer attitudes and computer familiarity had more or less the same variability from the central points in their distribution, 4.316 and 4.312, respectively. The standard deviations of computer anxiety and CBT scores were 3.696 and 2.949, respectively.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the High Ability Group

Variables	Mean	SD	Max	Min
Attitudes	33.30	4.316	39	21
Anxiety	20.17	3.696	31	14
Familiarity	28.60	4.312	38	20
CBT Scores	22.17	2.949	27	17

Table 3 represents the intercorrelations among the three variables and the CBT reading comprehension scores of the high ability group. The relationship between computer attitudes and computer anxiety was highly and negatively correlated (r = -0.710, $p < 0.05$). There was a moderate positive relationship between computer attitudes and computer familiarity (r = 0.461, $p < 0.05$),and there was a moderate negative relationship between computer anxiety and computer familiarity (r = -0.573, $p < 0.05$).

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Coefficients of the High Ability Group

	Attitudes	Anxiety	Familiarity	CBT Scores
Attitudes	1	-0.710*	0.461*	0.627*
Anxiety		1	-0.573*	-0.531*
Familiarity			1	0.315
CBT Scores				1

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

The correlation between computer attitudes and CBT scores was 0.627 ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, they significantly correlated with each other at a moderate level. As expected, computer anxiety correlated negatively with CBT scores. The correlation coefficient was -0.531 ($p < 0.05$). The relationship between computer familiarity and CBT score was non-significant (r = 0.315).

Descriptive statistics for each variable of the average ability group are presented in Table 4. Computer familiarity had the greatest standard deviation, 3.801. The standard deviations of computer anxiety, computer attitudes, and CBT scores were 3.461, 3.202, and 3.096, respectively.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of the Average Ability Group

Variables	Mean	SD	Max	Min
Attitudes	32.43	3.202	40	27
Anxiety	20.57	3.461	28	15
Familiarity	29.63	3.801	36	20
CBT Scores	18.00	3.096	23	12

Table 5 represents the intercorrelations among the three variables and the CBT reading comprehension scores of the average ability group. There was a moderate negative relationship between computer attitudes and computer anxiety (r = -0.558, $p < 0.05$). Computer attitudes and computer anxiety were not significantly correlated with computer familiarity.

Table 5. Pearson Correlation Coefficients of the Average Ability Group

	Attitudes	Anxiety	Familiarity	CBT Scores
Attitudes	1	-.558*	.098	.383*
Anxiety		1	-.330	-.380*
Familiarity			1	.522*
CBT Scores				1

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

The relationship between computer attitudes and CBT scores was weak (r = 0.383, $p < 0.05$) which was similar to the correlation between computer anxiety and CBT scores (r = -0.380, $p < 0.05$). There was a significant relationship between computer familiarity and CBT score (r = 0.522, $p < 0.05$).

Descriptive statistics for each variable of the low ability group are presented in Table 6. The standard deviations of computer attitudes, computer anxiety, and computer familiarity were 4.625, 4.489, and 4.073, respectively. CBT scores had the least standard deviation of 2.97.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of the Low Ability Group

Variables	Mean	SD	Max	Min
Attitudes	32.30	4.625	40	23
Anxiety	19.70	4.489	26	10
Familiarity	28.40	4.073	37	22
CBT Scores	13.07	2.970	18	7

Table 7 represents the intercorrelations among the three variables and the CBT reading comprehension scores of the low ability group. There was a rather strong negative relationship between computer attitudes and computer anxiety (r = -0.690, $p < 0.05$). The relationship between computer anxiety and computer familiarity was moderately and negatively correlated (r = -0.533, $p < 0.05$) while there was a moderate positive relationship between computer attitudes and computer familiarity (r = 0.446, $p < 0.05$).

Table 7. Pearson Correlation Coefficients of the Low Ability Group

	Attitudes	Anxiety	Familiarity	CBT Scores
Attitudes	1	-.690*	.446*	.506*
Anxiety		1	-.533*	-.371*
Familiarity			1	.471*
CBT Scores				1

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

The relationship between computer attitudes and CBT scores was moderate (r = 0.506, $p < 0.05$) which was similar to the relationship between computer familiarity and CBT scores (r = .471, $p < 0.05$). There was a weak negative relationship between computer anxiety and CBT score (r = -0.371, $p < 0.05$).

It can be concluded that the computer attitudes and computer anxiety was significantly and negatively correlated in all groups. There was a strong relationship between the two variables for the high and low groups (r = -0.71, -0.690, $p < 0.05$) while there was a moderate relationship for the average group (r = -0.558, $p < 0.05$). There was a moderate positive relationship between computer attitudes and computer familiarity in the high and low ability groups (r = 0.461, 0.446, $p < 0.05$), but there was no significant relationship in the average ability group. The relationship between computer anxiety and computer familiarity was moderately and negatively correlated for the high and low groups (r = -0.573, -0.533, $p < 0.05$), but there was no significant relationship in the average ability group.

Furthermore, the CBT scores correlated with computer attitudes of the high, average, and low groups at strong, weak, and moderate levels, respectively (r = 0.627, 0.383, 0.506, $p < 0.05$). There was a moderate negative relationship between CBT scores and computer anxiety for the high ability group (r = -0.531, $p < 0.05$) while there was a weak relationship for the moderate and low ability groups (r = -0.380, -0.371, $p < 0.05$). Finally, the correlation coefficients between CBT scores and computer familiarity showed a moderate relationship for the average and low ability groups (r = 0.522, 0.446, $p < 0.05$),while there was no significant relationship for the high ability group.

DISCUSSION

Previous findings from research studies and theories were adopted in this study as a basis for examining the strength of the relationships among the three variables. The findings showed that the relationships between computer anxiety and computer attitudes were significantly and negatively correlated for all three groups which was consistent with a previously proposed theory (Whitley, 1997; Bradley & Russell, 1997). The relationships between computer attitudes and computer familiarity from the findings were moderately correlated for the high and low ability groups, which was consistent with previous findings (Busch, 1995; Mizrachi & Shoham, 2004). However, the average ability group showed no significant relationship. In addition, the finding also showed that the relationships between computer familiarity and computer anxiety were moderately and negatively correlated for the high and low groups, which was also consistent with previous findings (Chua et al., 1999; Becker & Schmidt, 2003). Nevertheless, there was no significant relationship in the average ability group.

In examining the strength of relationship among the three variables and the CBT scores, the findings showed that the relationships between CBT scores and computer attitudes for the high, average, and low groups were correlated significantly at strong, weak, and moderate levels, respectively, which was consistent with previous findings (Russell, 1999). Test-takers with higher computer attitude scores had significantly higher CBT scores than those with lower computer attitude scores. The findings also showed that there was a moderate negative relationship between CBT scores and computer anxiety for the high ability group and showed a weak relationship for the moderate and low ability groups. Test-takers with higher computer anxiety tended to have significantly lower CBT scores, while test-takers with lower computer anxiety tended to have significantly higher CBT scores. Finally, the findings of this study showed a moderate relationship between CBT scores and computer familiarity for average and low ability groups, while there was no significant relationship for the high ability group. There is a possibility that test-takers of the high ability group are more or less indifferent in their computer familiarity. These conflicting results are also shown in previous studies (Lee, 1986; Sawaki, 2001) where there was no consensus in the findings.

CONCLUSION

The findings in this study indicated a significant negative relationship between computer attitudes and computer anxiety and the CBT scores, which were meaningfully correlated with computer attitudes and with computer anxiety. Administering computer-based reading tests, thus, should be done carefully. The CBT reading scores of test-takers' with different levels of computer-related variables might not represent their real abilities. Language teachers, test developers, and ELT-related people should find ways to prevent or minimize the negative effects of those variables. Hence, people who initiate the use of CBT reading tests need to familiarize themselves with the computerized test (e.g., how to take the CBT test, how to administer it, how to prepare test-takers for this new test format by advising them of the advantages of the CBT, how to familiarize them with this kind of test, etc.)

One limitation of the study that needs to be addressed is the issue of external validity, that is, the extent to which the findings can be generalized. It must be noted that the aim of the study was to explore the pattern of relationships within a set of variables, and not to establish the prevalence of a particular condition within a population. Samples in this study consisted of the fourth-year undergraduates from one department of a university. Thus, it cannot be viewed as representative of a wider larger population.

Future studies are suggested to include more samples from a wider population to increase external validity. A cause-effect study, if applied, can give more information on the investigated relationships. Furthermore, additional qualitative studies on this issue will provide better understanding of the relationship among these variables.

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Korea's National Curriculum: Form and Function - How Communicative Is It?

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the implications of communicative language teaching in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) as laid out in the Korean national curriculum for high schools. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is widely accepted as an effective teaching method in English as second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) contexts. As in many other Asian countries, English is spoken as a foreign language in Korea. The Korean Ministry of Education has realized the importance of CLT in the curriculum and included it in its 7th English Curriculum which was designed in 1997 and implemented since 2001. The content of the curriculum is carefully designed to focus on all types of language functions and cover most of the areas of communication. The study and its test items are based on the contents of the new high school curriculum and its prescribed language structures and functions are focused on to provide appropriate situations to elicit written answers from the subjects. The same set of test items as used in the written part of the survey was supplied to the subjects for oral pair work and the responses were recorded with a help of a micro tape recorder. Errors were calculated and classified to show how many and what types of errors were being made by the participants. The results obtained could be of great interest to classroom teachers as well as to administrators and National Curriculum designers.

INTRODUCTION

Language is made up of certain forms that consist of language *substance*. Substance refers to the undifferentiated raw materials out of which language is constructed. It is divided into phonic substance (i.e., the sound waves of speech) and graphic substance (i.e., the symbols used in writing). When we organize substance into recognizable and meaningful patterns, we have a language form. *Form* is the realization of a combination of units in a language. It is the phonological or grammatical structures of a language. The letters h, u, s, o, e can be rearranged into a recognizable and meaningful pattern “house” as a word. Here the letters/sounds h, u, s, o, e have substance and “house” has both substance and form.

Language is used to communicate ideas, to express attitudes, feelings, and so on. The role language plays in the context of society or the individual is referred to as *function*. Richards, Platt, and Webber (1985) state:

> In language teaching, language functions are often described as categories of behavior; e.g., requests, apologies, complaints, offers, compliments, etc.

> The functional uses of language cannot be determined simply by studying the grammatical structure of sentences. It considers the individual as a socialbeing and investigates the way in which he or she acquires language and uses it in order to communicate with others in his or her social environment. (p. 113)

The term *competence* refers to the speakers' knowledge of their language, the system of rules that they have mastered so that they are able to produce and understand an indefinite number of sentences, and recognize grammatical errors as well as ambiguities. It is an idealized concept of language, i.e., language code, which is opposite to the notion of performance encoding or decoding of languages. Richards et al. (1985) state:

> Competence is a person's internalized grammar of language. This means a person's ability to create and understand sentences, including sentences they have never heard before. It also includes a person's knowledge of what are and what are not sentences of a particular language. (p. 52)

Thus, for them the term *competence* refers to a speaker's knowledge of their language and the system of rules that they have mastered so that they are able to produce and understand an indefinite number of sentences and recognize grammatical errors as well as ambiguities. It is an idealized concept of language (i.e., language code), which is the opposite of the notion of performance (i.e., encoding or decoding of languages).

Although all the sounds and structures are attempted, a number of sounds and grammatical items, etc. are usually specified in advance of a course of study. The specification can vary widely from course to course. Learners may also vary widely in the degree of mastery of structures they attain. But this kind of knowledge is not adequate for those students who want to learn a language in order to make use of it rather than to know about it. It is now the uncontroversially accepted view that languages are learned so that people can communicate and that communication involves more than structures alone.

The introduction of the communicative approach in the 1970s and 1980s has done a lot to expand on the goal of creating “communicative competence” compared to earlier methods that professed the same objective.

The theory of communicative competence gave rise to various methods for which the common term communicative method will do. The increased interest in language functions and appropriateness of language use, as opposed to teaching of grammatical forms or formal language teaching, inspired the development of notional-functional and situational syllabuses. In situational syllabuses, how language is used in different situations or social settings (e.g., in a bank or in a social gathering) is addressed. Situational syllabuses aim to recreate these situations and to teach various linguistic functions involved such as requesting, thanking, complaining, and instructing, etc.

In notional-functional syllabuses, the content of a course is organized in terms of notions, or concepts, like time, duration, frequency, direction, and motion, which the learners require to communicate in particular functional contexts. Major communicative functions include evaluation, persuasion, emotional expression, and the making of social relations.

The content of the Korean National English Curriculum covers the notional-functional areas and consists of a set of language forms and functions which are realized linguistically by grammatical structures and appropriate vocabulary to be used in appropriate situations

METHODOLOGY

The high schools in this study were selected randomly from the Gwangju-Jeonnam area. There were eight schools selected altogether. Test items were supplied on the basis of the national curriculum to determine the students' formal as well as functional competence. Their oral responses were recorded with the help of a micro tape-recorder. The same set of test items was supplied to the students to have conversations in pairs and these responses were also recorded. The analysis and interpretation of the research work is divided into different sub-topics. The responses in written form had their own norms and values. The researcher classified the errors committed by the students into broad categories such as errors in structure (including S-V agreement, tenses, word-order, and direct questions), errors in punctuation, errors in the use of functional words (including conjunctions, articles, prepositions, and pronouns), errors in lexical items, and errors in spelling. The errors by the students in their responses in spoken form were classified into the following broad categories: errors in pronunciation, fluency (pauses), intonation, stress, grammar, and repetition of words, lexical items, context/comprehension, and others.

As it has already been stated that functional competence refers to the user's ability to use language in the context taking the particular role and relationship of the participants into account, the researcher asked the students to have a conversation on the same situation as that given for the written test, in pairs and in turns, and she recorded their dialogues with the help of a tape-recorder. This time the researcher observed only the performance of the students as to whether they had followed the proper functions/structures of language in the given situation or not, ignoring all the other grammatical errors.

The students' errors in the functional aspect of the language were also categorized. How many types of functions does language have? This question cannot be answered definitively because the complex nature of language and society and their interrelationships defy any such enumeration, and in part because there is no single right or proper way of classifying language functions. The functions of language which the students were tested on were classified into broad functional categories following those of Van Ek's (1975) categories. According to him, language functions can be classified into the following categories: (a) getting things done, (b) socializing, (c) expressing and finding out intellectual attitudes, (d) imparting factual information, (e) expressing moral attitudes, and (f) expressing and finding out emotional attitudes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to find out how well the National Curriculum is being implemented. This paper also discusses communicative language teaching (CLT) and its implementation in Korean high schools. This study is designed to investigate students performance in language functions provided them in the curriculum. One would hypothesize that the students would not be able perform the language functions as well in their spoken responses as in their written responses. The present study investigates problems with the implementation of the curriculum in classrooms and its results, and suggests ways of enhancing student performance in the future.

There were eighteen questions asked to the students in a questionnaire. Only two students out of one hundred and twenty did not respond to the functional aspect of the test. Below is the detailed analysis of the test results.

Table 1. Analysis of Errors in Written Responses

Major Error Areas	No. of Errors	% of Errors
Structure	270	36.43%
Functional Words	64	8.63%
Lexical Items	188	25.33%
Spelling	51	6.88%
Punctuation	238	32.11%

There were a total of 1,157 sentences written by the respondents for the analysis of written responses (see Table 1). They made 36.43% of their mistakes in structures. This means that the students were found to be weakest in making sentences wit correct structure. They made 32.11% of their mistakes in punctuation. This means while writing responses, they could not use the necessary punctuation marks in appropriate places. The students made 25.33% of their mistakes in lexical items, meaning that they used inappropriate words in their responses. In functional or grammatical words and spelling, they made 8.63% and 6.88% mistakes, respectively. The respondents seem to be somewhat weaker in structures, punctuation, and lexical items. They provided more satisfactory answers in using functional words and spelling categories (errors between 5% and 10%). The respondents from urban areas were found to be comparatively more competent then those from more remote areas. Likewise, the respondents from technical high schools are found to be better in their written performance than those from general high schools.

Table 2. Analysis of Errors in Spoken Responses

Major Error Areas	No. of Errors	% of Errors
Pronunciation	808	23.03%
Fluency/Pauses	749	21.35%
Unclear Words	730	20.80%
Repetition of Words	605	17.24%
Lexical Items	509	14.50%
Comprehension	44	1.25%
Context/Situation	63	1.79%

The students responded to 982 sentences on the oral test. They made 23.03% of their mistakes in pronunciation, 21.36% in fluency/pauses, 20.80% in speaking unclear words, 17.24% in repetition of words, and 14.50% mistakes in using inappropriate vocabulary. Finally, they made the lowest percentage of mistakes in comprehension and context/situation at 1.25% and 1.79%, respectively (see Table 2). The mistakes were classified based on their detectability in normal speech. This study shows that the respondents were weak in pronunciation and very weak in fluency/pauses and in speaking unclear words. Many of the words students used, were not used in the appropriate positions in their utterances, making them semantically or syntactically unclear and distinct from the pronunciation category. Likewise, they made a considerable number of mistakes in repetition of words and inappropriate vocabulary. They provided more satisfactory responses in comprehension and understanding of situations. In comparison, in both types of responses (written and oral), the respondents from urban areas are found to be comparatively more competent than those from more remote areas. In comparing the students' performance in language functions in written and spoken forms, it was found that the students were not able to adopt the actual language function or patterns in their conversation. The students were more competent in the written form of the language than they were in the spoken form in using the language functions. They often could not express their language functions voluntarily. Their teachers had to encourage them 80% at the time to respond in the conversation part of the survey.

As has already been stated, functional competence refers to the user's ability to use language in the context taking the particular role and relationship of the participants into account. The researcher asked pairs of students to engage in a dialogue pertaining to the same situations that they had earlier been given in their written test. Their oral output was recorded with a tape-recorder. At this time, the researcher observed the performance of the students only in relation to whether they had followed the proper functions/structures of language in the given situation or not, ignoring all grammatical errors. The researcher classified the language functions asked to the students into broad categories following Van Ek's (1975) functional category.

The students were found to be more competitive in expressing and finding out emotional attitudes, expressing moral attitudes, and expressing and finding out intellectual attitudes with 80%, 78%, and 70% correct responses, respectively, in these areas (see Table 3). Also, they made 62% correct responses in imparting factual information and 50% correct responses in socializing. Their performance was weakest in getting things done, with only 37% correct responses in this area of language functions.

Table 3. Analysis of Errors in Functional Responses

S.N.	Language Functions	Total No. of Respondents	% Correct Responses
1	Getting things done	35	37%
2	Socializing	12	50%
3	Expressing and finding out intellectual attitudes	14	70%
4	Imparting factual information	28	62%
5	Expressing moral attitudes	19	78%
6	Expressing and finding out emotional attitudes	10	80%
	Total	118	

It has been a very short period since the implementation of the new curriculum, but there should already be positive results appearing. We should not place the blame for this lack of positive results on the student everyone should be aware that there are many factors which directly influence the results. The main reason is that the students are not getting enough time for language exposure since they are fully occupied with preparation for the university entrance examination. The second reason found in this study is that the teachers instruct their students in their native language (Korean). As the medium of instruction is not English, and because English is not used in daily life in Korea, opportunities for students to practice English in real-life situations are rare.

At the time of the field research, the researcher held interviews with the subject teachers to indirectly ascertain more about the situation relating to student responses. Of the fourteen teachers, 100% responded that their students were not competent in the focused objectives of the curriculum (i.e., the communicative aspect of language learning)because they were more concerned with performing well on the university entrance examination, which does not test the communicative aspect of language learning. Another reason was that some of the teachers are not totally familiar with the new methods of instruction that is, the teachers are not trained to implement the newly adopted curriculum. This research was performed on a limited number of respondents, but reveals some generalities about the current teaching situation.

Conclusion

This paper has dealt with perspectives of the implementation of the Korean high school English curriculum in the current situation. The most significant outcome of this study is the evidence of a disparity between what the curriculum aims to teach and what the learners are achieving through this new communicative curriculum. The results point out attitudes and motivation among the subjects toward the new curriculum. It reveals that the respondents are not as motivated by the new curriculum as they are by the university entrance examination, which doesn't include a communicative aspect. The teachers themselves are not familiar with the use of the new approach to language teaching (i.e., the communicative approach), so they are not making the best use of it. Thus, the concerned authorities should provide orientation classes regularly to make the teachers more aware of and familiar with the proper techniques to handle the new syllabus easily. Students should be encouraged to speak by being provided with the appropriate environment from the beginning of their classes. Teachers as well as students should be provided with additional learning materials and classroom situations and enough time to have enough exposure to communicative language teaching and learning activities.

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Appendix A

QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE RESPONDENTS

What would you say in the situations below?

1. You are meeting a new friend. Make a short conversation between you and your new friend.
2. Your partner wants to take an examination but is not well prepared. Now advise him/her in this situation.
3. Your school is going to take part in a sports competition. Have a short conversation with your friend concerning who will win the match.
4. Your friend couldn't pass the final examination. Express your sympathy to your friend.
5. While you were on the way to school yesterday, you saw an accident. Describe that accident to your friend.
6. You see someone who looks like your friend; you go up and begin talking. When he turns round, you see it is not who you thought it was. Apologize to him.
7. You are in a classroom. The window beside you is closed, and you feel too hot. Now ask permission to your teacher to open that window.
8. Your friend hasn't done the homework. Ask him/her to do the homework.
9. You meet a foreigner on the way to your school. How do you start a talk to him?
10. You are going for an educational tour organized by your school. One of your friends is not interested in going. Make him/her go.
11. You think that it will certainly rain, because there is a dark cloud moving in the sky. But your friend doubts it. Make a short conservation with your friend.
12. Your telephone at your house is ringing, how do you respond to it?
13. A guest has come to your house and you are offering him to have dinner with you, but he is refusing. Have a short conversation with the guest.
14. Your friend is feeling bored. Now give him/her a good suggestion.
15. What are your plans for the weekend? Have a short conversation to your friend.
16. Ask your friend to see the play which you are performing in next Saturday.
17. Describe your first day at school.
18. How do you practice English speaking? Tell to your friend.

Appendix B

LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS FOR THE RESPONSES

The following language functions were given to the students from the new high school English curriculum:

i) Getting things done:
- Making plans and expressing intentions.
- Making suggestions and giving advice.
- Making requests.
- Persuading someone to do something.
- Issuing warnings.

ii) Socializing:
- Making offers

iii) Expressing and finding out emotional attitudes.
- Expressing sympathy.

iv) Expressing and finding out intellectual attitudes.
- Asking for permission.

v) Imparting factual information.
- Describing purpose and function.
- Identifying.
- Describing.
- Talking about the past.

vi) Expressing moral attitudes.
- Expressing certainty.
- Expressing ability/inability to do something.
- Apologizing and responding to an apology.

Failure in an ESP Program: Why?

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ABSTRACT

Despite the recent significant developments in EFL practices in Vietnam, ESP teaching has received insufficient attention. Many ESP teachers at the tertiary level, still adhere to the Grammar Translation Method, which results in ineffective communicative competence. The purpose of this paper is to report on an investigation into the effectiveness of teaching ESP in a university in Vietnam. The chief questions addressed are: (a) What beliefs concerning ESP teaching and learning do teachers and students have? (b) Which method has been used in ESP classrooms? (c) Are the materials appropriate to the students' levels and interests? and (d) How good is their communicative competence after completing the course? Results show that most teachers recognize that using appropriate teaching methodologies and materials is a crucial factor in ESP teaching. However, the testing results reveal that students' communicative competence is not well developed. Lack of ESP teacher training programs, administration, and inappropriate materials are possible constraints leading to the failure. This paper will, therefore, discuss the teaching implications, materials adaptation, and professional development in ESP practices. Since the issues raised in this paper are likely to resemble those in other ESP settings, the authors will promote discussions of the generalizability of the results, especially in the Korean context.

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, there have been dramatic changes in the economy and society of Vietnam, which have an important impact on language teaching and learning at the tertiary level. The economic open-door policies pursued by the government of Vietnam and recent economic reforms have increased the demand for English-speaking people who are expected to be communicatively competent (Le, 2001). However, most ESP students fail to be able to communicate verbally after they have finished their university English courses. To have a better understanding of the issue, let us look at the current situation of ESP in the university.

ESP IN THE UNIVERSITY: THE TRAINING OF ESP TEACHERS

There is no formal ESP teacher training in the university. A typical ESP teacher is a content teacher who is an expert in their field of study and has completed their master's or doctoral degree in an English-speaking country. They have never been trained to be a teacher of English. In other cases, an ESP teacher is a General English teacher who is employed to teach an ESP course. For ESP teachers, there are very few opportunities for professional development, such as seminars or workshops on methodology or materials development.

ESP IN THE UNIVERSITY: ESP COURSE ORGANIZATION

The ESP program in the university consists of two stages. At the first stage, students in all departments (except those majoring in English), such as history, geography, civil engineering, agriculture, and computing, have to take three ESP courses (about 200 hours of instruction) offered by the English Department. The aims of these courses are to activate the learner's passive knowledge of English for them to become much more accurate in their use of grammar and vocabulary and to improve their reading skills. The other language skills, listening, speaking, and writing, are either given insufficient attention or completely neglected. At the second stage, students are enrolled in an ESP course (about 67 hours) offered by their departments.

THE RESEARCH STUDY

This study aimed at eliciting information on teachers' and students' beliefs concerning ESP teaching and learning at the university in the hope that it would contribute to syllabus design, materials development, and revision of the ESP curriculum in the university. The data collected was also expected to be useful for ESP course designers and teachers at other Vietnamese tertiary institutions.

METHODOLOGY

The Questionnaire

The present study used a questionnaire survey of 250 undergraduates and 20 teachers from different departments in the university. There were two questionnaires, one for the students and the other for the teachers. While the questionnaire for the teachers was written in English, the questionnaire for the students was in Vietnamese since the English level of the students was not high enough for them to understand and to express themselves in English.

The student questionnaire was first piloted on 60 students. After the students had completed the questionnaire, they commented on the questionnaire design, content, wording, and layout. Their comments and the feedback from the teachers were fed into the preparation of the final questionnaire. Follow-up interviews with both groups yielded input for the analysis of the research findings.

The pilot student questionnaires for both teachers and students focused on three areas: (a) teacher's methodology, (b) materials, (c) their own English competence. These questionnaires were in the form of a checklist and took about 10 minutes to complete. After the pilot questionnaire was revised, the final questionnaire was administered to ESP students and teachers. The students completed the questionnaire in their ESP classes.

The Interview

The questionnaire survey was followed by interviews with students and the ESP teachers to probe into the research findings obtained from the questionnaires. The interviews were conducted informally in Vietnamese after they had finished their ESP courses. The aim of the interviews was to confirm beliefs concerning teaching and learning ESP expressed in the questionnaire.

The students were asked such questions as: *What did you expect to learn from this ESP course? What are you able to do with your English now? What did you learn most from this course? What skills do you need to improve?*

In their interviews, the teachers were asked questions like: *What do you expect your students to achieve after taking the course? What problems did you have in your teaching? What do you think about your students' English ability after the course?*

The Informal Oral Test

An informal oral test was administered to 100 students who finished their ESP courses. The students were selected randomly from different departments. The aim of the test was to assess their oral communicative abilities at the pre-intermediate level. The test consisted of two phases. In the first phase, students were asked to introduce themselves and give other personal information such as their hobbies and interests. After that, they were asked several questions about their ESP courses and expectations about their future jobs. The test took approximately ten minutes. Students were individually examined by two examiners. One of the examiners was the interlocutor and the other was the assessor. To ensure the reliability and the validity of the results, a rubric was used for marking the test (see Appendix A).

FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Teachers' and Students' Beliefs Concerning ESP Teaching and Learning

The questionnaire showed that most students liked their ESP classes (75%). They were motivated to learn English as ESP was essential for their future jobs. They, therefore, enjoyed learning the technical terms provided in their ESP lessons. Despite their preference for learning vocabulary, these ESP students were dissatisfied with their English because they recognized their inabilities. The majority of students regarded their English proficiency as “average” (68%) and “weak”(16%). Moreover, the questionnaire revealed that students did not usually work in pairs or groups in class. As a result, their use of English for classroom communication was also limited. Students reported that in class they occasionally spoke English with their friends or teachers (78%). The results from the interview and the informal test also supported this. In fact, very few students (7.5%) were able to express their ideas in very simple English sentences, but most students (82%) could hardly say a word in English in response to the simple question, *What do you like or dislike about your ESP classes?* In general, limited chances to practice English in class led to an inability to use English for real-life communication in the majority of these ESP students.

The questionnaire results also indicated that the teachers were aware of the importance of using appropriate materials and methodology in their ESP classes, and most of them thought that their materials were relevant to their students. In reality, however, their misconceptions of the goals of their ESP courses led to what we consider to be inappropriate materials and ineffective teaching practices in their classes. In fact, 89% of the teachers believed that their main job was providing their students with lots of technical terms so that they would able to understand the reading texts through translation. Therefore, it was assumed that ESP students had to develop sufficient reading skills to serve their own future research purposes in. Nonetheless, the interviewed students reported that the English language they had learned through the reading texts seemed not to meet any of their future jobs needs, such as writing reports or making effective oral presentations.

The teachers' beliefs concerning course goals also affected the content of the ESP courses. It can be seen from the questionnaire that vocabulary and reading were ranked the most important, while writing and the oral communicative skills were considered unnecessary. Besides, these ESP teachers also recognized that since they have not been trained in English teaching methodology, they could not exploit the materials effectively by creating interesting activities for their classes. In fact, students reported that the frequently implemented activities in their classes were listening to the teacher, copying the words from the board, doing written exercises, and so on. Communicative activities such as discussion or role-play were rarely or never employed. In summary, the teachers' incorrect assumptions of what their learners' goals were and their lack of teaching expertise may have been a major reason for the inability to develop satisfactory communicative skills among the students.

Content of ESP Courses and Teaching Materials

The results show that the topics for study are selected by the ESP teachers themselves. Most syllabuses are content-oriented and are based on traditional grammar-translation methodology.

Coursebooks are the main means of instruction in ESP teaching in a few departments in the university. Modern coursebooks for teaching English to Business and IT students have found their way into the classrooms, for example, *English for Computer Users* (Cambridge University Press), *Business Law* (Pearson Longman), and *Business Opportunities*(Oxford University Press). Such books are available and widespread in the market in Vietnam today. These coursebooks are accompanied by teacher's books, which provide guidance for ESP teachers and presuppose the development of the four language skills. The reading materials are usually authentic and serve as a source of valuable and often up-to-date professional and cross-cultural information for students, which will enable them to operate in the international professional environment.

However, in most departments, the situation with coursebooks is different. The absence of ESP textbooks for certain specialties leads to the use of General English textbooks in ESP classes. Alternatively, ESP teachers (15 out of 20) create compilations of texts and exercises, most of which are taken from their M.A. courses, encyclopedias, and the Internet without being simplified or adapted; thus the materials are too challenging for their students whose English is at the pre-intermediate level.

On the whole, the majority of ESP materials used in the university:

- are not based on students' needs
- do not cover the four macro-skills
- contain a number of texts by which English tends to be studied through a detailed analysis of these texts in terms of structures. The specialty is

apparent only in the vocabulary list.
- have a limited choice of text types
- lack communicative exercises

Methodology in ESP Classes

The way most ESP teachers viewed the field of ESP had an important influence on their teaching. They believed their main task was to teach technical vocabulary of a given field or profession. For example, if they were teaching students majored in engineering, their task was to teach students lists of words related to engineering through some readings. Consequently, the Grammar Translation Method was recognized as the dominant approach in most ESP classes. The typical ESP classroom was teacher-centered, and the activities employed were reading aloud, translating, asking questions on the text, and doing grammar exercises.

Student and Teacher Perceptions of Competence

In their interviews, most students admitted that it was not easy for them to express themselves in English. That is, they frequently failed to communicate effectively, and lacked confidence in using English.

From the teachers' interview responses, similar problems were identified. In addition, most ESP teachers pointed out that students' English language standard was generally poor. Another concern for the teachers was the system of assessment. In fact, there was no unified system of assessment. There is no formative assessment, and summative assessment is usually conducted in the form of exams at the end of an ESP course. A typical exam generally consists of test items related to reading comprehension, L2-to-L1 translation, and grammar, test items that more readily assess linguistic knowledge rather than communicative competence.

Implications

In light of these findings, it is reasonable to suggest that priority should be placed on the areas of curriculum, materials, and professional development. It is important that an ESP curriculum be developed for the university. The curriculum should define aims and learning outcomes, the content of ESP instruction, and methodology for ESP classes. The curriculum then serves as a guideline for selecting content and for developing high quality materials for particular ESP courses. However, according to Silva (1993), it is not enough for materials to be interesting and up-to-date. What the teachers do with the materials in the classroom is equally important. In other words, the methodological exploitation of the materials, including tasks and activities, also needs careful attention. The results of the study indicated that most teachers were not able to exploit the materials effectively and design communicative activities for their classes. It therefore seems that training in communicative methodology via in-service training seminars and workshops is needed.

It is also necessary to develop a unified, objective, valid, and reliable system of exams, the format of which should be close to that of international examinations. In addition, the objects of assessment should be clearly identified and correlated with the specified aims of ESP. Cooperation between language teachers and content teachers could have a positive influence on ESP instruction. For example, language teachers can help content teachers with methodology while content teachers provide assistance to language teachers if asked for help when complex issues arise in ESP classes. This cooperation would result in more appropriate materials with effective tasks and activities for ESP classes.

Conclusion

Lack of ESP teacher training programs and inappropriate materials are some of the main constraints which lead to the failure in an ESP program in a university in Vietnam. The paper has, therefore, discussed the teaching implications in ESP practices. ESP teachers must be well prepared for developing courses that teach language from many different fields, based on a curriculum and appropriate materials and methodologies. In order to prepare ESP teachers for their job, an ESP curriculum should be developed and more seminars and workshops on methodology and materials development should be provided. It is our sincerest hope that these observations from the study will lend insight into the challenges facing the ESL instructor acting as ESP curriculum developer as well as instructor.

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Appendix A

SPEAKING RUBRIC FOR THE INFORMAL ORAL TEST

Global Rubric for the Interlocutor

10	Fully able to take part in the interaction and fulfill all tasks with ease and fluency. Able to expand on responses with minimal effort. Use of grammar and vocabulary is fairly accurate and appropriate. Pronunciation is clear and does not interfere with comprehension at any time.
8	Able to take part in the interaction and fulfill all tasks with ease and fluency. Use of grammar and vocabulary is fairly accurate though may be unambitious or, if ambitious, is probably flawed. Pronunciation is clear most of the time.
6	Able to take part in most of the interaction and fulfill tasks adequately. Responses may show reluctance to expand on ideas. Use of basic grammatical structures is fairly accurate and appropriate but with some errors. Pronunciation clear and comprehensible most of the time but with marked L1 influence.
4	Able to take part in some of the interaction and fulfill some of the tasks but requires support. May respond to rather than initiate exchanges. Frequent basic grammatical errors and restricted use of vocabulary. Noticeable influence of L1 which affects comprehensibility from time to time.
2	Unable to take part in much of the interaction without substantial support. There may be long, intrusive hesitations. Grammatical errors and lack of vocabulary make interaction very difficult. Influence of L1 makes comprehensibility difficult most of the time.
0	Sample insufficient for assessment.

Detailed Rubric for the Assessor

	Accuracy	Fluency
5	Accurate and appropriate use of basic grammatical structures and vocabulary. Pronunciation clear and comprehensible at all times.	Fully able to take part in the interaction and fulfill all tasks with ease and fluency.
4	Accurate and appropriate use of basic grammatical structures and vocabulary with occasional errors. Pronunciation clear and comprehensible most of the time.	Able to take part in the interaction and fulfill most tasks with ease.
3	Fairly accurate and appropriate use of basic grammatical structures but some errors. Pronunciation clear and comprehensible most of the time but with marked L1 influence.	Able to take part in most of the interaction and fulfill tasks adequately.
2	Frequent basic grammatical errors and restricted use of vocabulary. Noticeable influence of L1 which affects comprehensibility from time to time.	Able to take part in some of the interaction and fulfill some of the tasks but requires support. May respond to rather than initiate exchanges.
1	Grammatical errors and lack of vocabulary make interaction very difficult. Influence of L1 makes comprehensibility difficult most of the time.	Unable to take part in much of the interaction without substantial support. There may be long, intrusive hesitations.
0	Grammar and vocabulary too restricted for interaction. Speech incomprehensible.	Unable to take part on the interaction.

Conference Overview

Presentations of

The 13th Korea TESOL International Conference

From Concept to Context: Trends and Challenges

October 15-16, 2005, Seoul, Korea

The 2005 Korea TESOL Conference Committee gratefully recognizes the following people for presenting research papers, conducting workshops, and leading discussions at the 13th Korea TESOL International Conference. Listings are in alphabetical order by surname (academic preceding commercial presentations), followed by the title of the session; co-presenters are listed separately.

Academic Presentations

Classroom Management

Jin Cheng	Reading Teaching Based on a Social Constructivist Model.
James Life	The Classroom as a Living Organism.
Ya-Chen Su	Students' Changing Views: Employing the Integrated-Skill Approach to Taiwanese EFL Classes.

Computer-Assisted Language Learning

Timothy Allen	Student Website: Technotards Can Do It, Too!
Atsushi Asai	Text-Marking Effects in Online Reading.
William Michael Balsamo	Online Reading Lab and Library for ESL Students.
Ian Brown	CALLing All Poets: Combining Poetry Writing and CALL.
Ian Brown	The Online Teacher Guidebook.
Brett Collins	English Trailers: Student Reactions to Conversation Catalysts.
Andrew Johnson	English Trailers: Student Reactions to Conversation Catalysts.
Andrew Johnson	Interactive Reading: Teaching Reading Skills and Authentic Materials With CALL.
Ross Miller	Copy, Paste, Click, Copy, Paste: English Essays Made Easy.
Thomas Pals	Assessing Levels of Difficulty of Authentic Listening Materials: How Hard Is Hard?
Thomas Pals	Podcasts: Time-Shifting the EFL Classroom.
Timothy Randell	Assessing Levels of Difficulty of Authentic Listening Materials: How Hard Is Hard?
Timothy Randell	Podcasts: Time-Shifting the EFL Classroom.
Michael Shawback	Assessing Levels of Difficulty of Authentic Listening Materials: How Hard Is Hard?
Michael Shawback	Podcasts: Time-Shifting the EFL Classroom.
Mark Sheehan	Interactive Reading: Teaching Reading Skills and Authentic Materials With CALL.
Sean Smith	Student Website: Technotards Can Do It, Too!
Suksan Suppasetseree	Developing CAI Courseware for EFL Learners in Thailand.
Jitpanat Suwanthep	Exploration of Students' Attitudes Toward Learning English Through CALL.

Cross-cultural Issues

Melanie van den Hoven	Assessing Korean EFL Students' Perceptions of Other Cultures.
Hailian Li	Assessing Korean EFL Students' Perceptions of Other Cultures.
David Rear	Teaching Students to Think Critically and Debate in English.
Anthony Schiera	Como Se Dice "Ho-La" en Espanol?

Heidi Vande Voort Nam	The Christian Teacher and the Secular Workplace.
Todd Vercoe	Teaching English to the Asian Mind.
Anchalee Wannaruk	Pragmatic Transfer in EFL Refusals.

Curriculum and Materials Development

Gerry Lassche	Warm-up for Language Learning!

English for Specific Purposes

Craig Bartlett	Adapting to Learning Contracts: An Exploratory Study.
Lan Chi Bui	Failure in an ESP Program: Why?
Minh Chau Bui	Failure in an ESP Program: Why?
Phi Oanh Duong	Failure in an ESP Program: Why?
Minyoung Son	Needs Analysis of Junior High School Students in Korea.
Pisamai Supatranont	Classroom Concordancing: Increasing Vocabulary Size for Academic Reading.

Global and Environmental Education

William Michael Balsamo	Bangladesh Seminar: A Meeting of Two Cultures.
Steve Garrigues	Teaching World Awareness Through World Music.

Issues in Language and Literacy

Hamish Gillies	Japanese-English Language Mixing Behaviour Amongst Mixed Nationalities in Japan.

Learning Strategies and Styles

Yen-Lin Chou	Socioaffective Strategies: The Language Learning Strategies Asian Students Frequently Overlook.
Frederick Fearn	From Reader to Reporter: Approaching News English in the Classroom.
Russ Garofalo	Effective Ways to Scaffold Authentic Listening Tasks.
Paul Joyce	Vocabulary Learning: Can Broader Mean Deeper?
Hiam Kanbar	Learning in Style: Setting Up a Learning Strategies/Styles Program.
Jake Kimball	Strategies for Teaching and Learning Vocabulary With Young Learners.
Jake Kimball	Strategies for Teaching Spelling.
Kira Litvin	Student Self-Evaluation: An Action Research Project.
John Miller	Learning in Style: Setting Up a Learning Strategies/Styles Program.
Christopher Sippel	Vocabulary Learning: Can Broader Mean Deeper?
Brian Smith	Students Teaching Students: One Application of Learner Autonomy.
Scott Smith	Using Think-Alouds to Improve Reading Comprehension.
Scott Smith	Effective Ways to Scaffold Authentic Listening Tasks.
Hyekyung Sung	Learning in Style: Setting Up a Learning Strategies/Styles Program.
Suchada Poonpan	Indicators of the Research-Based Learning Instructional Process: The Best Practice School.
Anson Yang	Does an Open Forum Promote Learning?

Methodologies and Techniques

Allison Bill	Approaches to Vocabulary Acquisition in the Korean EFL Context.
Allison Bill	What Colour Is Your Personality - And Other Ideas That Work!
Susan Caesar	Speaking Your Mind: Challenges for Korean EFL Students Abroad.

Peter Farrell	Critical Thinking and Propaganda Awareness: Lesson Ideas Using Advertising.
John Halliwell	Noticing Movement: An Approach to Teaching Passives and Relative Clauses.
John Halliwell	Refocusing "Attention" on Grammar in the Classroom.
Jane Kenefick	Speaking Your Mind: Challenges for Korean EFL Students Abroad.
Edward Klein	Motivating ESL/EFL Reading Through Presentation Projects.
David D. I. Kim	Teaching English Pronunciation to Korean Students: What and How.
Jean Kirschenmann	Motivating ESL/EFL Reading Through Presentation Projects.
Ma Milagros Laurel	Context-Linked ELT Methodologies and Techniques.
Kira Litvin	Project-Based Learning: Using Surveys & Learning Lessons.
Poh Leng Mark	Increasing Learner Autonomy in the Writing Class Through Experiential Learning.
John McNulty	Approaches to Dealing With Plagiarism in University Writing Courses.
Rocky Nelson	Learning English Through Extensive Reading.
Michael B. Paradowski	From Context to Content: The L1 Strikes Back.
Susan Mary Pryor	The Great Homework Debate.
Jonghee Shadix	In Pursuit of Connected Speech: What Koreans Should Know.
Terry Shortall	Authentic Versus Contrived Language: The Case of the Present Perfect.
John Olszewski	Objective, Empirical Evaluation of Level Testing, Oral Interview and Conversation.

Music, Art, and Literature

Ron Klein	Teaching Korean-American Fiction: Combining Language, Literacy and Culture.
Jill Christopher	English Through Art and Poetry.
Margaret-Mary Lieb	Popular Music and Its Role in the English Language Classroom.

SLA and Applied Linguistics

Cheng-hua Hsiao	Taiwanese Parents' Bilingual Rationales and the Determining Factors in Language Development in a Cross-cultural Context.
Brian King	SLA in Naturalistic Contexts: Queer Korean Identity Construction, Investment, and Access.
James Life	Transferring Meaning Between English and Korean Using Conceptual Components.
Steven Lee	Child-Adult Differences in Auditory Discrimination and Pronunciation of Foreign Phonemes.
Amir Mahdavi-zafarghandi	Age Factor and Fluency in L2 Acquisition of Grammatical Competence.
Robert Palmer	The Effectiveness of Electronic Dictionaries and Glosses.
Rube Redfield	Putting Krashen's Comprehension Hypothesis to the Test.
David Shaffer	The Proverbial Metaphor: Teaching Figurative Language Idiomatically.
Behtary Shahabaddin	Length Constraint as Task Demand: Exploring L2 Oral Performance Variability.
Minyoung Son	How Does L2 Working Memory Relate to L2 Reading Skill?
Massoud Tajadini	Bi-Source Errors: A New Dimension in Interpreting and Elaborating Error Sources.

Sociolinguistics

John Davis	Korean ESL Learners and Pragmatic Routines in an Australian Context.

Testing and Evaluation Techniques

Fatma Ataman	Standardizing the English Proficiency Exam at METU.
Gulsen Baskan	Standardizing the English Proficiency Exam at METU.
Andrew Finch	Group Testing: Student-Designed Tests.
Michael Guest	Teaching Progressively for University Entrance Exams.
Sam Henderson	Vocabulary Assessment in Five Minutes or Less.
Prateep Kiratibodee	The Relationships Among Test-Takers' Variables and CBT Reading Scores.
Young-Ju Lee	The Impact of ESL Placement Test Decisions.
Young-ju Lee	The Process-Oriented ESL Writing Assessment: Promises and Challenges.
Chatraporn Piamsai	Learner Strategies and Student Performance on a Computer-Based Listening Test.
Sharon Simpson	Analyzing Student Educational History Against Current English Proficiency: Teaching Indications.

Teacher Training and Development

Andrew Kim	From English Teachers to Material Writers: A Collaborative Project
Hosung Choe	The Native-Speaker Model and Korean Nonnative-English-Speaking Teachers.
Sean Coutts	From English Teachers to Material Writers: A Collaborative Project.
Kathryn D'Aoust	From English Teachers to Material Writers: A Collaborative Project.
Brian English	Moving Up the EFL Ladder: Getting That Next Job.
Andrew Finch	Integrating Teaching and Assessment in EFL in Korea.
Jeffery Hawkins	Action Research: What? Why? How?
Hirokatsu Kawashima	Language-Learning Activities in Three EFL Classrooms for Children.
Yuya Koga	Language-Learning Activities in Three EFL Classrooms for Children.
Kira Litvin	From English Teachers to Material Writers: A Collaborative Project
Ksan Rubadeau	What's the Plan, Man?: Planning a Scheme of Work.
Jeremy Slagoski	Practicum: Microteaching for Non-Native-Speaking Instructors.
Naoki Sugino	Language-Learning Activities in Three EFL Classrooms for Children.
Minako Yogi	Reconstruction of a Teacher-Training Program in Japan.
Lawrence Zhang	Critical Reading Pedagogy: Experiencing Sociocultural Life in Teacher Professional Development.

Under-resourced Environments

Ed Klein	Decisions and Directions in Text Adaptation for ESL/EFL Reading.

Video

Larry Crist	Enhancing Communicative and Cognitive Skills Using Sightless-Listening/Silent-Viewing.
Youngbok Kang	Enhancing Communicative and Cognitive Skills Using Sightless-Listening/Silent-Viewing.

David Weaver	Using DVD Movies for Integrated Language Skills Instruction.

Writing

Abdollah Baradaran	Impact of Risk Taking via Group Work on EFL Writing.
Kristofer Bayne	Adapting Reaction Papers for Training in EAP Writing.
Frederick Fearn	Adapting Reaction Papers for Training in EAP Writing.
Shadab Jabbarpoor	Impact of Risk Taking via Group Work on EFL Writing.
Elisabeth Kramer	Write Back: Fast Feedback to Create Authentic Context.
Carlton Lancaster	Organization and Coherence: A Text-Analysis Approach to Composition Instruction.
Hui-Ling Lang	The Effect of a Genre-Based Approach to English Writing in Taiwan.

Other Relevant Issues of ESL / EFL

Negah Allahyar	Teachers' Perspective on Teaching Grammar.
Negah Allahyar	Using L1 in CLT.
Steve Ferguson	Stand and Deliver: Making Effective Presentations in English.
Soheila Garshasbi	Teachers' Perspective on Teaching Grammar.
Jung-Eun Lee	An Analysis of Task Types in Korean Middle School English Textbooks?
Jessica Magnusson	The Ever-Changing Nature of the English Language.
Paul Rowe	Korean Student Tiredness: Leaping Tigers or Exhausted Kittens?
Malika Prasai Tripathi	Korea's National Curriculum: Form and Function How Communicative Is It?

Organizational Partner Presentations

Allen Ascher	Making Language Memorable: Maximizing Student Progress.
Allen Ascher	Meet the Author: Allen Ascher.
Nalin Bahuguna	Achieving Communicative Competence with *Person to Person*.
Nalin Bahuguna	Dictionaries: Making an Informed Choice.
Nalin Bahuguna	Developing Vocabulary Through Reading.
Jennifer Bassett	*Dracula in Wonderland*: Stories for Everyone.
Andrew Blasky	Intensive and Extensive Reading.
Andrew Blasky	Powerful Vocabulary for Reading Success.
Leah Bortolin	Houghton Mifflin Reading: Grammar for an EFL Environment.
Leah Bortolin	The Process of Writing: Making Extraordinary Out of the Ordinary.
Andrew Bruske	*All-Star*: What You Experience Is What You Remember!
Andrew Bruske	*English Zone*: Fostering Motivation With Cross-curricular Content.
Andrew Bruske	Expanding Reading Skills: Reading for a Reason.
Michael Cahill	Five Steps to Academic Reading Success.
Michael Cahill	Fun Activities for the Reading Class.
Ellen Choi	Motivate to Educate!
Mary Cole	Pre-service and In-service Courses for Overseas-Trained Teachers of English.
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Gilly Dempster	Talking Their Heads Off!
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Steven Gershon	*Gearing Up* for Conversation.
Steven Gershon	Give Your Students an *Upgrade*.
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Kathleen Graves	Learning From Experience: SIT's Approach to Reflective, Experiential Learning.
Clare Hambly	Let's Learn English the Fun Way.

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Richard Walker	Practical Principles for Creating Successful and Motivated Secondary-Level Learners.