# KOTESOL Proceedings 2013

## Exploring the Road Less Traveled: From Practice to Theory



**Proceedings of the
21st Annual KOTESOL International Conference
Seoul, Korea, October 12−13, 2013**

**Korea Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
(Korea TESOL / KOTESOL)**

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# Foreword

The 21st Annual Korea TESOL International Conference was held at Sookmyung Women's University on October 12 and 13, 2013. Over 1,000 international and Korea-based attendees gathered in Seoul, South Korea, for a weekend of teacher development under the conference theme of *Exploring the Road Less Traveled: From Practice to Theory*. The two-day Conference offered plenary sessions by Graham Crookes, Thomas S. C. Farrell, and Dick Allwright, whose plenary talk on "Theorizing Down Instead of Up" opens this volume of the *KOTESOL Proceedings*. In addition to the three plenary sessions, there were eleven featured speakers, most of whom gave two presentations. These included Charles Browne, Beverley Burkett, Gabriel Diaz Maggioli, Sue Garton, Jihyeon Jeon, Jun Liu, Curtis Kelly, Bill Littlewood, Annamaria Pinter, Willy A. Renandya, and Lillian L. C. Wong. In addition, the Conference included 180 concurrent sessions of various formats including research paper presentations, workshops, and colloquia.

We are pleased to include papers from Dick Allwright (Theorizing Down Instead of Up), one of the plenary speakers, and from four of the featured speakers: Gabriel Diaz Maggioli (Teacher Education at the Crossroads), Jihyeon Jeon (English for Global Communication: What Matters?), Curtis Kelly (Understanding Language Learning by Looking at Faulty Memory), and Bill Littlewood (Developing Principles and Strategies for Comunication-Oriented Language Teaching) in the 2013 *KOTESOL Proceedings*. The twenty-five papers in this volume include papers on teaching English in Korea, Japan, the Philippines (Selwyn Cruz & Roger Bingculado), Macao (Trevor Ho), and Vietnam (Yen Thi Hoang Vo).

Teaching EFL is often driven by textbooks and theories that come from the ESL teaching world, so it is a pleasure to redress the balance somewhat in this volume, by offering papers that start with classroom practice and action research, and in keeping with the conference theme, move from *practice* to *theory*. Thus, we have Roderick Lange and Samuel Barclay talking about using a rubric to encourage active participation from students in class, Cameron Romney investigating the effect of the teacher using the students' L1 (Japanese) in the low-proficiency-level classroom, Evelyn Doman talking about how teachers can use peer review in the classroom, Elizabeth Yoshikawa on getting students to speak in class, and Damian Lucantonio on teaching the research paper. We also include papers that discuss theories that are being tested in the classroom, such as Huei-Chun Teng's analysis of EFL learners' task strategies for the listening comprehension test.

It is our pleasure to present to you this volume of *KOTESOL Proceedings 2013* We would like to thank the authors of the papers collected here for their cooperation and patience with the editing process, and of course, for making their contributions to this volume. We would also like to thank our editors: Lindsay Herron, Elliott Walters, and Sarah Emory, for their sterling work and quick turnover times. We hope that you will enjoy reading the papers in this publication.

Maria Pinto & David E. Shaffer
Editors-in-Chief

# KOTESOL Proceedings 2013

## *Exploring the Road Less Traveled:*
## *From Practice to Theory*

Proceedings of the 21st Annual KOTESOL International Conference

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**Conference Overview**

# Plenary Speaker

# Theorizing "Down" Instead of "Up": The Special Contribution of Exploratory Practice

Dick Allwright
*Lancaster, UK*

Starting with the example of Exploratory Practice work in Brazil, I will argue that we need to re-think the awkward relationship between theory and practice. Science typically works by *theorizing upwards*, by abstracting from messy real world "practice" to a higher realm where "theory" can help us understand that world. In principle, we can then use our theoretical understandings to cope better with the world. Unfortunately, abstracting *away* from the world makes getting back to that real world highly problematic because you now have to deal with all the complexities the theorizing got you away from.

*Theorizing downwards* instead can be a practical and productive alternative. "Theorizing downwards" means accepting life's complexities and digging down into them to develop understandings that will help us live more productively. Exploratory Practice is a form of practitioner research that does just that, bringing teachers and learners together in a common search for understandings that may be "too deep for words," but that will nevertheless help them develop a relationship of mutual trust and get more out their lives together as practitioners of teaching and learning.

## INTRODUCTION

Our conference theme does something that is quite unusual and potentially extremely powerful: it puts "practice" before "theory." This suggests that, instead of practice coming from theory, which is the traditional view of the theory/practice relationship, theory can and perhaps should come from practice. It can come, I will argue, in the form of understandings that help us make classroom life more satisfactory for all concerned.

So this paper is precisely about putting language classroom practice first. But the term "classroom practice" probably suggests a focus on what *teachers* do in the classroom. I want the term "classroom practice," more radically, to cover not just what teachers do but what learners do. This paper is about *doing* teaching and learning, and about *being* a teacher or a learner.

Above all, I want to persuade you that classroom practice is itself, in a very important sense, for learners as well as teachers, a sort of "theorizing." This is because theorizing is essentially a matter of trying to understand something. In our field, this means trying to understand the language classroom – how it works, or does not work, to help learners to develop competence in another language. Working to understand the language classroom is central to what it means to *do* teaching and to *be* a teacher. It is also central, I will argue, to *being* a learner and *doing* learning.

I will put practice first, myself, by putting before you, in words and pictures, a particular form of language teaching practice that I have been involved in developing over the last twenty or more years, in Brazil. I hope these words and pictures will help me make clear, and attractive, what I mean by the term "theorizing down" in my very unfortunately "dry as dust" title.

I will contrast all this to the "normal" scientific model of "theorizing up" – academics developing high-level understandings that are then brought "back down" to produce proposals for classroom practice. I will argue that "theorizing up" by academics, however "normal," and however apparently sensible and well-intentioned, has not served teachers and learners well, and is not likely ever to serve teachers and learners well. We practitioners (again teachers and learners both) need, I will propose, to develop deep understandings that we can live, even if we can't express them fully. This will be more productive in the long run than having academics develop high-level ones that they can certainly find words for, but which only serve to impoverish our practice, not to enrich it.

I will propose Exploratory Practice, the model of practice I illustrate from experience in Rio de Janeiro, as a way forward to enable all practitioners (teachers and learners alike) to "theorize down" and develop their own livable and productive understandings of their own practices. I will emphasize what I see as the special contribution of Exploratory Practice in our field: the establishment, as an unintended but hugely welcome consequence, of mutual trust in the language classroom.

Finally, I will argue: if theorizing means working for understanding, then that is far too good a thing to be left to academics alone. Let's all do it, learners as well as teachers.

*A sort of apology before I go further. Why should classroom practitioners take any notice of anything I, a career academic, might say about language classroom practice? I worked as a university academic for thirty-five years, after only two years as a full-time language teacher. My excuse is threefold: firstly, as a university academic, I was also a classroom practitioner (if only of academic pedagogy); secondly, some twenty or more years ago, I began to understand the problems the academic approach was potentially causing for other, language classroom, practitioners; and thirdly, I have been retired for ten years now, and so have had plenty of time to distance myself from the academic world I used to inhabit.*

## A STORY OF CLASSROOM PRACTICE IN BRAZIL: TEACHER AND LEARNERS WORKING TOGETHER FOR UNDERSTANDING

Aline Santiago first published the following brief but telling story in the "Exploratory Practice Corner" of a professional newsletter in Brazil (Santiago, 2006). Her "eighth-grade group" would have been about 15 years old at the time.

ALINE SANTIAGO'S STORY
In the beginning of this year, I was in a quite difficult situation because I had to face an eighth grade group that has been seen as the worst at school, principally in relation to discipline. After some bad moments together, I was quite irritated

and could not stand the situation. So I decided to start some work based on an Exploratory Practice principle using the subject I was dealing with according to the course plan ("must" X "should"). The starting point was a brainstorming considering "Quality of Life" immediately linked to "Quality of Life in class" – one of the EP principles. The following moment was to write sentences using "should" or "must" regarding the role of students and teachers in class. I collected the sentences made in groups and, in the following class, the sentences were shared with the whole group. On that day, they had the chance to write their comments about our work and future life in class, taking into consideration the sentences made by them. In addition, they could try to guess what my initial puzzle was: "Why am I so irritated when I have to face the 807 group?"

To my surprise, my terrible group was able to understand that it was necessary to improve our life in class and really took part in the talk and process of understanding what was happening. They realised that the responsibility of having a pleasant class needed to be shared, it was not only my own concern.

Aline adds:

Also, they helped me realise that I was partially responsible for our bad relationship, because I was unable to listen to them. After three classes sharing ideas, we could understand that respect from both parts was necessary. Also listening was part of our life in class, although we were not exercising this ability. I can say that we have grown with this simple way of understanding something that has made us so uncomfortable in class. Now, we really are a group! Our life in class is much better!
(Santiago, 2006. Aline's story can also be found in Allwright & Hanks, 2009: 191)

Aline, faced with a very unpleasant situation, took the plunge, and found a way of working for understanding with her learners, in spite of their being so difficult. It took class time, but she did not need to depart from her curriculum, and it was not time wasted. Together they seem to have reached a livable understanding that has helped them become a "real group," in Aline's terms. Part of reaching that understanding meant talking about the problem, but it did not involve coming to an explicit explanation of the situation. Rather it meant talking about the situation so that people could realize, without having to put it all into words, what was going wrong, and what it would take to sort it out. Nor did they have to explicitly decide what to do about it. They (including the teacher) just found themselves acting differently in later lessons. Just explicitly working for understanding actually served to help it get better. This is something we have seen countless times now in classrooms, and it has become central to our thinking. But before I describe the development of Exploratory Practice in Brazil any further, I should make the connection with theorizing.

## THEORIZING AND "WORKING FOR UNDERSTANDINGS"

Theorizing, for me, is a matter of trying to understand something.
*Theorizing UP* is looking for understanding that can take the form of an *explanation*. An explanation is something you can put into words and then you,

and other people, can *apply* it to other similar situations.

*Theorizing DOWN* is looking for an understanding that will help you *live* in your current situation, even if you cannot put it into words: asking why things are the way they are, and doing your best to find out. That was what Aline Santiago was doing in her classroom, with her learners.

Theorizing UP is what "scientists" do. Science's ultimate goal, in principle, is to find an explanation for everything, preferably one explanation that covers everything. The ultimate logic of this position is that, if we could find the one explanation that covers everything, there would be no more need for this sort of science at all.

Theorizing DOWN is what we all do. We have to. Our goal, if we are reasonable, normal people, is not to be able to *explain* everything, once and for all, but at least more or less to understand life as we experience it so that we can manage to *live* our own reasonably successfully, without spoiling the lives of others.

The major problem with the theorizing UP position is that it assumes the world is not going to change. The laws of physics, if we can find them, will be true for all time.

It may be true that the laws of *physics* are universal and unchanging, but *life* as we humans experience it presents us with a constantly changing situation, so that trying to understand it has also to be a constant process. Over time, we do build up a repertoire of more or less reliable understandings of how the world works, especially in physical terms. But we cannot absolutely rely on our "old" understandings, especially in terms of our human relations. We have to constantly be on the lookout for new understandings.

This is something we do as individuals, of course, each in our own unique ways, but it is also something that is profoundly social, something other people can help us with, and that we can help other people with.

It is also something that we do all the time, whether we do it consciously or not, and whether we do it successfully or not. I call it "working for understanding."

But it is perhaps also something we can learn to do more successfully, if we take the trouble to pay attention to it and look for ways of putting "working for understanding" on our daily agenda. If we are classroom language teachers, this means making it part of our ways of working with our learners in the classrooms.

This is what Exploratory Practice offers:

Exploratory Practice is an indefinitely sustainable way
for classroom language teachers and learners,
while getting on with their learning and teaching,
to develop their own understandings of life in the language classroom.

## MORE ABOUT EXPLORATORY PRACTICE (EP) IN RIO: THE ANNUAL EP EVENTS

Aline Santiago's story shows us what Exploratory Practice can look like, in ordinary classroom practice, and what it can achieve. But EP does not have to

stay behind closed doors in the classroom. Its initial focus is intentionally very local, but the experience of doing EP can be a very good thing to share with others.

It happens every year in the annual EP Event in Rio de Janeiro. Try to imagine up to 250 people (200 of them school-age learners from as young as 8 years old) gathered together in a big room discussing a huge display of posters. They have created these posters to describe something that has puzzled them about their classroom lives (as learners and/or as teachers), and explain how they have investigated it to try to reach a livable understanding.



**Figure 1. The annual EP Event in Rio de Janeiro.** Learners and teachers discuss a large display of posters that they created to describe something that has puzzled them about their classroom lives.

Mariana Pompilho de Souza's story will fill in some of the background to such an event.

MARIANA'S STORY
Hi, my name is Mariana Pompilho de Souza, I'm 15 years old and I was Solange's [Solange Fish Costa Braga's] student in 2005 at Albert Einstein School. I was from the 804 class. Once, the teacher asked us to do a "task" in which we had to discuss and put into practice some questions about the classes and the school that we would like to investigate like: Why did we have to wear an orange uniform?, Why didn't we like to learn English?, Why was it difficult to pay attention to the school classes?, Why do teenagers get pregnant despite all the information about contraceptive methods?, etc.

Everything was normal: we did the tasks, doing researches, filling questionnaires, interviewing students and teachers, preparing posters and presenting them to the class. But it didn't finish this way, I mean with evaluation and grades. The teacher started to talk about Exploratory Practice and asked us if we wanted to participate in the EP event. A few people got interested on that and I was part of this group, thanks God. The first time I went to the EP sessions we debated our questions. It was very interesting because I liked to show my opinions. The sensation of being among several teachers is great! We could say what we think about our questions and they heard us without criticizing us; they could

understand us and explore our opinions, respecting them above all. And the snacks during break time were also great!
I think I like everything and I intend to keep on practising EP questions for a long time.

(Allwright & Hanks, 2009, pp. 165-166)

Mariana's story refers to "the EP sessions." These were the Rio de Janeiro EP Group's planning sessions for the annual event (for more about the rich collegial life of the Rio EP Group, see Miller et al., Chapter 14 in Allwright & Hanks, 2009). Mariana's mention of these sessions here is particularly important because it introduces the notion of "respect," a key factor in the establishment of a relationship of mutual trust. We can see how valuable this is to Mariana.

Trust is relevant again if we look carefully at the following photograph (Figure 2). It shows learners discussing a teacher's poster, but with the teacher herself very much on the sidelines. But there is no need for a teacher to be present at all (Figure 3). Though sometimes, of course, we see teachers directly explaining their posters to learners (Figure 4).



**Figure 2. A key factor in the establishment of a relationship is mutual trust.** Learners discuss a teacher's poster, but with the teacher herself very much on the sidelines.



**Figure 3. In discussing teachers' and learners' posters, there is no need for a teacher to be present at all.**

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**Figure 4. At times, of course, teachers directly explain their posters to learners.**

So these are very much collegial events, bringing teachers and learners together not just in the same room, but in the same enterprise of sharing and discussing their work for understanding. This is work that has been done throughout the previous year, in the language classroom, as part of their normal routine classroom practice of looking at their quality of life by identifying puzzles and investigating them together.

Before I say more about such "normal routine" classroom practice, though, it may be helpful to return to the issue of the relationship between theory and practice.

## MORE ABOUT PRACTICE AND THEORY: THE TRADITIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE AND A NEW WAY OF LOOKING AT IT

### The Traditional Research Model: Theorizing UP

Traditionally, scientific research has been seen as a way of developing theories that can be used to determine practice. In medicine, for example, researchers trying to understand a problem like heart disease will perhaps start with ideas about how what people eat may cause some people to be more likely than others to have heart problems.

As they progress in their work for understanding, they gradually formulate hypotheses that, if true, would explain the role of diet. They test those hypotheses, and from those hypotheses that pass their tests, they put together a plausible explanation, a "theory," of the role of diet in heart disease. This is what I mean by "*theorizing up*" – working upwards from a complex real-world practical problem to an understanding that can be expressed in the briefest and most general terms, like Einstein's $E = mc^2$ (Figure 5).
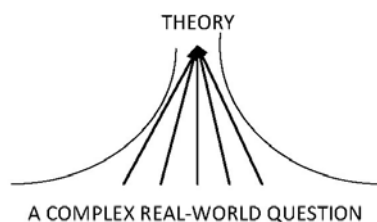
**Figure 5. Theorizing Up.** Working upwards from a complex real-world practical problem to an understanding that can be expressed in the briefest and most general terms.

From this theory medical practitioners can then work *downwards* again, back down to the "real world," to decide how best to try to help people suffering from heart disease, and how best to help prevent its occurrence in the population in general (Figure 6).
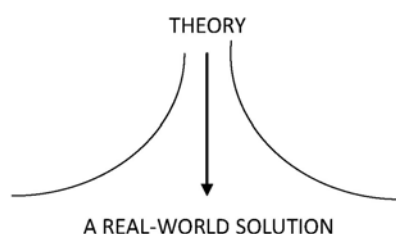


**Figure 6. Working Downwards.** From a understanding of a real-world problem, practitioners can work downwards again to arrive at a real-world solutions.

That is the "normal" model of how theory relates to practice, as the source of rational decisions about practice, and therefore, the driving force behind practice.

That is also the model that has been most influential in the field of language teaching for many decades. But what I want to do here is to question the practical usefulness of that model in our field, stand that model on its head, and say more about theorizing DOWN instead of UP.

## What has gone wrong with theorizing UP in our field?

Historically speaking, it is arguable that in "western" language teaching, over the last half-century at least, practice has in fact preceded theory rather than followed it. In addition, where theories derived from practice have then been used to determine subsequent practice, they have in fact served more to spoil practice than to enhance it.

That is a bold claim to make, I know, and I do not have the time to develop it fully here. I have argued it more fully elsewhere (see Allwright, 2004).

Briefly, my claim is based on the observation that academics like myself, typically working on postgraduate courses in applied linguistics, have needed theories to give intellectual substance to their teaching. They have looked to good practice in the field and sometimes gone straight to psychological or linguistic theorizing for an explanation that can be turned into a prescription for future teachers. But this theorizing upwards, finding a plausible and relatively simple explanation for the success of good practice, necessarily means simplifying your concept of that practice in order to be able to make succinct theoretical statements about it.

These necessarily simplified statements then become a theory for others (governments, education administrators, teacher trainers, and most importantly, teachers) to try to put into practice. But, because the theory is only, and can only be, a simplified version of the original good practice, the *subsequent* practice is only a pale shadow of the original. For example, communicative language teaching, with its rich interest in the whole spectrum of human communication by language, has become widely interpreted as simply a call for more oral work in class (despite the best efforts of people like Professor Bill Littlewood, I should add, but as he himself has noted).

So, theorizing UP, however respectable in scientific, academic circles, and however logical in itself, has not actually served us well enough, is not serving us well enough, and is not going to serve us well enough. This is because it necessarily involves a process of simplification ("reductionism") that operates as if it were possible to treat as fundamentally irrelevant the necessary complexity and uniqueness of each language classroom.

## So what can we do about it? Theorizing DOWN.

In principle, we, as classroom teachers, could of course simply decide we were not going to allow practice to be treated in this way. But it is not easy to see how that could be really successful, given the enormous real-world pressures on people in power to look for simple solutions to complex problems, and then to try to impose them on teachers.

My alternative approach bypasses both the "people in power" and the academics who seek to do research on behalf of teachers and learners. I propose that teachers (and learners), instead of copying the academic researchers who try to abstract away from "real-life," can themselves look down into the complexity of their classroom lives and do their own "work for understanding." In so doing, they can develop their own understandings, understandings that are more likely to enrich their collective practice, rather than impoverish it.

This is what I mean by theorizing DOWN instead of UP: looking for understandings by accepting the inevitable complexity of real life and delving into it, rather than abstracting up away from it. Any understandings reached in this way are necessarily going to be very local ones, in both time and space − understandings that will be valid, if at all, only for the people involved, in that place at that time, and not necessarily for anyone else anywhere else, or at any other time, or even for the same people at any other time or in any other place (Figure 7).
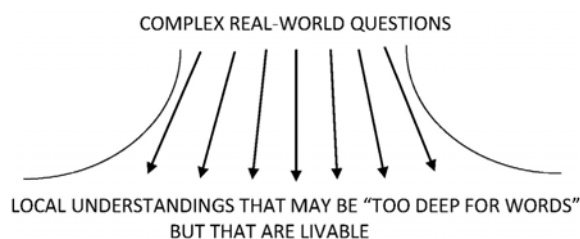


**Figure 7. Theorizing Down.** Looking for understandings by accepting the inevitable complexity of real life and delving into it, rather than abstracting up away from it, to get local understandings.

In the diagram, we can see that the arrows only go one way, down. They do not have to go back up again because deep understandings can stay deep. They do not have to be put into words because they can be "lived." So, unlike the traditional research model, we do not get solid findings that we must then interpret for a different situation. Instead, we get personal understandings that can directly affect our subsequent behavior in the same situation, without our even having to make a deliberate decision about how we are going to behave in the future.

# EXPLORATORY PRACTICE: WHAT WE CAN DO TO REACH SUCH DEEP UNDERSTANDINGS

Within the framework of Exploratory Practice, we start with a question about our practice (not necessarily a "problem") that puzzles us (like "Why do we cheat?" – see below). We then work to understand the issue better. This is the "exploratory" part of Exploratory Practice. To make sure it does not waste any class time, we use our normal classroom pedagogic practices as our investigative tools.

To illustrate the way this process can work, here is Carlos Magno's report of an investigation initially prompted by a Brazilian teacher's initiative (sharing with her class her dislike of setting tests), but then pursued by learners with their own particular puzzles to explore.

CARLOS MAGNO'S STORY
My name is Carlos Magno, I was Walewska's [Walewska Gomes de Braga) student in Santo Tomás de Aquino Municipal School. I have just finished the 8th grade and I'm going to high school now.

My classmates presented a lot of posters. My favorite one started in an English class when the teacher announced we could present a work in the EP Event at PUC. We started thinking in a question to investigate. And then I had the idea for the poster: *Why do we cheat?*



We interviewed our classmates and teachers. We got some amazing narratives: how the cheating is prepared, what happens when a student is caught cheating. We found out that some people don't cheat but help others cheating. Most teachers said they cheated. There are lazy students and there are those who work hard and don't have time to study. For some students the subject is difficult to study and learn and they cheat, for others cheating is a habit: they cheat since they were little. Good grades are important: no one wants to fail.

**Figure 8. Posters on "Why do we cheat?"**

We all agreed that cheating is wrong, students have to study. It is important for our future.

We also noticed that a lot of people misbehave outside the school. There are a lot of wrong things happening and we may compare them to cheating in tests. We read some articles from the local newspapers showing people parking their cars on the sidewalks, people throwing papers and cans through the windows, on the streets, the elderly being disrespected, so many wrong things...

When my group presented the poster at PUC, many teachers mentioned that their students also cheat. The teachers congratulated us and said our poster made the curiosity of knowing why their students cheat emerge.

I understood that sometimes the students cheat because they don't study and are not prepared, but sometimes we, the students, get nervous and go blank.

### Daniela's PS
*Carlos doesn't like speaking in public. The presenters of the poster were Daniela and Patrícia.*

(Allwright & Hanks, 2009, pp. 210-211)

Daniela's PS reminds us of the importance of collegiality. These students worked *together* on their puzzle, throughout, respectful of each other's strengths and weaknesses.

This is their teacher, Walewska Gomes Braga's, perspective.

WALEWSKA'S ACCOUNT
Carlos Magno went to our EP meetings and presentations but he refused to present any poster. I loved it when he suggested a new puzzle: *Why do we cheat?* I was telling the class how much I hate to give them tests. I simply can't avoid them cheating and it is a waste of time to prepare, to correct and etc. And then... Carlos said aloud: "teacher, *why don't we do that EP work?* Fantastic!!"

I asked them to look up the word "cheat" in dictionaries. We all laughed when we compared the results. We read in "The Cambridge International Dictionary of English" that... *Anyone caught cheating will be immediately disqualified from the exam.* In the "Novo Dicionário Aurélio da Língua Portuguesa" the example is: *One shall not pass the math exam without cheating.* Cultural differences.

I brought them an article from the internet telling ways of cheating. They read, we commented and got some ideas.

They started collecting narratives of cheating: how, when, why. They talked to teachers and students and even to their families. They came with fascinating stories. We laughed with some reports and sympathised with others. Parents who beat kids up, lack of time, injustice, so many sad realities!

(Allwright & Hanks, 2009, p. 212)

As we develop our understandings we will naturally try to explain them to others, and in that process, especially if other people are fundamentally receptive but also critical (in the most positive sense of that term: helping us think just as well as we possibly can), then our thinking, and our understandings, will be correspondingly further developed.

If, however, we fall into the trap of trying to articulate our understandings in some fixed and final fashion, in some brief theory statement, then we will

necessarily have to simplify them to do so, and our deepest understandings will be lost in the process. So, paradoxical as it may seem, we can expect to benefit greatly from trying to articulate our understandings, not just to share them with others but to give others an opportunity to help us refine our own thinking. But the benefit risks being lost if we think our attempts at articulation should arrive at a definitive and adequate statement.

What we need to get from the process of developing our understandings is understandings we can "live," whether or not we can put them into words. And we can expect our deepest understandings to be far "too deep for words." But the fact that understandings may be "too deep for words" only means that they cannot be adequately stated. It does not mean that they cannot be usefully talked about, and potentially refined in the process.

### An aside to illustrate what I mean by understandings that are "too deep for words"

To illustrate what I am talking about here, it may help to appeal to something I have heard about in many countries over the years – the thought, and the practical experience, that the "best" language teachers are almost totally incapable of saying anything practically helpful about what it is that makes them so successful. It is as if they have no understanding at all of what they were doing. They just work from some sort of natural instinct. I puzzled about this for a good many years, especially after a particularly dramatic set of examples of it that I encountered in New York in 1984, where, in public at a multi-national workshop, one spectacularly successful language teacher said that all she knew was that she kept on getting her contract renewed, so she had to be doing something right!

My understanding now is that those really amazing teachers are in no way lacking in understanding of what they are doing. Rather, they are people with such a profound and complex understanding that they know that any attempt to pass it on by putting it into words is never going to do justice to the subtlety of their understanding. Their understanding is just "too deep for words." They can live their understanding, but not talk about it. So, they prefer to say nothing, even though that may make them look stupid at worst, or at the very least deliberately unhelpful.

## UP OR DOWN, BOTH WAYS OF THEORIZING HAVE PROBLEMS

Theorizing, for me, whether upwards or downwards, is all about trying to develop understanding. Both have their problems in terms of their potential usefulness in the "real world" of practice.

Theorizing upwards involves reducing the obvious complexity of the real world to a manageable level, so that a generalizable understanding is reached. This process of simplification brings the problem that applying the understanding back down in the real world is very problematic. We may have a "theory," but is it really usable in the real world? Behaviorism led to audio-lingualism being reduced to four propositions (see Rivers, 1964, pp. 19-22), which led to impoverished teaching materials omitting communication practice. And, as we have already

seen, communicative theory led to an unhelpful emphasis on speaking.

Theorizing downwards does not try to ignore the full complexity of the real world, but it results in understandings that can be "lived" perhaps, but at the cost of their not being communicable in words. On the face of it, that would appear to be a major obstacle, one that renders the whole idea valueless. What can be the value of understandings we cannot communicate?

## Finding value in understandings that are "too deep for words"

To answer this important question, we need to look again at research, at what it is for, and who it is for, in our field.

Theorizing UP is characteristic of academic research in our field. It is dedicated to producing generalizable understandings that can inform decision-making at all levels, by all agents in the field, but especially by those in overall authority. In this sense, academic research is ultimately altruistic, working for understandings that will help not themselves personally in their own academic practice, but others. It is third-party research.

To contrast with academic research, we have practitioner research. This you might call "first person" research as it is dedicated to enabling practitioners to better understand their own practices. It is only altruistic in the sense that the practitioners are hoping to better help their clients (doctors helping patients, for example). In this sort of research, generalizable understandings are far less important because each practitioner is working to better understand his or her own particular practice. Other people's understandings of their situations may be helpful, but not directly generalizable to one's own.

A further step can be taken by moving to full participant research, where all participants are thought of as practitioners. In our field, this means treating teachers as practitioners of teaching, and their learners as practitioners of learning (see also my workshop proposal for this conference). This is what Exploratory Practice seeks to do, in what we have elsewhere called "fully inclusive practitioner research," rather than simply "participant research" (Allwright, 2009, pp. 15-31; Hanks, 2009, pp. 33-55). In this participant model of research, we have all the participants seeking to better understand their situation. This could be called "multiple first-person research," with everyone seeking to better understand their own situations. But that would make it sound purely selfish. It is not purely selfish research, however, because people will typically work together towards collective understandings that benefit everybody involved. We saw that in the examples of EP work in Rio, and in Aline Santiago's story in particular. As Aline concluded: "Now we really are a group! Our life in class is much better!"

## But, if it's so decidedly local, how can it be useful to others?: The first value of sharing

It may not be selfish, then, but it is determinedly local, and does not seek to produce generalizations for other people to learn from. You might then think: participant research like this is perhaps fine for the immediate participants, but must surely be totally useless for anyone else. So why bother to tell anybody about it, like they do in Rio at their annual EP Events?

It is a fair question, but as I suggested earlier, the posters the participants produce are not meant to pass on definitive findings. Instead, they are intended to act as recruiting devices to encourage other people to think of doing similar work for understanding in their own situations, perhaps using some of the same procedures and investigative methods, perhaps even with the same puzzle to start with. In practice, the posters serve, then, and especially well, as opportunities for sharing.

## THE SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION OF EXPLORATORY PRACTICE: A MAJOR BONUS

One aspect of this sharing that I have observed at Rio events deserves special mention because it is potentially the most significant benefit of the whole Exploratory Practice enterprise. It is the establishment of trust: trust between teachers and learners (in both directions), and trust among learners. The collective work in class, and the subsequent public sharing of the work for understanding, can prove to be a remarkably powerful force in the lives of the participants, and as such a force for good in terms of human relationships.

What this means is that such work for intellectual understanding also constitutes productive work for empathetic understanding, for bringing people together. To repeat Aline Santiago's words: "Now we really are a group!"

## FINAL THOUGHTS

If theorizing can be seen as looking for ways of understanding something that puzzles us, then theorizing is far too good to be left to the professional researchers. We all need to do it, just to get by in the world, let alone in the language classroom. But we don't need to theorize UP, to look for neat, statable, explanations. Instead we can stay within our practice, and go deep into it. (For a full development of the argument for Exploratory Practice, see Allwright & Hanks, 2009.) Our practice becomes in itself a process of theorizing. In Exploratory Practice, we put it this way, as I noted earlier:

> Exploratory Practice is an indefinitely sustainable way
> for classroom language teachers and learners,
> while getting on with their learning and teaching,
> to develop their own understandings of life in the language classroom.

## THE AUTHOR

**Dick Allwright** retired in 2003 from a long academic career teaching applied linguistics at the Universities of Essex and Lancaster. Dick Allwright is still actively pursuing his interest in teacher, and especially learner, development via the notion of "Exploratory Practice," a form of practitioner research involving teachers and learners working together, during language lessons, to explore and develop productively their understandings of their classroom lives. In 2009, with Judith Hanks, he published his third book: *The Developing Language Learner: An Introduction to Exploratory Practice* (Palgrave).

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# Featured Speakers

# Teacher Education at the Crossroads: The Role of Theory and Practice

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Teacher training and education practices in language teaching have oscillated between either an emphasis on practice or an emphasis on theory. In this on-going "tug of war" among traditions, three perspectives can be clearly seen: one with a strong emphasis on practice, one with a strong emphasis on theory, and one relying on reflection as a first attempt at bringing theory and practice together. I want to propose a fourth perspective, which allows teacher educators and aspiring teachers to engage in cycles in which they practice theory and theorize practice. In this paper, I will explore the main tenets of this fourth perspective and offer concrete, tried-and-tested means through which teachers can theorize their practice.

## INTRODUCTION

Language teaching is perhaps one of the few fields of knowledge in which individuals can get certified to act as professionals via short-term intensive courses, undergraduate courses, and also through graduate study. This plethora of ways of entry into the profession has rendered language teacher education a field that has yet to develop a specific pedagogy. Each access pathway brings with it a particular perspective derived from the goals it intends to attain. Because of this, it has often been difficult to reconcile the roles of theory and practice in the education of language teachers.

Also, the field of language teaching has tended to oscillate between dichotomous perspectives in very much the same way as Foucault's pendulum, seldom being able to strike a balance between these opposing perspectives.

In this article, I intend to review three popular perspectives in language teacher education with the aim of identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and also as background to the introduction of a fourth perspective, one which can help bridge the gap between theory and practice by doing away with dichotomies and bringing together the best aspects of all previous perspectives.

## LOOK AND LEARN

The 1960s were a seminal decade for Language Teaching. It was during this decade that the first graduate programs in the field were instated, as well as the two main professional associations: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) International Association in the United States and the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL)

in the United Kingdom. Also, this decade saw the birth of the short teacher-training course that would later become a certificate-level qualification. These initiatives were intended as a response to the widespread expansion of English as an international language, which required teachers who could deliver high-quality English language teaching (ELT) programs to diverse audiences around the world.

At the time, the design and delivery of the short-term program took on a modality similar to that used by apprenticeship models popular in the Middle Ages, with the trainer becoming a model to be emulated by the student teacher (apprentice). The apprenticeship model was also applied to the training of future trainers, a practice that is still popular today via requirements such as the need to shadow an experienced trainer prior to being allowed to conduct a training course.

The "look and learn" perspective focused on "doing teaching" and had as its primary goal the enhancement of teaching knowledge via the implementation of prescribed training procedures (mostly oriented at the development of teaching skills such as planning, classroom management, presenting and practicing language, etc.). In this sense, it viewed professional knowledge as consisting of a finite repertoire of teaching skills that could be applied in any teaching and learning situation, regardless of other factors such as trainee needs or contextual variables. Because of this, this perspective centered on the learning of teaching methods that were anchored in practices that had "worked," though mostly in monolingual contexts or with teachers who were native speakers or possessed native-like competence in English.

Evidently, this perspective placed practice at the forefront of the teacher education process, which was delivered via training focused on those essential skills that would guarantee that graduates of the program were able to implement them confidently in the classroom. Theory, on the other hand, was incidental and, although acknowledged, did not form part of the core of the course.


# READ AND LEARN

The swinging of the pedagogical pendulum gave rise to a second perspective to teaching teachers that was born as a reaction to the "look and learn" tradition. Spearheaded by university undergraduate and graduate courses, the "read and learn" tradition was supposed to add scientific rigor to the process of teaching teachers so that professionals would not only be able to teach, but also keep pace with the developments in the profession via acquaintance with updated research.

However, this perspective was not devoid of limitations. For a start, the teacher of teachers became not a model to be emulated, but a selector of research and modeler of "best practices." These were mostly the outcome of research carried out on teaching and learning by researchers who were not directly involved in classroom teaching and learning. Hence, the student teacher became little more than a reader and applier of the theories selected by their teacher. In this sense, the academic tradition was as limiting as the previous tradition, as only that research considered valid by the teacher of teachers was made accessible to student teachers. Knowledge for teaching was thus reduced from a series of procedures to a series of theories, which was still a fixed body of knowledge.

The emphasis of this tradition switched drastically from doing to "knowing about" teaching, putting theory at the forefront and rendering practice a mere corollary of theoretical developments. These theories, in turn, were not specifically generated within the field of Language Teaching, but the result of endeavors stemming from such disciplines as Applied Linguistics, Anthropology, or Educational Psychology.

With its emphasis on theory before practice, the "read and learn" tradition also failed to reap the rewards it promised practitioners, although it significantly contributed to the birth and validation of applied teacher research.

## THINK AND LEARN

Concurrently with the perspectives we have described, a third tradition started permeating the TESOL field, mostly through developments in the field of general education. Schön's 1983 seminal work, *The Reflective Practitioner,* brought to our field a much-needed balance between theory and practice, and helped redefine the way teacher education was conducted.

To start with, the "think and learn" tradition drastically changed the roles of both the teacher of teachers and the student teacher. Teachers of teachers became facilitators of the engagement of student teachers in cycles of action and reflection that led to better understandings of the tasks of teaching and learning.

The source of knowledge became broader, to include both the student teachers' personal experiences as well as empirical and theoretical research, thus validating both the knowledge of how to teach and the knowledge about teaching. These cycles of action and reflection (in the two forms specified by Schön: reflection *in* action and *on* action) helped concretize the primary goal of teacher education as the enhancement of reflection in order to inform practice. In this sense, the purpose of a "think and learn" perspective to teacher education is to help student teachers "think" like a professional.

While this perspective brought a healthy balance between theory and practice, it failed to impact the field as such, as most of the reflection remained circumscribed to the individual teacher. If grounded knowledge gained through reflection is to positively affect the field, then it must be socialized so that it can be confirmed and/or contested, thus allowing the profession to move forward.

In this sense, what is needed in the field is a perspective that helps validate the roles of both theory and practice. This perspective should also allow for the ongoing development of the profession, by having its practitioners engage in focused reflection that impacts action. In turn, the results of this praxis need to be socialized so that they can become the focus for the negotiation and reification of meanings that help practitioners make sense of their actions. We will now turn to a discussion of a fourth perspective that may offer such a possibility

## PARTICIPATE AND LEARN

Diaz Maggioli (2012) suggests that framing the teaching of teachers within a sociocultural perspective can help teachers of teachers attain the aforementioned

goal. This perspective is deeply grounded in the work of Lev Vygotsky (1978, 1986) and his followers, and focuses on the role that mediation has in the development of autonomy.

According to Diaz Maggioli (2013, p. 136)

> Vygotsky (1978) introduced the concept of mediation to account for ways in which individuals interact with the world around them and thus learn. Interactions between the individual and the world are often mediated by the use of human-made tools (material and symbolic). These material and symbolic artifacts have the potential to mediate but, 'until used as such, they offer only affordances and constraints to an individual.'" (Swain et al., 2011, p. 2)

The "participate and learn" perspective positions both the teacher of teachers and the student teacher as community members and change agents who interact in order to negotiate meanings which will allow the student teacher to become a full-fledged member of the professional community.

Teaching knowledge in this perspective is a complex construct, which is in a constant state of flux, as it is contingent with the community members' engagement in action and interaction. Hence, personal knowledge (individual understandings and private theories), professional knowledge (public theories), community knowledge (localized understandings derived from community interactions), and collective exploratory knowledge (the product of the ongoing interaction among experts and novices in the community) all come to bear at the time of enhancing participation in the practices of the professional community. In this sense, participation can be equated to learning, making the main goal of the "participate and learn" perspective that of helping student teachers "become" professionals.

A "participate and learn" perspective focuses on the student teacher's participation in teaching activities so that they can practice the theory but also theorize their practice. This is done within a safe turf; among community members who interact in order to collective explore situated personal and collective experiences derived from engagement in practice.

In this scenario, knowledge of teaching skills, knowledge of cutting-edge research, and also the products of individual and collective reflection are all validated as key sources upon which to build induction into the profession.


## CONCLUSION

The field of English language teacher education has often suffered the vagaries of opposing trends and perspectives. These only helped to further entrench polarizations while failing to move the profession forward. Adopting a more encompassing perspective, one which inherently validates theory, practice, and the individual and collective contributions of those engaged in learning and teaching, may help resolve the present conundrum. (See the Appendix for a summarization of the four perspectives of language teacher education described in this paper.)

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## APPENDIX

### Four Perspectives for Language Teacher Education in a Nutshell

| | Look and Learn | Read and Learn | Think and Learn | Participate and Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Professionally known as...* | The craft tradition | The academic tradition | The reflective tradition | The sociocultural tradition |
| *Main role of teacher educators* | Model | Resources selector and model | Facilitator | Community member ("old timer") and change agent |
| *Main role of student teachers* | Apprentice | Reader and applier of theory | Researcher and practitioner | Legitimate peripheral participant in the community |
| *Primary source of knowledge* | Handed down theoretical and empirical fixed body of knowledge. | Empirical and theoretical research-based fixed body of knowledge. | Personal experience + empirical and theoretical research. | Professional knowledge + personal knowledge + community knowledge + collective exploratory knowledge. |
| *Primary goals of training/ education* | Enhance knowledge of content through prescribed activities so that everyone knows the same. | Enhance knowledge of theory to guide practice. | Enhance reflection in/on action to inform practice. | Enhance participation in the community |
| *Expected outcomes* | DO teaching | KNOW about teaching | THINK like a teacher | BECOME a teacher |
| *Main orientation to training/ education* | Focused on teaching methods, anchored in tradition of "what works." Uniform procedures. | Focused on theory stemming from research. Prescribed ways of teaching. | Focused on research anchored on action and reflection. | Focused on participation in the activities of the community and fostering the development of transformative intellectuals |
| *Main sources for training* | Uniform set of methods, techniques, procedures and materials. | Sets of related research literature stemming from Applied Linguistics, Psychology and Pedagogy. | Personal action-research projects derived from the experience of teaching. | Situated personal and collective experiences of the community of practice. |
| *Theory-Practice balance* | Practice before theory. | Theory before practice. | Practice + Theory | Theorizing practice and practicing theory. |

Extracted from Diaz Maggioli (2012, p. 13).

# English for Global Communication: What Matters?

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Since the Korean government announced the goal of enabling the Korean people to communicate in English for global communication, constant attempts have been made to improve the curriculum, materials, methods, and teaching staff to provide better opportunities to learn English, so that the Korean people are able to communicate in English. In all these efforts, however, the English presented for learning has been centered mostly on situations in English-speaking countries. Thus, Korean learners have relatively little understanding of the English communication process among people from different cultures in wider contexts. With the advent of globalization, the use of English as a medium of communication has expanded, and accordingly, the interlocutors and the contexts for English communication have become global. What consideration then is needed to modify Koreans' understanding of English communication for a global audience? In real communication, is *what we say* more important than *what our audience hears*? The present study calls for an audience-centered approach to consider the global audience when we communicate in English and modify English education in Korea.

## INTRODUCTION

English has been used for international communication for a long time and thus the efforts to learn English in countries where English is not the native language have long histories. Earlier, the major focus of English learning for nonnative speakers was to communicate with native English speakers in English-speaking countries. However, since technological development has made the world one globalized society, the contexts and the interlocutors in English communication have changed.

What are we facing these days to communicate in English? Nowadays English has more power as an international language than ever before. People using English for communication today include 335 million native speakers of English (L1) and 505 million English as a second (or additional) language (L2) users (Lewis, Simons, & Fennig, 2014). As Kachru (1992) explains, English use has expanded to include inner circle regions, outer circle regions, and expanding circle regions. Inner circle regions include countries where English is used for daily communication (e.g., Britain, the U.S.A, Australia, New Zealand); outer circle regions are where English is used for official or business communication (e.g., the Philippines, Singapore); and expanding circle regions are where English is used occasionally for interaction with diverse English speakers (e.g., China, Korea, Japan). See Figure 1.
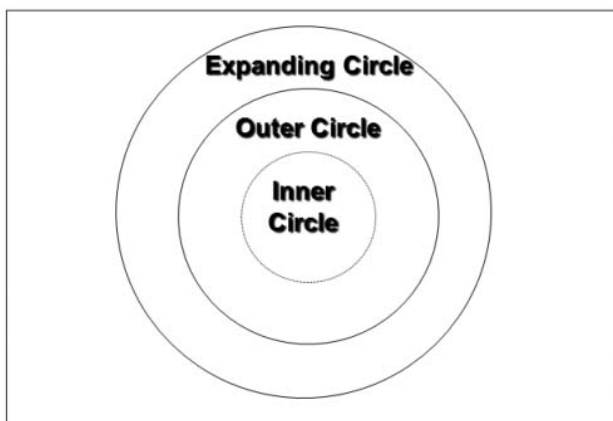
**Figure 1. English as a global language** (Kachru, 1992).

This expansion of English use opens up English communication between diverse people in variety of situations. For example, in the past, Koreans, belonging to the expanding-circle countries, used to try to learn English primarily to communicate with English speakers from inner-circle countries and outer-circle countries. Koreans currently, however, communicate in English with not only speakers from inner-circle or outer-circle countries, but also with speakers from expanding-circle countries.

When Koreans communicate in English with native speakers of English from inner-circle countries, they tend to perceive any problems arising from that interaction as being due to their limited English proficiency. On the other hand, when Koreans communicate in English with English speakers from expanding-circle countries (e.g., the Japanese), any misunderstandings arising from that communication are identified not just as being due to inadequate English proficiency but also due to other factors inherent in the communication process. This is probably because we tend to focus more on the limitation of English proficiency when communicating with native English speakers.

In the field of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), we have focused on the norms of English language use by native speakers, the development of English proficiency by English learners, and various aspects of developing English proficiency for English learners. However, if the contexts and interlocutors for English communication change worldwide, we need to modify our views on the teaching and learning of English accordingly, by first understanding the nature of English communication for a global audience with varying English proficiency in diverse contexts. In wider contexts, the sources of difficulty in English communication would not be caused by just the limitations of English language proficiency, but by a variety of sources. Thus the success of communication is dependent upon both the proficient English speaker and the limited English speaker.

In Korea, the fever for learning English is even hotter these days because, to Koreans, being able to communicate in English in many parts of the world brings value to their lives (Jeon, 2010). The Korean government has put emphasis on English education: the curriculums, materials, teacher development techniques, and instruction methods have been constantly discussed and improved to provide

better English education for Koreans. However, the focus of English language learning and teaching is still mostly on native speaker norms, and a change in the context in which English is used has not been seriously considered.

If English is used for communication among speakers with diverse native tongues and cultures, communication carried out in English will be partly affected by factors related to the native tongues and the cultures of the speakers involved in the interaction (Meierkord, 2012). When the aim of English communication is to adjust to the culture and language of English-speaking countries, the major responsibility for the effectiveness of the communication will be on nonnative speakers of English. However, if the aim of English communication is for people of different cultures and mother tongues to understand each other, the responsibility for making communication work will be on all the people taking part in the communication, be they native or nonnative speakers of the language. To fully understand each other, both the native speakers and nonnative speakers need to cooperate to negotiate meaning, by taking into account cultural and mother tongue differences (Sweeney & Hua, 2010). As it is important to understand the audience and the context of the communication in communicating in one's own native language, communication using English should also consider the context and the audience of the interaction. Understanding the audience and making communication "audience-centered" is even more important when communicating in English because of the diversity in our audience.

This paper attempts to identify possible sources of difficulties in English communication among people of different cultures and mother tongues, and to suggest ways to make communication audience-centered.

## BACKGROUND

English is currently used for communicating with a global audience. Dealing with the audience in inner-circle, outer-circle, and expanding-circle regions requires special consideration of the diversity of our audience. The diffusion of English use provides English with new meanings and functions in diverse parts of the world, creating the field of "World Englishes." According to Kachru (1992), what works among the members of the inner circle may not necessarily work with the members of the outer circle and/or with the members of the expanding circle. Kachru (2005) further discusses the reality of Englishes used in diverse cultural contexts by debunking myths about the English language. In the world context, most interactions in English communication occur among interlocutors who learned English as an additional language, contrary to the interlocutor myth (which assumes that one of the interlocutors in English communication will be a native speaker of English). In reality, there is more communication between nonnative speakers of English (e.g., English communication between Koreans and Japanese people) than there is between native speakers of English and nonnative speakers of English (e.g., English communication between Koreans and Americans). Thus, the English being used more often carries the culture of nonnative speakers than the culture of native English speakers.

To understand the English communication process involving a global audience living in different regions (see Figure 2), the field of TESOL (Teaching English to

Speakers of Other Languages) needs to integrate information from other relevant fields such as Intercultural Communication and World Englishes.
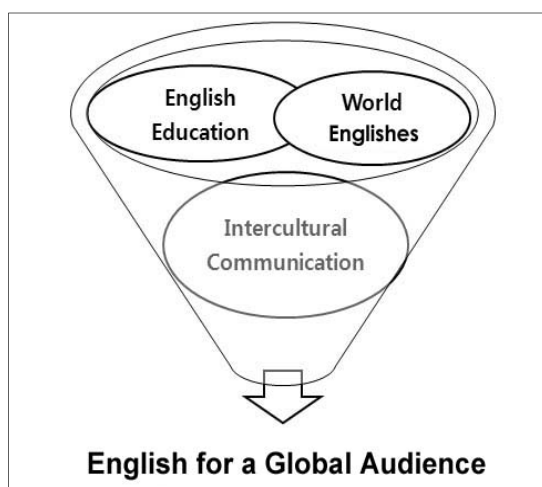


**Figure 2. Information on English communication for a global audience.**

Intercultural communication focuses on issues dealing with various aspects of communication among people of different cultures. Some of the findings of intercultural communication studies provide us with a general understanding of the communication processes and problems involved in communication among people of different cultures. The processes of intercultural communication have not been integrated directly into the field of TESOL. Integration with Intercultural Communication can most closely be seen in studies on learning culture.

World Englishes has focused on the development of regional Englishes, identifying features of vocabulary, syntax, etc. Some of the findings of World Englishes are helpful for us to understand features of English used in particular regions. However, the integration of the information and topics brought by World Englishes to TESOL has begun relatively recently (Matsuda, 2005). Since the contexts of English uses by diverse users will be expanding even more in the future (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2006), more integration is needed for TESOL to embrace the changes of English users and communication contexts.

## THE DIFFICULTY OF COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH FOR A GLOBAL AUDIENCE

To understand the communication process in English for a global audience, commonly discussed factors that make it difficult for us to communicate with people from different cultures can be broken up into five categories – feelings, perception, language, culture, and communication style. Table 1, below, summarizes these sources of difficulty.

**Table 1. Sources of Difficulty in Communicating in English with a Global Audience**

| Categories | Distinction Typically Found |
|---|---|
| 1. Feelings | • Comfortable and confident vs. Not-sure feelings |
| 2. Perception | • Expanded vs. Limited<br>• One vs. The other |
| 3. Culture | • High context vs. Low context |
| 4. Communication Style | • Direct vs. Less direct<br>• Explicit vs. Implicit |
| 5. Mother Tongue | • Syntax<br>• Phonology<br>• Morphology<br>• Pragmatics |

First, difficulty might arise from the feelings that we form consciously or unconsciously. We form feelings differently depending on whom we deal with during a communication. We may feel comfortable communicating with people that we know well because we can be relatively sure about the meaning shared during communication and have less doubt about our understanding. However, when dealing with people who are different from us, we may form feelings of discomfort, uncertainty, and doubt (Berger, 2007). We are not sure whether what we understood was right or whether we responded or communicated properly. When we are not sure of the shared meaning, we do not feel comfortable, which leads to us forming doubts about our communication and interlocutors. We need to understand the feelings we form while communicating in English with interlocutors whom we do not know well.

A second difficulty lies in the perceptual difference people have at any given moment. People may perceive things differently and pay attention to different things or different aspects of the topic under discussion at any given moment during the communication. For example, when one says "Look at the sky," some people might look at the color while others pay more attention to the patterns of the clouds. Thus, if one continues to talk about the sky, the understanding and participation of the interlocutors can be different depending on what and how they perceive things. In this sense, it is more likely that we feel difficulty in understanding if we are paying attention to one aspect while our interlocutors are talking about other aspects. We need to understand the perceptual difference that we might have during our communication in English.

A third difficulty arises from cultural differences between interlocutors. When we use English as a medium for communication, the way we communicate can be affected by the culture of the speaker. Hall's (1976) famous distinction between low-context culture and high-context culture can be useful here. According to Hall, people from low-context cultures depend less on the context and more on verbal communication, while people from high-context cultures depend more on context and thus depend less on verbalized communication, because things are more easily understood through the context. Thus, an instruction given in a low-context culture is generally more specific than one given in a high-context culture. We need to understand how culture is interrelated with the way we communicate and find ways to communicate with people of different cultures.

Fourth, difficulty may come from a difference in communication styles

between interlocutors. Studies in intercultural communication or business communication show a difference in communication styles in various communication genres (Brown, Hayashi, & Yamamoto, 2012; Pullin, 2010). While some people communicate more explicitly, some people express things more implicitly. Even when we use the same language medium, the degrees of explicitness and implicitness can be different. The directness of communication also differs depending on the individual. Some people express ideas more directly; others tend to express their ideas more indirectly. We need to understand these differences in communication style.

Finally, difficulty may arise from language difference. The language experience each individual has in their native tongue and/or additional languages they speak provides opportunities to develop differences in the ability to process sentences, to perceive sound differences, to recognize shape differences, and to recognize frequency of use. Some people can process both long and short sentences, but others can process only short sentences due to limitations coming from their L1 or other L2. Depending on their exposure to the sounds of the language, for some people it may be easy to distinguish the difference between short and long vowels, but for others, it may be hard to recognize a difference relying only on the length. Some people can differentiate the shape of ㄱ and ㄴ easily, but for some people the images look quite similar and are hard to distinguish. For native English speakers, a substantial variety of English expressions are familiar, but for limited English speakers, only a restricted number of expressions are familiar and some expressions are far from familiar. Thus, when we communicate in English with a global audience possessing different first languages, we need to consider the familiarity of the audience with the language one intends to use in terms of syntax, phonology, morphology, and pragmatics.

## MOVING TOWARD THE LESS-TRAVELED: AN AUDIENCE-CENTERED APPROACH FOR THE GLOBAL AUDIENCE

How then can we overcome these discomforts in communicating with people from other cultures and make our English communication successful with diverse audiences? Is it possible to learn about all the features of varieties of English? As with Wittgenstein's rules for a game (Ambros, 1979), the rules for the use of English would be neither right nor wrong. The rules would only be useful for the particular applications to which we apply them within a given context for members of the communication act. As it is impossible to learn all the rules for all possible games, it is hard to learn all the features of all varieties of English found in English communication. But we may develop strategies to adapt to our audience in any given communication situation. Certain principles can be suggested for communicating with a global audience, communicating when there are perceptual, contextual, and communication style differences, and communicating when there is a mother-tongue difference.

### Principles Suggested for Communicating with a Global Audience

Cooperating principles for successful English communication are given in

Table 2 below. The aims of these principles are: (a) to reduce discomfort, (b) to deal with differences in perception, culture, and communication, and (c) to deal with differences in mother tongue while communicating with people of different cultures.

**Table 2. Principles Suggested for Communicating with a Global Audience**

| Aims | Principles |
|---|---|
| To reduce discomfort | • Be aware of uneasy feelings; observe and look for discomfort; and adjust the communication rate, turn-taking, silence, eye-contact, etc. |
| To deal with differences in perception, culture, and communication | • Provide more clues.<br>• Explain more and ask more.<br>• Use verbal communication.<br>• Make communication specific.<br>• Make communication direct. |
| To deal with differences in mother tongues | • Syntax: Make it shorter.<br>• Phonology: Provide more contrasts.<br>• Morphology: Use dissimilar looks.<br>• Pragmatics: Use the most typically used expressions. |

To make English communication with a global audience successful, a general effort to reduce the feelings of discomfort, uncertainty, and doubts is required. To practice to reduce the discomfort of communicating with people of a different culture, attention should be given to first becoming aware of any uneasy feelings that may arise during communication, then to observing and looking for areas of discomfort, and finally to adjusting communication speed, rate, turn-taking, silence, eye-contact, etc. for the audience.

In addition to the general effort to reduce any possible discomfort in communicating with people of a different culture, specific efforts to deal with differences in perception, culture, and communication style are required, including the principles of (a) providing more clues, (b) explaining more and asking more, (c) using verbal communication, (d) making communication specific, and (e) making communication direct. Additionally, special attention should be given to the difference in mother tongues by considering syntax, phonology, morphology, and pragmatics.
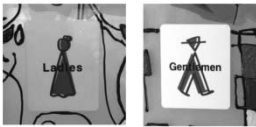
## Principles Suggested for Perceptual, Contextual, and Communication Style Differences

Table 3 provides examples that can be applied to the cooperating principles to accommodate perceptual and cultural differences. To deal with difference in perception, the speaker should try to provide more clues. Generally, people who can communicate adequately with few clues can communicate easily with more clues, but people who communicate adequately with many clues can likely not communicate successfully with few clues. If you look at the example for Principle 1, Example A presents signs for a restroom using only single letters, while Example B provides clues in words, shapes, and colors. When the communication is verbal, to accommodate perceptual differences, it is desirable to make your communication as specific as possible. The intended meaning is more

likely to be shared more accurately with the audience when the communication is specific. If you simply say "Clean that room first," as in Example A, the room may not be cleaned as intended by the speaker. However, if the speaker specifies what he or she expects, it is more likely that the room will be cleaned as intended.

**Table 3. Principles Suggested for Perceptual, Contextual, and Communication Style Differences**

| Areas | Principles | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Perceptual Difference | 1. Explain more and ask more | • Consider the perceptual difference:<br><br>A:　　　　　　　　B: |
| | 2. Make it specific | • Consider the perceptual difference:<br>A: Clean that room first.<br>B: Clean that room first. Sweep the floor, dust the desk, and clean the window. |
| Contextual Difference | 3. Use verbal communication | • Consider the cultural difference:<br>A: I have always wanted to visit that nearby zoo. It'd be fun going there together. How about we all go together now?<br>B: ... (*silence*) ...<br>C: Sure. Well... I just bought a new pair of shoes...<br>D: ... (*silence*) ... |
| Communication Style Difference | 4. Make it more direct | • Consider the directness:<br>A: It's so hot in here.<br>B: Would you mind opening the window?<br>C: Could you please open the window? |

For cultural difference, consideration should be given to making an effort to verbalize as much as possible. Generally, people who grow up in a high-context culture[1] can understand the meaning through both verbal and contextual information. However, people from low-context cultures can easily process only the verbal communication and are not necessarily able to process the contextual information. Thus, in dealing with a global audience, it is safer to make the communication adequate for a low-context culture. People who can understand the meaning from the context can understand the verbal communication more easily. On the other hand, for people who depend on verbal communication, understanding by context is sometimes impossible. If person A in the example provided for Principle 3 (Contextual Difference, Table 3) grew up in a high-context culture, he or she could easily sense that the responses of persons B, C, D are not positive answers, which means they don't want to go to the zoo, but if person A were from a low-context culture, it would be hard for him or her to be able to interpret these responses. In general, people who can interpret the meaning both from the context and the verbal communication are in a better position to communicate successfully. Thus, when dealing with diverse people, verbal communication should be emphasized.

People tend to communicate differently in terms of directness. Some people tend to communicate more directly while others communicate less directly. People who can deal with both indirect communication and direct communication can

understand person A's comment (Communication Style Difference, Table 3) as an expression about the current state or as a suggestion to change that state. However, people who understand only direct communication may understand person C's request easily but may not be able to interpret person A's comment as a suggestion to open the window. Thus, to target both types of communicators, direct communication should be tried first to more adequately accommodate a global audience.

## Principles Suggested for Mother-Tongue Difference

Table 4 suggests cooperating principles that take into account mother tongue difference. To accommodate the difference in native languages, the audience's familiarity with and ease with which it can process the features of language in terms of syntax, phonology, morphology, and pragmatics should be considered. When dealing with a global audience, it is preferable to use shorter and simpler sentences and to adjust sentence length as one goes along with the audience. This is because people who can process longer and complex sentences are generally able to process short and simple sentences; but the opposite is not necessarily true (see the example for Principle 1, Table 4).

**Table 4. Principles Suggested for Mother-Tongue Difference**

| Areas | Language Principles | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Syntactic consideration | 1. Use shorter sentences. | • Consider the length:<br>A: Our goals include making a determination about that in the near future.<br>B: We'll decide that soon. |
| Phonological consideration | 2. Use more easily distinguishable sounds. | • Consider pronunciation:<br>A: I can't be there.<br>B: I cannot be there. |
| | 3. Provide written words for adults. | • Consider adults:<br>A: My name is Jihyeon.<br>B: My name is Jihyeon. J. I. H. Y. E. O. N. |
| Morphological Consideration | 4. Use a more distinguishable look | • Consider the look:<br>A: M vs W<br>B: MEN vs WOMEN |
| Pragmatic consideration | 5. Use the most typical expressions | • Consider the use:<br>A: How are you?<br>B: What's up? |

Familiarity with the phonology should also be considered. What is distinct to one speaker's ear may not be so distinguishable to another speaker's ear. Generally, subtle sound differences are harder to perceive than those sounds that are more distinct, as shown in Principle 2 in Table 4. The abbreviated form *can't*, especially when the difference between *can* and *can't* is distinguished by the length of a single syllable, is sometimes not very easily identifiable by people who are not accustomed to that distinction. The form *cannot* provides more distinguishable features to allow the audience to differentiate it from *can* by both word length and number of syllables. For a global audience, it is recommended that the speaker try to use word choices with sounds that are as different as

possible. In addition, it should be remembered that for some people, certain sound combinations are not easily perceived just by hearing them. Language Principle 3 in Table 4 gives the example of providing the spelling. As many adults depend heavily on written language systems to learn additional languages, it is often helpful or necessary to provide the spelling of a new combination of sounds. When adults hear personal names with an unfamiliar combination of sounds, it is helpful for the listener to see or hear the spelling.

Familiarity with morphology can vary depending on the language system and the culture one belongs to. *M* and *W* can be distinctive to native English speakers but to some others, the letters are perceived simply as reversals of a single image. Similarly, to people whose native language's writing system does not use roman letters, ㄱ and ㄴ can be seen as reversals of the same image while, to Koreans, they are clearly distinctive images. Thus, when dealing with people of different cultures, since the speaker does not know what morphological familiarities their audience may possess, it is advisable to use a more distinguishable look. *Men* and *Women* is more easily distinguishable than just *M* and *W*.

When dealing with people of different cultures, you should not vary the expressions that you would use for your audience from the same culture. For example, native speakers of English may vary the greetings from "How are you?" to "What's up?" Most Asians are familiar with the expression "How are you?" learned from English textbooks. However, they are at a loss when hearing "What's up?" because the expression is heard less, and therefore, they do not know what would be an appropriate response. Thus, in order to make English communication successful, it is preferable to begin with more typical expressions rather than trying less commonly used expressions.

# CONCLUSION

With the advent of globalization, English communication has expanded to include diverse speakers and contexts. This article has attempted to (a) summarize the changes in English communication worldwide, (b) identify some of the difficulties experienced in English communication among people of different cultures and mother tongues, and (c) suggest cooperative principles to make English communication successful, considering the global audience. More discussion and integration are needed among scholars in relevant fields to further understand English communication among people of different cultures and native tongues to reshape the framework of current English language learning and teaching to better accommodate global realities in English communication.

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## FOOTNOTE

[1] People in high context cultures depend more on context in sharing meanings through communication while people in low context cultures depend less on context and more on the verbal communication. Thus people in low context cultures tend to verbalize the detail during communication while people in high context cultures tends to express less, assuming that meanings are understood by context.

# Understanding Language Learning by Looking at Faulty Memory

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We are in the business of memory; in other words, learning. Memory, however, is not as simple as it may seem. Memory errors, such as forgetting, source amnesia, and false memory, show that memory is not reproductive, it is constructive and even re-constructive, but for a purpose. By looking at how episodic memory is faulty, when there is no physiological reason it should be, we can discover what Schacter (2013) calls the sole purpose of memory. We also draw on the systems of memory-making, including faulty memory, to make meaning from language. On hearing words, our brains do not look them up in a huge, built-in neural dictionary. Instead, each word and phrase activates a plethora of existing sensory, emotional, and motor networks that stimulate simulations, in what Bergen (2012) calls "embodied cognition."

## INTRODUCTION

Most of us operate without thinking much about how we remember things, assuming it is just one of those things beyond our reach; but we do seem to hold a few basic assumptions: We know that students need to be exposed to language for it to go into memory, and then it has to be practiced to stay there. We understand that making a memory means forming new neural connections that modify larger networks and that the strength of these connections is influenced by certain factors, such as personal relevance. We suppose that making memory is a process of recording and storing, much like what a digital camera does, except without nearly as much precision and permanence. We think of the brain as a filing cabinet full of data and images, prone to corruption and fading over time.

In fact, it bothers us to no end that memory is so unstable. Why does it take so long to learn certain things, such as language, and why do we forget so much after we learn it? Why do episodic memories, those that recall the past, just fade away unless we reinforce them, especially since physiologically, the brain has the potential to make permanent connections? Or why can some memories, like those of a traumatic event, seem crystal clear even decades later? That resilience is there even when we don't want it, as any PTSD sufferer knows. If only we could learn vocabulary like that.

I believe that getting a better picture of how memory works is vital for our profession, and may lead us to teaching practices that are more effective than what we have been using so far, and hopefully less painful. So is the brain really like a buggy digital camera, or is there more? Work by neuroscientists like

Schacter (1999, 2002, 2007), Atance and O'Neill (2001), Bridge and Paller (2012), and surprisingly, Marcel Proust (Lehrer, 2007), on episodic memory, the kind of memory that lets us recall past events, suggests that it is more. The insights they provide might let us pierce the mystery of how memory is made, how the brain makes meaning, and why we even have memory. According to Schacter (ICCNS, 2013), episodic memory exists for one single purpose, one I am hoping you can figure out. The place to start looking for this purpose is not where you might expect: Rather than looking at memory when it works, let us look at memory when it doesn't.

## MEMORY AND FAULTY MEMORY

Memories seem to be of three types: (a) episodic, like a movie of an experience; (b) procedural, for skills and habits; and (c) semantic, for meanings and facts, such as $1 + 1 = 2$, that have become so automatized that we have no recall where we learned them. Experts believe that there are three steps in storing these memories: first as a flicker in the sensory system that just lasts a fraction of a second; then as a short-term memory that lasts for 20–30 seconds; and finally, for some memories, as long-term memories that can last indefinitely (Mohs, 2014). Unlike the first two memory systems, long-term memory can store an unlimited amount of information. When we, as teachers, talk about "memory," we are usually talking about long-term memory. So the process of how things go in and out of long-term memory is what we are most concerned with.

Huge waves of sensory input (with the exception of smell) go through a kind of filter, the reticular activating system, that allows certain kinds of information through. In particular, three types of information are sent on for further processing: (a) that with particular personal relevance, (b) that related to something you have recently been thinking about, and (c) that with novelty. It probably works in conjunction with many other areas of the brain. We also believe the hippocampus and pre-frontal cortex, the emotional system, play a major role in evaluating sensory input and deciding whether it is worth further processing (Schacter, 1999). Each input seems to be almost instantly assigned an emotional valence. Whereas we once thought this was done outside the pre-frontal cortex, separate from cognition, Pessoa (2014) suggests that fast pre-frontal cognition might also be playing a role. Many neuroscientists now believe emotion and cognition are so integrated at so many levels that they cannot be considered separate. In addition to the emotional valence causing something to be put in long-term memory, repeated firing of the same neural networks does so too, which is what study before a test is all about.

Episodic memory, the way we remember past events, is particularly faulty. The basic inability to retrieve a memory, or forgetting, seems to be caused by weak encoding or poor cueing (Schacter, 2002). Weak encoding is the main reason for forgetting, which is why we forget most things, including dreams. Poor cueing or absent-mindedness, not being able to associate a memory with a retrieval cue, is another problem. Weak encoding and poor cueing are most likely when we are not really paying attention, such as when you come home wondering what to eat for dinner and forget where you put your keys down.

The offshoot of basic forgetting for language teaching is fairly straightforward. Make sure you have your students' full attention when you tell them the things you most want them to remember. The age-old tool, "This will be on the test," works wonders for that purpose. Something else we might pay more attention to is providing high-quality cueing, as through multisensory input. Then finally, since emotional valence influences retention, giving what Krashen (2011) now refers to as "compelling input" rather than just "comprehensible input." Novelty causes dopamine release and better retention, even with the not-so-novel items encountered at the same time as the novel ones. Spaced repetition also causes better retention. Rather than giving all the content in one session, spreading it out over two or more sessions causes the recently made networks to reactivate and consolidate the connections:

> It sounds unassuming, but spaced repetition produces impressive results. Eighth-grade history students who relied on a spaced approach to learning had nearly double the retention rate of students who studied the same material in a consolidated unit, reported researchers from the University of California-San Diego in 2007. (Pashler, Rohrer, Cepeda, & Carpenter, as cited in Paul, 2013, para. 8)

Interference also causes retention problems. An older memory might be replaced with a newer one, or a newer memory might not take hold because stronger or more-often repeated older versions already exist. The offshoot for preventing interference, especially with similar structures in either L1 or L2, is to give students difference-noticing activities. Provide them with the similar forms and have them identify the differences.

Other types of faulty memory go beyond just forgetting and interference, and in them lie the first hints as to how memory works. We tend to be good at remembering the main content of new information but poor at remembering the source. This is called misattribution and has three types: source amnesia, cryptomnesia, and false memory.

*Source amnesia* means misattributing the source, something speakers like me do all the time. The experience of one U.S. President, Ronald Reagan, shows us how this memory fault works. In his 1980 presidential campaign, he repeatedly told the heart-wrenching story of a World War II pilot who died in a crash. According to Reagan, his bomber was hit and going down. The brave pilot ordered all his crew to bail out, but when he was getting ready to go, he discovered that his gunner was still in the plane. The gunner was too badly injured to jump. "Reagan could barely hold back his tears as he uttered the pilot's heroic response, even though the pilot could have parachuted out: 'Never mind, son. We'll ride it down together.' Then Reagan tells us the pilot was given a Congressional Medal of Honor" (Schacter, 1996, p. 287). Did you notice something odd about this story? If both the pilot and gunner died in the crash, how could we know what the pilot said? Reporters wondered too. On checking, they found there was no Congressional Medal of Honor awarded for such a case. They then came across the exact same scene in a 1944 war movie, *On a Wing and a Prayer* (Schacter). Reagan had remembered the story but misattributed the source.

We can look at the odd experience of another famous person, George

Harrison, to see how *cryptomnesia* works. Cryptomnesia happens when you learn something, forget that you learned it, and then later come up with the same idea again, thinking it is yours. When George Harrison's "My Sweet Lord" became a major hit, Ronald Mack, the author of the Chiffons' 1962 "He's So Fine" heard it and instantly recognized the melody as his own. His company sued Harrison for plagiarism, but Harrison claimed that although he had heard The Chiffons' hit, he did not steal it, at least not intentionally. He had composed "My Sweet Lord" on his own while "vamping" some guitar chords. The judge ruled in favor of the plaintiff and said the incident was "subconscious plagiarism" (Self, 1993). I suggest you do web searches on these two songs and listen yourself.

The first two types of misattribution show a pattern: some components of a memory are kept, though maybe distorted, while others are lost. The third type of misattribution, *false memory*, carries this pattern to even greater extremes. According to misinformation theory, false memory is a memory that we distort or confabulate as a result of post-event information corrupting it. The best-known examples come from legal cases where passionate eyewitness testimony turned out to be completely wrong. For example, a woman accused the memory expert Dr. Donald Thompson of raping her. Thompson had an ironclad alibi, though. He was on TV at the time of the rape. It was later found that the woman had seen the program just before the rape occurred and incorporated the memory of the person she had seen on TV with the memory of the rape itself (Schacter, 1999, p. 114). In fact, the more traumatic the experience, the more likely the memory might alter.

We owe most of our understanding of false memory to Elizabeth Loftus, an embattled psychologist who has been challenging the veracity of eyewitness testimony for years. Loftus (2013) argues that many of the claims in court are a special kind of false memory, *implanted memory*, in which the memory of a traumatic event is mixed up with information encountered later, often through police or therapist questioning. For example, she talks about the sad case of a Seattle man who, while out with his fiancé, was suddenly arrested because he had similar physical features to a rapist. The victim, in looking at photos during police questioning said he was the "closest," but later, in court said she was "absolutely sure he was the man" (Loftus, 2013). The innocent man was imprisoned until the real rapist was caught and confessed, but he died from a stress-related heart attack not long after his release.

Loftus (2013) has done extensive research on the misinformation effect, how post-event information can partly alter episodic memory, and her work was partly prompted by an implanted memory event she had herself. Her mother drowned in the family pool when she was a child. Thirty years later, her 90-year old uncle told her that she was the one who had found her mother's body:

> [After] initial shock she began to remember and eventually I could see myself, a thin, dark-haired girl, looking into the flickering blue and white pool, my mother dressed in her nightgown, floating face down . . . "Mom, Mom?" I asked the question several times. (Benedek, 1995, p. 1)

Memories of finding her mother began coming back, and Loftus believed she had repressed these memories. She found that they were completely false when

her uncle and several other relatives confirmed she was not even there when her mother was found. This made Loftus wonder how she could confabulate these false memories at just the suggestion of her uncle. Answering this question led to her research, her discovery of how easily a memory could be implanted, especially if the event was traumatic, and now, her relentless efforts to inform U.S. courts that eyewitness testimony is less reliable than thought.

So why is memory so faulty? It is not because of simple fading per se, but because memory is constructive rather than reproductive. It is good at keeping the content and gist, but not so good with nonessential details. There is a reason for this – related to why we have memory in the first place. The sole purpose of episodic memory is for us to predict the future (Schacter, 2013). We do so by simulating outcomes, outcomes of situations perceived through sensory input, through cognition, and through other means. We see a situation and we simulate what will happen next. We try to decide something, and we simulate possible consequences if we do. As a result, we can usually decide what to do in any situation. In order to do this simulating, we do not need a filing cabinet full of clear, precise memories of every past experience because this would require too much processing to make a simulation. What we need is amalgamations of memories in simpler, faster-to-access archetypes for use to construct future events.

## How Simulating Allows Us to Process Meaning

As a knowledge base for simulating, memories condense, amalgamate, and reconstruct themselves. This seems more plausible if we think of memories as dynamic networks rather than items in a filing cabinet. Consider this: If we encounter a tiger, we first get sensory input. It seems that our most basic neural systems that identify lines, colors, and sounds are activated, and then activate higher networks for pattern matching. If the incoming sensory data is consistent with any of the larger networks formed as memories in previous encounters, we might narrow the identification of the tiger from similar mental models like dogs, lions, or car seat covers. Just identifying a tiger for what it is, however, is not very useful, so the same sensory networks begin simulating what is going to happen based on real or secondhand memories. That allows us to select an appropriate reaction such as running away as opposed to trying to eat it. In short, sensory input leads to instant simulating.

The brain reuses older skills to make new ones, and this appears to be exactly what the brain has done in order to evolve language. Bergen's exciting new book, *Louder Than Words: The New Science of How the Mind Makes Meaning* (2012), finally informs us of how the brain makes meaning from language by embodied cognition. To process language, the brain uses the same memory-based simulating tools that help us identify objects in the environment and determine appropriate actions.

Do you remember how memory allows you to identify patterns and simulate the future? Let's say a tiger walks out of the brush in front of you. The incoming visual, auditory, and other sensory firing patterns fit those you hold in memory as representing a tiger. That lets you identify the tiger and all the other nasty things your memory associates with such creatures. You also start simulating potential

futures. If it is walking in your direction, that means it might intend to do something unpleasant to you. The same thing happens when we just hear the word *tiger*. Within milliseconds, the word *tiger* triggers the same sensory networks in the brain that let us identify tigers. That word is a substitute for the incoming sensory signals themselves, and that is how we make meaning from words.

Just hearing that word alone might make us internally visualize a tiger, or baseball team, by activating networks in our visual cortex, with all the emotional and situational components associated with it (scary, jungle, Detroit). However, it is not often that we encounter single words in isolation. We usually take in language in a more action-based context: "A tiger jumped on the antelope." Even as you read this, neurons in your visual, auditory, and motor cortices begin firing to simulate the meaning (Bergen, 2012). In your mind's eye, you'll probably simulate a sunny jungle or plains setting, a tiger of a particular size at a particular distance, running, jumping with claws outstretched, and coming down on some frantic antelope unable to get out of its way. You might also simulate a roar and thud in your auditory cortex, and the jump and grasp in your motor cortex. If you simulate a shortstop from Osaka, you probably watch too much baseball.

Now here is the interesting thing. The simple sentence I gave you, "A tiger jumped on the antelope," did not contain any information about running, jumping, size, distance, predation, etc., and yet you simulated this. This alone is fair proof that our brain does not store words like single dictionary entries and also shows how memories amalgamated into mental models work. You saw an archetype constructed from hundreds of encounters, hopefully not firsthand, that let you fill in the most likely scenario. This shows that we process meaning by embodied simulation, with "embodied" meaning use of the sensory cortices, much like the way mirror neurons work. In the motor cortex, for example, if I hear "open the door," the same neural networks as doing the act itself fire, but at a low enough amplitude that our hands do not start moving – well, at least for most of us.

Bergen (2012) points out two other interesting points as well. One is that we can also imagine things we have never encountered, such as a "flying pig" (although some of us might have visited a pub with that name), or a "yellow trucker's hat blowing across the road." This is further proof that we are simulating rather than just recalling previous memories. He also explains some fascinating research that suggests even abstract terms such as *justice* might have started with embodied cognition through use of metaphor. It might even be that all language processing uses embodied cognition (personal communication, 2014).

## CONCLUSIONS

The discoveries of memory as a tool of simulating and language as embodied cognition could have large repercussions in our field. Indeed, what could be more central to English teaching than how the brain does memory and language? Both these theories support the notion that communicative teaching methods are more brain compatible than traditional methods, such as memorizing vocabulary lists,

and we can be sure this new understanding will bear other fruit. I am not sure what they will be, but I am confident that our progeny will mark this moment in time as the beginning of a great advance in our field.

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## AUTHOR NOTE

My presentation title at the 2013 KOTESOL International Conference was "Solving Classroom Problems with Neuroscience"; but as often happens, between the time I submitted the title and actually gave the presentation, the topic evolved. I ended up presenting mainly on the topic referred to by the title above. Likewise, in the period of time since my presentation, I have expanded and added to the content, so this article goes beyond what I said then.

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# Developing Principles and Strategies for Communication-Oriented Language Teaching

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Communicative language teaching (CLT) has long been recommended as the way ahead for language teachers in many countries, including Korea. However, the recommendation has often led to uncertainty and misunderstanding. Many teachers have felt uncomfortable with it and questioned its suitability in their own situations. Whilst they have identified with its underlying message — that we should teach communication skills through activities that engage the students — they have also felt the need to adapt it to their own situations. One approach to this process of adaptation is to formulate "context-free" principles and strategies that can be implemented in ways suited to specific contexts. Another is to develop a flexible methodological framework that embraces not only the newer "communicative" ideas but also the more traditional practices with which all teachers are familiar.

## INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS CLT?

Hunter and Smith (2012) analyzed the keywords in articles published in a leading UK-based journal (*ELT Journal*) and showed how communicative ideas and terminology gradually became dominant in ELT in the years up to 1986. But their analysis also contradicts any claim that there was ever an agreed conception of what CLT really meant. This lack of consensus has been confirmed in the years since then. For example, Harmer (2003, p. 289) suggests that CLT "has always meant a multitude of different things to different people." Hall (2011, p. 93) agrees and notes that "everyday classroom practices can appear to be quite different when CLT principles are applied in differing social and educational contexts." Not surprisingly, this lack of certainty has also been found in practicing teachers' conceptions of CLT. In Korea, for example, Li (1998) reported that teachers had unclear conceptions of the nature of communicative approaches. In Hong Kong, Clark et al. (cited in Carless, 2003) found similar evidence with respect to teachers' ideas about task-based learning and teaching. According to Ho and Wong's (2004, p. xxxiv) summary of fifteen national surveys in East Asia, CLT has been implemented in various ways "with the term almost meaning different things to different English teachers."

One source of uncertainty has been that from the outset, CLT has existed in two different versions, which correspond roughly to its two main sources: a communicative perspective on *language* and a communicative perspective on *learning*. The communicative perspective on language is primarily about *what* we learn. It proposes that when we learn a language we are primarily learning not

language structures but language "functions" (how to "do things with words"). On the other hand, the communicative perspective on learning focuses attention on *how* we learn, especially on our natural capacities to "acquire" language simply through communication without explicit instruction.

In classroom practice, both perspectives lead to an emphasis on "communication in the classroom" (Johnson & Morrow, 1981). But if we focus only on the communicative perspective on learning, we may draw the conclusion (as many have done) that involvement in communication is sufficient in itself for learning and that we should not make any use at all of "traditional" techniques such as explanations, drills, and question-and-answer practice. This has often been called (after Howatt, 1984, p. 287) the "strong" version of CLT. The communicative perspective on *language*, on the other hand, still leaves open the possibility that teachers might present and practice individual items (in a communicative context) before or after students use them for communication. This has often been called (again, after Howatt, 1984, p. 287) the "weak" version of CLT. Allwright and Hanks (2009, pp. 47-49) argue that the "much less challenging ideas" of this weak version (which they see embodied in Littlewood, 1981) "solved the commodity problem" of CLT (because it could form the basis of published course books) but hindered the "radical rethink about learners" that the strong version might have stimulated, if it had been commercially viable.

The two versions of CLT thus have different implications for how language is best learnt and taught in the classroom. But both versions require the teacher to be a creator and organizer of communicative activities, a role which presents challenges both for teachers and for learners.

## THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING CLT

Practical challenges are reported from numerous countries when teachers have been asked to implement CLT, particularly in primary and secondary schools, where classes are often large and resources limited (e.g., Carless, 2004, in Hong Kong; Hiep, 2007, in Vietnam; Hu, 2005, in China; Jeon, 2009, and Li, 1998, in Korea; Nishino & Watanabe, 2008, in Japan; see also surveys of a range of East Asian countries in Butler, 2011; Ho & Wong, 2004; Littlewood, 2007). These challenges include

- difficulties with classroom management, especially with large classes, and teachers' resulting fear that they may lose control;
- new organizational skills required by some activities such as pair or group work,
- students' inadequate language proficiency, which may lead them to use the mother tongue (or only minimal English) rather than trying to "stretch" their English competence;
- excessive demands on teachers' own language skills if they themselves have had limited experience of communicating in English,
- common conceptions that formal learning must involve item-by-item progression through a syllabus rather than the less observable holistic learning that occurs in communication,

- common conceptions that the teacher's role is to transmit knowledge rather than act as a facilitator of learning and supporter of autonomy,
- the negative "washback" effect of public examinations based on pencil-and-paper tests that focus on discrete items and do not prioritize communication, and
- resistance from students and parents who fear that important examination results may suffer as a result of the new approach.

Butler (2011, p. 36) classifies the challenges as involving "(a) conceptual constraints (e.g., conflicts with local values and misconceptions regarding CLT/TBLT), (b) classroom-level constraints (e.g., various student and teacher-related factors, classroom management practices, and resource availability), and (c) societal-institutional level constraints (e.g., curricula and examination systems)." Li (1998) groups Korean teachers' difficulties with CLT under four factors: the teacher factor, the student factor, the education system factor, and the method factor. The factors that emerge from Kim's (2008) analysis of one teacher's behavior could be grouped under similar categories: the teacher's own experience as an English learner, students' low proficiency level in English, the effectiveness of traditional methods of instruction for preparing students for high-stakes school exams, top-down teacher training, class size, teachers' and students' socialization in the educational context, and teachers' and students' beliefs about language teaching and learning. After a survey of 305 teachers in Korea that revealed the "discouraging factors" that often inhibit enthusiasm for CLT, Jeon (2009, p. 147) emphasizes the need for an approach adapted to the local context: "different contexts require different methods. It is time for Korean policy makers and practitioners to seek a Korean way to develop communicative competence in English" (p. 147).

## ADAPTING CLT TO LOCAL SITUATIONS

This need for adaptation is the "overarching conclusion" that Carless (2007, with reference to TBLT, seen as an "offshoot" of CLT) reaches after extensive interviews with 11 secondary school teachers and 10 teacher educators in Hong Kong. He argues (2007, p. 605) that we need "context-sensitive teaching methods" or what he describes as "situated task-based approaches, in which culture, setting and teachers' existing beliefs, values and practices interact with the principles of task-based teaching." For example, in Hong Kong it is necessary to (a) explore more fully the options for teaching grammar, (b) integrate task-based teaching better with the requirements of examinations, and (c) find an appropriate balance between oral tasks and other modes such as narrative writing and extensive reading. Carless concludes his survey with the statement that "there is clearly more conceptual and empirical work required in the development of versions of task-based approaches suitable for schooling" (p. 605).

Several reports tell how individual teachers in different situations have carried out this process of "adaptation" or "contextualization" in their practice. For example, Carless himself (2004) observed that many Hong Kong teachers reinterpret the use of communicative tasks as "contextualized practice" rather than

activities in which learners negotiate meaning independently of the teacher. Mitchell and Lee (2003) found that a Korean teacher of English (as well as a British teacher of French) re-interpreted CLT in a similar way: "Teacher-led interaction, and the mastery of correct language models, took priority over the creative language use and student centering that have been associated with more fluency-oriented or "progressivist" interpretations of the communicative approach" (p. 56). Zheng and Adamson (2003) analyze how a secondary school teacher of English "reconciles his pedagogy with the innovative methodology in a context constrained by examination requirements and the pressure of time" (p. 323) by "expanding his repertoire rather than rejecting previous approaches" (p. 335). He maintains many traditional elements, such as his own role as a knowledge transmitter, the provision of grammatical explanations, and the use of memorization techniques and pattern drills. However, he integrates new ideas into his pedagogy by including more interaction and more creative responses from the students in his classes, "usually in the context provided by the textbook, but sometimes in contexts derived from the students' personal experience" (p. 331).

## "CLT" Versus "Traditional" — An Outdated Dichotomy?

The discussion so far has been framed around the notion that the core notions of a "traditional approach" and a "CLT approach" are valid ways of conceptualizing reality. However, this is not a necessary assumption. Teachers may break free altogether from concepts such as "traditional" and "CLT." They may simply choose ideas and techniques from the universal, transnational pool that has been built up over the years and evaluate these according to how well, in their own specific context, they contribute to creating meaningful experiences that lead towards communicative competence. From this perspective, the notion that CLT is a distinct methodology that teachers "ought to" implement disappears. Ideas and techniques from whatever source – so-called traditional, so-called CLT, or indeed any other source – constitute a common pool on which teachers can draw in order to design classroom practices that are real and meaningful to their learners and help learners towards fulfilling their communicative needs. This aligns with the suggestion of Beaumont and Chang (2011, p. 291) that the CLT / traditional dichotomy may "inhibit methodological development" and it is better to define learning activities in terms of their learning outcomes and their "potential to make a contribution to the general goal of learning a language, i.e., successful communication" (p. 298). It is also consistent with the view that CLT now functions mainly as an "umbrella term" for learning sequences that lead towards communication (Harmer, 2007, p. 70) and that what is now essential is not any specific set of ideas and techniques but "the spirit of CLT" (Hiep, 2007, p. 196). The essence of this spirit is that the goal of teaching is for learners "to be able to use the language effectively for their communicative needs" and that "learning is likely to happen when classroom practices are made real and meaningful to learners" (Hiep, 2007, p. 196).

As we have seen, the term "CLT" is not only ambiguous but also often carries the misleading message that there is some proven version of "genuine" CLT to which a teacher should try to conform, even if his or her intuitions say otherwise.

If we need a label at all, it would be better to have one that sets out clearly the goals of teaching (successful communication) but implies more flexibility regarding the means (which will vary with context). In an earlier paper (Littlewood, 2004, p. 325), I proposed "communication-oriented language teaching" (COLT) as an alternative term. I will use that term in the remaining part of this paper.

## DEVELOPING PRINCIPLES FOR A COMMUNICATION-ORIENTED PEDAGOGY

It is often said that we have entered a "postmethod" era (e.g., Allwright & Hanks, 2009; Kumaravadivelu, 2003, 2006, and elsewhere; Littlewood, 2011). For many decades, language teachers have sought a "best method" that could be applied in any context, by any teacher and with any group of learners. Some stages in this search are surveyed in, for example, Littlewood (2008), Richards and Rodgers (2001), and Thornbury (2011). Each apparent solution has proved illusory and few people now believe that such a best method can exist at all because every teacher, teaching context, and group of learners is different (Prabhu, 1990). However, these decades of exploration have left the language teaching profession with an immense range of ideas, strategies, and learning activities from which an individual teacher can now choose in order to develop an approach that is suited to his or her own specific context.

But this choosing process must be guided by principles of some kind; otherwise, teaching will be random and lack direction. Can we identify principles that are sufficiently well-grounded to act as guides to developing a context-sensitive pedagogy without acting as dogma that inhibits and conflicts with teachers' own intuitions?

Ellis (2005a, 2005b) suggests looking for these principles in the knowledge we have about second language acquisition. We now have a vast amount of such knowledge (surveyed, for example, in the 1000+ pages of Ellis, 2008), which should give us a basis for what Ellis calls "instructed language learning." He proposes the following ten principles as being firmly enough established to form a basis for language teaching:

- Instruction needs to ensure that learners develop both a rich repertoire of formulaic expressions and a rule-based competence.
- Instruction needs to ensure that learners focus predominantly on meaning.
- Instruction needs to ensure that learners also focus on form.
- Instruction needs to be predominantly directed at developing implicit knowledge of the L2 while not neglecting explicit knowledge.
- Instruction needs to take into account the learner's "built-in syllabus."
- Successful instructed language learning requires extensive L2 input.
- Successful instructed language learning also requires opportunities for output.
- The opportunity to interact in the L2 is central to developing L2 proficiency.
- Instruction needs to take account of individual differences in learners.
- In assessing learners' L2 proficiency it is important to examine free as well as controlled production.

Kumaradivelu (1994, 2003) has a similar purpose but draws on accumulated professional experience in formulating ten "macro-strategies" as the basis for a "postmethod pedagogy" (here they are paraphrased):

- Provide the maximum possible number of learning opportunities.
- Facilitate classroom interaction with a communicative purpose.
- Minimize perceptual misunderstandings.
- Activate students' intuitive capacity for independent discovery.
- Foster conscious awareness of aspects of language.
- Contextualize the linguistic input.
- Integrate the language skills.
- Promote learner autonomy.
- Raise students' cultural consciousness.
- Ensure social relevance.

A class of 33 Chinese pre-service MA students (taught by the present author) drew on their experience as learners, their knowledge of past methods as well as the ideas of Ellis and Kumaravadivelu in proposing what can be summarized as eight "macro-strategies":

- Create a suitable learning environment.
- Cater for learners' needs.
- Pay attention to learners' motivation.
- Adapt teaching content to learners' interests.
- Orient learning towards active use of language.
- Adopt a variety of learning activities.
- Give appropriate feedback and assessment.
- Pay attention to the cultural dimension of language learning.

Closer to the stage of classroom planning, Littlewood (2004, 2011) proposes a methodological framework based on (a) the broader view of communicative competence that has formed a major impetus to the development of CLT with (b) the continuum from analytic learning (where the focus is mainly on separate aspects of language use) to experiential learning (where the focus is mainly on the holistic use of language for communication). The resulting "communicative continuum" consists of five categories that locate activities in relation to each other and the goal of communicative competence (see Table 1).

**Table 1. The "Communicative Continuum" as a Basis for COLT**

| Analytic Strategies | | ← → | | Experiential Strategies |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Non-communicative Learning** | **Pre-communicative Language Practice** | **Communicative Language Practice** | **Structured Communication** | **Authentic Communication** |
| Focusing on the structures of language, how they are formed and what they mean, e.g., substitution exercises, inductive "discovery" and awareness-raising activities | Practicing language with some attention to meaning but not communicating new messages to others, e.g., describing visuals or situational language practice ("questions and answers") | Practicing pre-taught language but in a context where it communicates new information, e.g., information gap activities or "personalized" questions | Using language to communicate in situations that elicit pre-learnt language but with some degree of unpredictability, e.g., structured role-play and simple problem-solving | Using language to communicate in situations where the meanings are unpredictable, e.g., creative role-play, more complex problem-solving and discussion |
| **Focus on forms and meanings** | | ← → | | **Focus on meanings and messages** |

For teachers accustomed to a tradition dominated by controlled, form-oriented activities, this framework provides dimensions for innovation and expansion. They can maintain their base in activities represented in the first and second categories, but gradually expand their repertoire into the other three. The study by Deng and Carless (2009) shows how, even after the introduction of a task-based policy in Guangdong, some teachers' classroom practice remains rooted in the two left-hand columns, with only occasional excursions into the third and fourth.

# THE WAY FORWARD WITH COLT

This final section will outline five key areas that teachers might explore as they develop their approach to communication-oriented language teaching (COLT). Further references to each area may be found in Littlewood (2013), of which the present paper is a revised and abridged version.

## Exploring Optimal Combinations of Analytic and Experiential Strategies

Some of the most significant strategic decisions that classroom teachers have to make concern the complementary functions of analytic and experiential strategies. This issue is at the heart of the distinction between the "weak" and "strong" versions of CLT discussed above (the latter affirming that analytic learning is not necessary) and is also central to considering the respective roles of accuracy-based and fluency-based activities (Brumfit, 1984). More recently, much research has addressed the role that form-focused instruction plays in facilitating language learning and the kinds of form-focused instruction that are of the most benefit in particular circumstances. However, the optimal balance between different kinds of activity from the analytic-experiential continuum must be determined by each teacher in his or her specific context.

## Exploring Ways of Structuring Classroom Interaction More Effectively

A major hindrance to many teachers in their implementation of communication activities (or "tasks") in the classroom, especially with monolingual classes at primary or secondary level, is that when students are not closely monitored, many of them revert to the mother tongue and do not challenge themselves linguistically. More effective ways need to be found of scaffolding group work (e.g., through task design features) so that these give better direction and support to independent interaction, even in the absence of direct teacher intervention. Techniques in cooperative learning (e.g., Littlewood, 2009; Sharan, 1999) are fruitful avenues for exploration.

## Exploring Ways to Deepen and Personalize the Content of L2 Communication in the Classroom

Much of the language use that occurs in the communication-oriented language classroom does not, as a teacher interviewed by Gong and Holliday (2013, p. 48) puts it, "seem to touch the hearts of the students." In the words of Hanauer

(2012, p. 106), who advocates the use of poetry-writing, we need to put the "living, thinking, experiencing and feeling person at the centre of the language learning process" and "make language learning a personally contextualized, meaningful activity for the learner." The exploration of more strategies for doing this is a key task for the future of COLT.

## Exploring the Role of the Mother Tongue in the Language Classroom

A practical issue that engages teachers' decision-making in the classroom almost constantly is the role (if any) that they should accord to the students' mother tongue (see, for example, Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; Hall & Cook, 2012; Littlewood & Yu, 2011, for recent discussion of the issues). The "monolingual principle" – that only the target language should be used – has been enshrined in most of the methodological proposals that have influenced language teaching over the last century and in many countries (e.g., Hong Kong and the UK), it is official policy to use the mother tongue only as a last resort. In some other contexts, including China and Korea, teaching through the mother tongue has long been accepted practice. Few people would disagree that, since the classroom is the only source of input for many students, the overriding aim should be to establish the target language as the main medium of communication. To achieve this aim, however, they also acknowledge that the mother tongue can be a major resource, provided it is used strategically and does not endanger the role of the classroom as (for many learners) the only context for target-language input and interaction.

## Establishing Closer Links Between Practice, Theory, and Research

It is clear from the previous section that top-down approaches, in which policy-makers and other "experts" legislate on how language is best taught, have lost their validity. Every teacher is the best expert in his or her own situation but can draw insights from other people (theorists as well as teachers) and test them in this situation. This means that in the search for sound principles on which to base pedagogy, it is important that theory, research, and practice work together on a basis of equality.

The final determinant of successful language teaching is, of course, not the conceptual frameworks with which theorists and researchers work but the frameworks of theories, beliefs, and assumptions with which teachers work in their specific classrooms. An important means for renewal in postmethod pedagogy is therefore collaborative research and exploratory practice in which teachers and researchers work together to identify and explore issues and problems that require attention. Events such as the KOTESOL conferences and workshops offer important opportunities for facilitating this process.

## THE AUTHOR

**William Littlewood** worked for several years in secondary schools and teacher education in the UK, where he was elected President of the British Association for Language Teaching.

Since moving to Hong Kong in 1991 to join an EFL curriculum project, he has worked at tertiary institutions and is currently Honorary Professor at the Hong Kong Baptist University. Prof. Littlewood has served on several government committees in Hong Kong, including the Key Learning Area Committee for English Language Education. His books *Communicative Language Teaching* and *Foreign and Second Language Learning* (Cambridge University Press) have been used widely in teacher education and translated into several languages, including Korean. He has presented many plenary papers at international conferences and published widely on applied linguistics and language teaching.

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# Presentations

# Collaborative Writing in a Korean Context

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This study investigated collaborative writing (CW) in a Korean EFL context, focusing on the final product (the writing) and the collaboration process (the languaging) as measured by language-related episodes (LREs). The study investigated 14 individuals and 32 groups of Korean university students who were enrolled in English for general purposes classes. Some students wrote individually (n = 14) and some in small self-selected groups as follows: pairs (n = 10), triads (n = 14) and quads (n = 8). Findings of the study show that CW resulted in compositions that were shorter than those written by individuals. On the other hand, collaboratively written texts tended to be syntactically more complex and accurate. CW enabled groups to work together, build meaning, and discuss the grammar, lexis, and mechanics of their work. A high proportion of the issues they encountered were resolved correctly in a collaborative manner, providing further evidence that supports the use of collaborative writing in the L2 writing classroom as an effective pedagogical tool.

## INTRODUCTION

Collaborative writing (CW) is the co-authoring of a piece of written work, where-by groups work together throughout the whole process of writing. The joint ownership and production of written work may benefit the students in several ways. By working together, students can supply assistance to one another in the same way as an expert can provide scaffolding to a novice learner. It has been observed that there are expert-novice reversals throughout the duration of the collaboration reiterating the idea of a *collective expert* (Donato, 1994). For instance, Ohta (2001, p. 76) comments that, "When learners work together... strengths and weaknesses may be pooled, creating a greater expertise for the group than of any of the individuals involved." Research on low-level EFL learners of Spanish (De la Colina & Garcia Mayo, 2007) found that even at low levels of proficiency, students can focus on form and pool their linguistic resources to correctly solve the problems they encounter. Furthermore, CW tasks promote communication between peers, which aligns well with the communicative approach to second language learning. In what Swain terms *collaborative dialogues* (Swain, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 2001), output (Swain, 1985) can be viewed as a socially constructed cognitive tool, which facilitates learning. Swain (2000, p. 112) states that "as a tool, output (whether written or spoken) serves second language learning by mediating its own construction, and the construction

of knowledge about itself." When further refining the meaning and significance of working collaboratively, Swain settles on the term *languaging* and refers to the influence of Vygotsky who stated, "Thought is not merely expressed in words: it comes into existence through them...thought finds its reality and form in language" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 219). Swain (2006, p. 98) says that "Languaging is the process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language" and claims that "languaging about language is one of the ways we learn language."

Research into CW has shown it to have several positive effects such as fostering communication in the classroom, focusing the attention of students on form, forcing output and negotiation of meaning that may lead to noticing, and languaging about the L2, which could facilitate the resolving of linguistic problems and language learning. CW has been shown to improve the quality of the content of the final piece of writing, specifically that writing tends to have fewer errors as learners pool their resources (Dobao, 2012; Donato, 1994; Jafari & Ansari, 2012; Ohta, 2001; Storch, 1999, 2005; Swain, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 1998, 2001) and to increase the motivation and confidence of the students to write (Shehadeh, 2011) as well as mediate L2 learning (Kim, 2008; Storch, 2002; Swain, Brooks, & Tocalli-Beller, 2002; Swain & Lapkin, 1998, 2002; Swain, Lapkin, Knouzi, Suzuki, & Brooks, 2009). At present, there is little published work in the EFL context and none in the Korean EFL context; a void this paper seeks to fill.

## THE STUDY

The present study seeks to answer the following three questions:

1. Does collaborative writing in a Korean EFL context support previous findings of improved accuracy in a short narrative based on a picture prompt?
2. Do Korean EFL students in my teaching context respond favourably to CW tasks?
3. Does the size of the group affect the potential for learning, measured by frequency and orientation of language-related episodes?

The students formed self-selected groups resulting in pairs (n = 10), groups of three (n = 14) or groups of four (n = 8). The students were asked to write a short narrative of between two hundred and three hundred words about one of the two characters in a picture story prompt. They were also asked to discuss what they intended to write, to proofread their writing, and to make any corrections they felt necessary before submitting the assignment. The students were given forty minutes to write the story. The students were allowed five minutes to operationalize the task in their mother tongue (Korean) at the beginning. After this initial five-minute period, they were to begin recording and to communicate using English only. The students who wrote the assignment individually (n = 14) were from one class (chosen randomly) following the same procedure as outlined above except that they wrote alone and in silence. The individuals were given a five-minute time frame to read the task guidelines and ask any questions to the teacher, and then given a thirty-minute period to write.

## THE RESEARCH TOOL

In an effort to increase the reliability of the study, a mixed methods approach was taken that incorporated several research tools: an online survey, quantitative analysis of the texts using T-unit analysis, independent blind rating of the texts using a holistic rubric, quantitative analysis of the transcribed audio recordings, and a qualitative analysis of the transcripts. The research data was comprised of forty-six short narratives from individuals (n = 14), pairs (n = 10), triads (n = 14), quads (n = 8); audio files (n = 32) of approximately 35 minutes each (of which twelve were transcribed, four from each group size); and the results to the online surveys including Survey 1 (n = 45), conducted after *writing assignment 1,* and a revised version, Survey 2 (n = 32), collected after *writing assignment 2.*

## DATA CODING AND ANALYSIS

Following previous similar research (Dobao, 2012; Storch, 2005; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007; Shehadeh, 2011; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009) both individually and collaboratively written texts were analyzed for accuracy, fluency, and syntactic complexity using two types of analysis to evaluate the texts holistically (using a rubric) and quantitatively (using T-unit analysis).

Two independent graders evaluated each text (coded to make it anonymous) using a rubric developed by Hedgcock and Lefkowitz and utilized by Shehadeh in an EFL context for a similar purpose. The holistic evaluation considered the content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics of the writing and gave a grade out of one hundred.

The quantitative analysis focused on the fluency, accuracy, and complexity of the texts. To calculate the fluency, a total word count was used. Then T-units and clauses were identified and counted. The T-unit (Hunt, 1965, 1970) has been used extensively in the evaluation of syntactic complexity of English as both an L1 and L2[1]. Hunt defines T-units (terminal units) as one main clause plus any other clauses which are dependent upon it. Ratios comparing the number of words per T-unit and number of clauses per T-unit were calculated to measure complexity. To calculate accuracy of the texts, the number of errors were counted and categorized into grammatical, lexical, and mechanical errors. These error counts were then used to calculate several ratios (errors:number of words, errors:number of T-units, and errors:number of error-free T-units).

The audio files were transcribed and then the language-related episodes (LREs) were identified. LREs, following Swain and Lapkin (1998, p. 326), occur whenever "students talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or correct themselves or others." The LRE's were classified into form-focused LREs (F-LREs), lexis-focused LREs (L-LREs), and mechanical-focused LREs (M-LREs).

## RESULTS

Results of the study are presented in four sections below: first, the holistic evaluation of the writing; second, the T-unit analysis of the texts; third, the results of the survey; fourth, the results from the transcribed audio recordings. In

order to test for statistical significance and reliability, a Mann-Whitney U Test was run. The Mann-Whitney U test is a nonparametric statistical test for validating whether the difference between two data sets is down to chance or not, and which is suitable for comparing two data sets that are not normally distributed, but can be ranked (put in order, highest to lowest). The test is appropriate in this case because it allows data sets that are independent of one another to be compared.

## Holistic Evaluation of the Narratives

The holistic grades for the writing are shown in Table 1 categorized by group size (individuals/pairs/triads/quads). The average (mean) TOEIC score is also included to give an indication of the collective ability of the group.

**Table 1. Mean Average Scores for Groups Based on the Holistic Grades**

| Group Size (members) | TOEIC Score | Content (30) | Organization (20) | Grammar (25) | Vocabulary (20) | Mechanics (5) | Avg. TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 523.79 | 23.25 | 15.21 | 16.82 | 14.86 | 3.75 | 73.89 |
| 2 | 524.00 | 23.60 | 15.50 | 14.35 | 13.75 | 4.05* | 71.25 |
| 3 | 475.79 | 22.75 | 15.86 | 18.07 | 15.18 | 4.14* | 76.00 |
| 4 | 472.00 | 24.81 | 15.50 | 17.00 | 15.19 | 4.44* | 76.94 |

*Note.* * = Results with a significant reliability (p < 0.005).

As Table 1 shows, the texts written by groups of four and three got higher average grades than those written by pairs or individuals. However, the Mann-Whitney U test of reliability results from the holistic data lead to the conclusion that the size of the group does not significantly affect the quality of the writing, although it does significantly improve the mechanical accuracy of the writing.

## T-unit Analysis of the Narratives

The tables below show the results of the T-unit analysis for fluency, complexity, and accuracy for the short narratives written in groups and individually in relation to the first of the three research questions. Table 2 shows the average fluency and complexity of the writing.

**Table 2. Measures of Fluency and Complexity**

| | Group of 4 (n = 8) | | | Group of 3 (n = 14) | | | Pairs (n = 10) | | | Individuals (n = 14) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Mean | SD | Total | Mean | SD | Total | Mean | SD | Total | Mean | SD |
| Words | 1195 | 149.38 | 39.21 | 2224 | 158.86 | 42.36 | 1672 | 167.20 | 29.35 | 2371 | 169.36 | 41.39 |
| Clauses | 217 | 27.13 | 6.22 | 420 | 30 | 7.90 | 301 | 30.1 | 5.55 | 400 | 28.57 | 8.56 |
| T-units | 153 | 19.13 | 5.33 | 300 | 21.43 | 5.85 | 229 | 22.9 | 3.87 | 307 | 21.93 | 6.35 |
| Words/ clause | | 5.49 | 0.35 | | 5.30 | 0.34 | | 5.58 | 0.47 | | 6.10 | 1.15 |
| Words/ T-unit | | 8.01 | 1.67 | | 7.46 | 0.86 | | 7.34 | 0.93 | | 7.90 | 1.20 |
| Clauses/ T-unit | | 1.46 | 0.30 | | 1.41 | 0.14 | | 1.32 | 0.18 | | 1.31 | 0.19 |

Collaborative Writing in a Korean Context

The texts written by individuals are longer (average number of words) than those written by the groups despite having five minutes fewer to complete the task. Furthermore, as the size of the group increases the number of words tends to decrease. Conversely, the mean measure of clauses per T-unit increases as the size of the group increases, which suggests that the texts written by groups were more syntactically complex. Words per T-unit tend to increase too. The results of the means show that there are small differences; however, the Mann-Whitney U test of reliability did not reveal any real significance to the results.

The next two tables (Tables 3 & 4) show the level of accuracy achieved in the writing and relate to the first question that prompted the research investigation. Table 3 shows the number of errors in relation to words, the number of error-free clauses, and also error-free T-units.

**Table 3. Measures of Accuracy**

| | Group of 4 (n = 8) | | | Group of 3 (n = 14) | | | Pairs (n = 10) | | | Individuals (n = 14) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Mean | SD | Total | Mean | SD | Total | Mean | SD | Total | Mean | SD |
| Error free clauses | 89 | 11.13 | 5.6930 | 207 | 14.79 | 6.117 | 171 | 17.1 | 6.77 | 172 | 12.29 | 6.40 |
| Error free clauses/ clause | | 0.418 | 0.2019 | | 0.49 | 0.1550 | | 0.5550 | 0.1740 | | 0.4362 | 0.2139 |
| Error free T-units | 50 | 6.25 | 3.9188 | 120 | 8.57 | 3.936 | 114 | 11.4 | 5.46 | 91 | 6.5 | 4.0715 |
| Error free T-units/ T-unit | | 0.3408 | 0.1237 | | 0.3904 | 0.1341 | | 0.4841 | 0.1951 | | 0.2954 | 0.1897 |
| Errors | 200 | 25 | 14.122 | 287 | 20.5 | 8.327 | 171 | 17.1 | 6.437 | 338 | 24.143 | 7.441 |
| Errors per word | | 0.1626 | 0.070 | | 0.1300 | 0.0437 | | 0.1062 | 0.0447 | | 0.1465 | 0.0467 |

The results show that the accuracy of the texts written individually was lower (containing more errors) than those written in groups of three and pairs. The texts written by groups of four have the most errors on average (25), but the standard deviation from the mean is 10.92, which suggests quite a large variation from the mean. In fact, one group made 52 errors, which is almost double that of any other group. By contrast, the standard deviation for the individuals, pairs, and groups of three are consistently around 7 for the number of errors. With the outlier removed the average number of errors is 21.14. The standard deviation remains high, but that is now because most of the groups made far fewer errors.

Pairs and groups of three wrote more error-free clauses, more error-free T-units, and made fewer errors per word. These findings clearly suggest that working collaboratively reduces the number of errors and improves the accuracy of the writing. Texts written by pairs were significantly more accurate than texts written by individuals.

Table 4 shows the grammatical, lexical, and mechanical accuracy of the writing based on the number of errors identified in the writing. It is clear that the students had most difficulty with the grammar as the majority of the errors were grammatical in nature. Lexical and mechanical errors were much less of a problem. However, individuals made many more lexical and mechanical errors than their peers who worked in groups. The data for the number of grammar

errors remains quiet distorted for the groups of four even after removing the main outlier; this is perhaps due to variation between the groups of four. However, data for the mechanical and lexical errors shows that groups tend to write more accurately than individuals.

**Table 4. Measures of Grammatical Lexical and Mechanical Accuracy**

| | Group of 4 (n = 8) | | | Group of 3 (n = 14) | | | Pairs (n = 10) | | | Individuals (n = 14) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Mean | SD | Total | Mean | SD | Total | Mean | SD | Total | Mean | SD |
| Grammar errors | 184 | 23 | 13.564 | 260 | 18.57 | 7.9199 | 151 | 15.10 | 6.4369 | 285 | 20.357 | 6.0077 |
| Grammar errors/word | | 0.1493 | 0.0687 | | 0.1174 | 0.0412 | | 0.0942 | 0.0444 | | 0.1249 | 0.0424 |
| Lexical errors | 11 | 1.3750 | 1.3024 | 17 | 1.2142 | 1.2513 | 7 | 0.700 | 0.6749 | 30 | 2.1428 | 1.7478 |
| Lexical errors/word | | 0.0086 | 0.0078 | | 0.0076 | 0.0072 | | 0.0040 | 0.0036 | | 0.0124 | 0.0099 |
| Mechanical errors | 6 | 0.750 | 0.7071 | 10 | 0.7142 | 0.8254 | 13 | 1.300 | 1.4181 | 25 | 1.7857 | 1.6723 |
| Mechanical errors/word | | 0.0053 | 0.0028 | | 0.0049 | 0.0062 | | 0.0081 | 0.0084 | | 0.0101 | 0.0093 |

The results of the Mann-Whitney U test reveal that only texts written by pairs were significantly more accurate than ones written by individuals. The most significant result is for lexical accuracy. In sum, the texts written by individuals tended to be longer, although less complex and less accurate. On the whole, texts written by groups were shorter, more syntactically complex, and more accurate, but not significantly so.

## The Results of the Survey

The overall impression of the students to CW was very positive; 55% of the respondents said that they enjoyed the CW task. Only 12% of students said that they did not enjoy working collaboratively in a group to write a short narrative. This supports the observations I made of the students carrying out the task, who displayed a lot of participation, active engagement, and laughter.

In summary, most of the students indicated a preference for writing together and would welcome the opportunity to do so again in the future. The survey results show that a few students found writing in a group made deciding what to write more difficult and reduced their motivation to write. On the other hand, most students were positive about writing in a group because it was enjoyable and boosted their confidence, and perhaps because they perceived that writing collaboratively helped them choose appropriate vocabulary, reduced the number of errors, and improved the grammar.

**Table 5. Students Perceptions of the Benefits of CW**

| Reason | Survey 1 | | Survey 2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of Responses | % | Number of Responses | % |
| I think that working in a group gave me more confidence | 11 | 24 | 12 | 38 |
| I think that working in a group motivated me to do my best. | 18 | 40 | 9 | 28 |
| I think that working in a group improved the grammar of the writing. | 13 | 29 | 9 | 28 |
| I think that working in a group improved the organization of the writing. | 11 | 24 | 6 | 19 |
| I think that working in a group reduced the number of errors in the writing. | 14 | 31 | 10 | 31 |
| I think that working in a group was enjoyable. | 25 | 56 | 13 | 41 |
| I think that working in a group made it easier to write. | 14 | 31 | 8 | 25 |
| I think that working in a group made me more involved in the writing process. | 5 | 11 | 3 | 9 |
| I think that all the group members were helpful. | 26 | 58 | 15 | 47 |
| I think that working in a group helped with vocabulary selection. | 22 | 49 | 11 | 34 |
| Other | - | - | 1 | 3 |

**Table 6. Students Perceptions of the Negatives of CW**

| Reason | Survey 1 | | Survey 2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of Responses | % | Number of Responses | % |
| Working in a group made me feel uncomfortable. | 11 | 24 | 5 | 16 |
| Working in a group made me feel stressed. | 10 | 22 | 3 | 9 |
| Working in a group made it more difficult to decide what to write. | 21 | 47 | 9 | 28 |
| Working in a group reduced my motivation to write. | 5 | 11 | 7 | 22 |
| Working in a group increased the number of errors in the writing. | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Working in a group was NOT enjoyable. | 6 | 13 | 2 | 6 |
| Working in a group made it harder to write. | 10 | 22 | 4 | 13 |
| One of the group members was too dominant, which made me less involved. | 3 | 7 | 2 | 6 |
| Some of the group members were unhelpful. | 7 | 16 | 3 | 9 |
| There are NO drawbacks. | - | - | 7 | 22 |
| Other | - | - | 6 | 19 |

## Results of the Transcribed Audio Data

The audio files of twelve groups were transcribed and LREs counted and categorized. The results presented in Tables 7 and 8 below relate to the third research question. They show the results for the twelve groups that were initially

transcribed: pairs (n = 4), triads (n = 4), and quads (n = 4). This represents almost 40% of the data; therefore, the results are not complete but should be fairly representative of the groups. It is clear from the data that the group size affects the amount of interaction that occurs between the group members. There is a tendency for larger groups (three and four people) to interact more, which tends to lead to more LREs.

**Table 7. Number of Interactions and Orientation of LREs**

| Group | | Number of Interactions | LREs | L-LREs | F-LREs | M-LREs | Resolved correctly | Resolved incorrectly | Not Resolved |
|-------|------|------|------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Code | Size | | | | | | | | |
| Tues-34-7 | 4 | 371 | 17 | 5 | 11 | 1 | 17 | 0 | 0 |
| Tues-34-1 | 4 | 596 | 28 | 10 | 11 | 7 | 22 | 4 | 2 |
| Fri-56-5 | 4 | 276 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| Tues-34-6 | 4 | 210 | 13 | 9 | 4 | 0 | 11 | 1 | 1 |
| Tues-56-6 | 3 | 197 | 17 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 13 | 0 | 4 |
| Thur-34-1 | 3 | 283 | 17 | 10 | 4 | 3 | 16 | 0 | 1 |
| Tues-56-1 | 3 | 455 | 20 | 8 | 12 | 0 | 17 | 3 | 0 |
| Fri-56-1 | 3 | 349 | 26 | 4 | 21 | 1 | 21 | 4 | 1 |
| Tues-56-2 | 2 | 211 | 15 | 1 | 10 | 4 | 13 | 1 | 1 |
| Fri-34-1 | 2 | 148 | 10 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 9 | 1 | 0 |
| Tues-56-3 | 2 | 323 | 19 | 5 | 13 | 1 | 14 | 3 | 2 |
| Thur-56-2 | 2 | 228 | 13 | 4 | 9 | 0 | 11 | 1 | 1 |

**Table 8. Summary of LREs by Type and Group Size**

| | Groups of 2 (n = 4) | | | | Groups of 3 (n = 4) | | | | Groups of 4 (n = 4) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Mean | SD | % | Total | Mean | SD | % | Total | Mean | SD | % |
| **Interactions** | 910 | 227.5 | 72.37 | - | 1284 | 321 | 108.87 | - | 1453 | 363.25 | 168.65 | - |
| **Total LREs** | 57 | 14.25 | 3.77 | - | 80 | 20 | 4.24 | - | 63 | 15.75 | 9.57 | - |
| **Form focused** | 38 | 9.50 | 2.88 | 67.0 | 42 | 10.5 | 7.85 | 52.50 | 27 | 6.75 | 5.06 | 43.0 |
| **Lexis focused** | 14 | 3.50 | 1.73 | 25.0 | 31 | 7.75 | 2.63 | 38.75 | 27 | 6.75 | 3.30 | 43.0 |
| **Mechanics focused** | 5 | 1.25 | 1.89 | 8.0 | 7 | 1.75 | 1.50 | 8.75 | 9 | 2.25 | 3.20 | 14.0 |
| **Correctly resolved LREs** | 47 | 11.75 | 2.22 | 82.5 | 67 | 16.75 | 3.30 | 83.75 | 54 | 13.5 | 7.76 | 85.75 |
| **Incorrectly resolved LREs** | 6 | 1.50 | 1.00 | 10.5 | 7 | 1.75 | 2.06 | 8.75 | 5 | 1.25 | 1.89 | 8.0 |
| **Unresolved LREs** | 4 | 1.00 | 0.82 | 7.0 | 6 | 1.5 | 1.73 | 7.5 | 4 | 1.0 | 0.82 | 6.25 |

In all groups, the students focused on grammar issues and lexical choices the most. The mechanics of the writing were discussed very little and focused

predominantly on spelling. The most important statistic is the number of correctly resolved LREs. All the groups managed to correctly resolve approximately 80% of the issues that they discussed. The students working in groups of four correctly resolved marginally more issues (86.2%) than groups of three, who resolved slightly more (83.75%) than those working in pairs (82.5%).

Some groups interacted more, and some groups focused on the language more, but not all of the interactions were language-focused. The transcribed audio files revealed that most of the talk was geared towards discussing ideas about what to write. The students brainstormed their ideas and developed them together, which resulted in co-construction of meaning. This is probably due to the type of task, which being a narrative was predominantly meaning-based. Some of the interactions revealed group organization and other interpersonal communication. The data suggests that the groups that interacted most also seemed to have engaged in the most LREs.

# DISCUSSION

Although the statistical analysis of the data has not provided robust support to the observations and trends that appeared in the data, CW tasks would appear to offer plenty of incentives to the teacher and the students, as well as a few areas for caution. In light of the research findings, I will return to the questions that guided the research of this study and discuss the implications of the findings and observations of the researcher.

## Research Question 1

In the first question, I was concerned with the relationship between the linguistic accuracy of the narratives and the size of the group. In the comparative analysis, it was shown (although not statistically significantly) that the narratives written in groups contained fewer errors in all three categories: grammar, lexis, and mechanics. In this study, the accuracy of the texts was considered from two perspectives: the first perspective followed a holistic approach, and the second perspective followed the measurement of error-free T-units per total T-units. The T-unit analysis was corroborated by the scores given to the texts by the independent raters, who rated texts written by groups higher than texts written by individuals. Other studies in EFL contexts (Dobao, 2012; Jafari & Ansari, 2012) and ESL contexts (Storch, 2005; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009) have found similar results with regard to the linguistic accuracy of collaboratively written texts.

It was also apparent that the texts written by individuals tended to be longer than the texts written by groups. Furthermore, a weak inverse correlation between the length of the texts and the size of the group was observed. These observations mirror the results of other studies on group CW activities (Dobao, 2012; Storch, 1999, 2005; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007).

The audio recordings of the interactions between the students while they wrote revealed that the groups deliberated about not only what to write, but how to write it, with a focus on the lexis and grammar, and to a lesser extent,

mechanics. This deliberation about what and how to write explains why groups required more time to write than individuals. The results of the LRE analysis showed that approximately 80% of the LREs were resolved correctly, which would explain why the texts written in groups tended to contain fewer errors. That is not to say that the collaboratively written texts were error-free. On the contrary, they still contained grammatical errors and occasional lexical and mechanical errors. An analysis of the data revealed what types of errors the students were able to notice and resolve correctly. The remaining errors were errors that they were either unable to resolve collaboratively, resolved incorrectly, or were unable to notice. These remaining errors may give a teacher useful insight into what grammar to teach (or draw the students' attention to) in the future.

There were a few contradictions between the holistic results and the T-unit analysis results. The differences may be attributed to the fact that in the T-unit analysis every error was treated equally while in the holistic rating style it is likely that errors that do not compromise meaning are not considered that serious. This could result in a text with a high number of minor errors actually being rated rather more favorably than a text with just a few serious errors.

The texts were also analyzed for complexity using, among other measures, the number of clauses per T-unit ratio. The results showed that the texts written in groups contained slightly higher ratios of clauses per T-units, which would suggest that the texts were slightly more complex. Again, the statistical analysis did not lend concrete support to this observation, but it is possible that the interaction between the group members gave the group confidence to try more complicated language because they knew they could rely on their peers to help them write correctly. For this reason, they might experiment more in a group than if they were writing alone as the responses to the survey suggest, which reveal a high proportion of the students who wrote in groups felt more confident to write, sensing that their writing contained fewer errors and better lexical choices. Previous studies (e.g., Dobao, 2012; Storch, 2005; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009) also did not find group texts to be significantly more syntactically/lexically complex than texts produced by students individually.

## Research Question 2

The response to the survey questions revealed that the majority of the respondents were generally positive towards CW activities. The main reasons given were that working in a group (a) gave me more confidence, (b) improved the grammar of the writing, (c) improved the organization of the writing, (d) reduced the number of errors in the writing, (e) was enjoyable, and (f) helped with vocabulary selection. However, they did not feel that it made it easier to write or that they were more involved in the writing process. In fact, the main complaint with the CW activities was that working as a group made it more difficult to decide what to write. Even so, when given the option in the second survey, 22% of students responded that there were no drawbacks to CW with a high proportion stating a preference for group writing in future assignments.

The results of the survey fit with the analysis of the LREs, which reveals substantial amounts of time were spent discussing what to write. In some cases, the students talked for five minutes or more without writing anything or focusing

on the form of the language, perhaps because they had to choose between several (sometimes conflicting) ideas. The high proportion of students who reported that CW helped with decisions about which vocabulary to use aligns well with the seventy-three lexis-focused LREs. The sense of improved grammar that was reported may have arisen from the 107 form-focused LREs, which is equally encouraging, especially since the students were resolving over 80% of the LREs correctly. From a classroom management point of view, it was good to see the students fully engaged in CW and reporting that they had enjoyed the CW activity.

There were a few instances of groups not working well together as exemplified in the transcribed data and the few, but equally important, responses to the survey that reported that the CW task reduced motivation to write, or made them feel uncomfortable or stressed. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that when groups form, they are mutually collaborative (Storch, 2002) and that all of the members feel comfortable. This is a challenge for the teacher; however, it could be achieved through careful planning, observation, and grouping of the students. In this study, the students formed self-selected groups without any teacher interference. Despite this, some groups evidently did not work well together, as the transcripts revealed.

## Research Question 3

The third aspect of enquiry was more qualitative in nature. An analysis of the interactions of the group members within the groups was undertaken to see whether larger groups interacted more and whether they were able to engage in more LREs, which it was posited may facilitate learning. As the results suggest, the larger groups indeed tended to interact more and engage in more LREs. They also successfully resolved marginally more LREs than pairs.

Languaging about language is assumed to facilitate learning (Kim, 2008; Swain, 2006; Swain, Brooks, & Tocalli-Beller, 2002) and even when the learner is not an active participant (in the case of larger groups) but passively involved, they may also learn (Donato, 1994). However, it depends on the type of deliberation that occurs, as recognized by Kuiken and Vedder (2002), who refer to *simple noticing* or *elaborate noticing*, and Storch and Wigglesworth (2010), who distinguished between LREs based on the depth of discussion, noting that the deeper the discussion about the language, the more beneficial it seemed to be. Donato (2004) also cautions that *externalized private speech* by the stronger student, which often occurs in expert-passive or dominant-passive relationships, is not helpful to the weaker student. Whether or not all students benefit equally, it seems to be the case that the use of CW activities in the Korean EFL classroom has the potential to provide the students with opportunities to engage with the language, test out hypothesises about language, get instant feedback appropriate to their level, and provide a measure of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to use English.

It must be noted that the variation within the groups was quite substantial as expressed by the standard deviation from the mean. Even when an attempt to remove an outlier from the statistics was made, the variation in the performance of the groups was still quite large. This suggests that there are several factors that

have an effect on the outcome of CW activities. This may be due to two main variables that could not be controlled: the diverse mix of ability (measured by TOEIC scores) within the groups and the dynamics of the group. This instance adds further weight to the observations made by Storch (2002) that groups do not always work collaboratively and that lower-level learners might not be well suited to this kind of activity (Storch, 1998; Williams, 2001). Ability and group dynamics are important considerations for teachers when deciding to engage the class in group activities in general and especially in the case of CW tasks. Together, these two factors seem to have contributed to the lack of statistical support to the findings and were likely compounded by the relatively small scale of the study.

## CONCLUSION

The current study provides further evidence of the benefits of CW tasks on composition work and an insight into the university-level Korean EFL context. The university students in this study correctly resolved a high number of their language-related issues through dialogue with peers. This focus on the language form and the interactions that it involved helped students to notice gaps in their knowledge or understanding that they could resolve with the shared linguistic knowledge of the group.

Although this study has been unable to provide statistically conclusive evidence that CW tasks improve the written work of Korean EFL students, the analysis of the students' interactions has produced encouraging evidence that student interaction leads to the pooling of linguistic resources to correctly resolve their own linguistic problems. CW activities, I would suggest, are a worthy use of class time due to the opportunities they afford students to communicate in English, create instances to talk about language, and above all, enjoy writing in English. Despite these encouraging signs, the implementation of CW activities within the EFL classroom requires the teacher to be mindful of the possible negative effects that seem to arise when groups do not form a collaborative dynamic.

The findings of this study offer promising, yet tentative, support for the use of CW in EFL contexts with students of low- to high-intermediate proficiency. Further research is necessary and desirable in order to find out whether or not, and to what degree, confirmation of these findings can be obtained from a larger study and in other Korean EFL contexts

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## FOOTNOTE

[1] For discussions on the validity and usefulness of T-unit analysis, read Foster, Tonkyn, and Wigglesworth (2000), Gaies (1980), Larsen-Freeman (1978), and Polio (1997).

# Development of a Teacher-Generated Curriculum at a Korean University

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This paper describes an ongoing curriculum development project at a South Korean national university's language center. The project was initiated by teachers with the support of the language center director and has been in place for over two academic years. It has produced two practical English conversation courses that are coursebook-less, entirely teacher-generated, and targeted at student needs. As a means of developing the curriculum, the teachers designed a ten-step collaborative process for ongoing course generation, evaluation, and revision. The paper covers the concerns that led to the initiation of the project, the principles that guided the teachers, the ten-step process, and an overview of the implementation of the curriculum during the first four semesters. The authors' goal is to inform educators interested in initiating similar projects in their own teaching contexts.

## INTRODUCTION

The field of curriculum development has long been considered the domain of the specialist, where different experts, from policy makers to methodologists to coursebook authors, have dominated course development until teachers finally become involved as implementers of curriculum (Graves, 2008). There is, however, a growing belief within the field of TESOL in teachers as curriculum developers (Jennings & Doyle, 1996; Graves, 2000).

In the fall of 2011, the English conversation teachers (including the authors) at Seoul National University of Science and Technology (SeoulTech) embarked on a curriculum development project. The resulting curriculum was collaborative, completely teacher-generated, targeted at student needs, and standardized in terms of curriculum goals, objectives, and assessment. In this paper, we hope to share our guiding principles and resulting process for creating an entirely teacher-generated curriculum, with the goal of informing educators who wish to pursue a similar project in their own teaching contexts.

## BACKGROUND

SeoulTech graduation requirements for undergraduate students include two Practical English Conversation (PEC) courses, which are taught at the Institute for Language Education and Research (ILER). The PEC courses meet once a week for 100-minute sessions over the course of a fifteen-week semester, a course structure that is common to many South Korean universities (Kim & Margolis, 2000).

Until the fall of 2011, little guidance was given by the university administration regarding the curriculum for the two PEC courses. Prior to the start of a semester a small group of faculty members would meet and choose a coursebook, and then select the chapters to be taught by all of the teachers. This was a forward design model (Richards, 2013); first content was selected, then course materials were developed, and finally the exams were designed (usually a few weeks before the exam date).

There were no measurable or specific course goals and objectives. The only requirement from the university was that students pass both PEC courses and achieve a 600 TOEIC score in order to graduate. Goals, where they were stated at all, were in broad terms such as "become more comfortable speaking in English about several common topics" or "be able to request and give basic information in English." The form in which the goals and objectives were stated seems to be what Abbot (1981) described as a TENOR (Teaching English for No Obvious Reason) situation, where teaching objectives are described as vaguely as possible, and there is little mention of student needs (as cited in West, 1994).

An additional issue at the ILER was dissatisfaction with the coursebooks chosen by the committees. As mentioned above, only a few teachers took part in the selection of the books and chapters. Teacher dissatisfaction with the coursebooks often led to discarding coursebooks and the selection of a new book for the following semester. In fact, the ILER teachers adopted and discarded three coursebooks between 2009 and 2011. As the coursebook was, for all practical purposes, the course curriculum, this meant that the courses had to be completely created anew three times in four semesters.

As suggested by Jennings and Doyle (1996) and Kroeker (2010), limited guidance by administrators, vague goals, and lack of communication among the teachers can easily lead to confusion about the purpose of the courses and very different classroom outcomes. The TENOR situation was compounded by a lack of formal communication and collaboration among the faculty. While some teachers would work together in small groups and teachers teaching the same course would meet on an infrequent basis to discuss course matters, there was no formal mechanism for regular collaboration. The language teaching objectives also differed from teacher to teacher. Some teachers focused on different elements of the coursebook. For example, some focused on memorization of coursebook dialogues, while others focused on use of specific vocabulary. Furthermore, some teachers assessed student ability to recite memorized dialogues as homework, while others had quizzes where students were required to write down vocabulary from the previous lesson.

Reports of the different classroom outcomes reached the ILER administration, and at the end of the Spring 2011 semester, the ILER director requested that ILER teachers work together to develop a standardized curriculum. That is where our part of the story starts and our curriculum development process began.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The teachers who worked on this project adopted three main principles to guide the creation of a new curriculum in a way that would be a break from the past and provide for a more effective and long-lasting curriculum. These guiding principles are that (a) teachers can be course developers, (b) backward design is an effective tool for developing teaching units, and (c) the ILER teachers need to collaborate in order to develop a successful curriculum.

## Teachers as Curriculum Developers

The first principle is that as teachers of English, we are qualified to develop curriculum (Graves, 2000). Teachers after all, are the ultimate implementers of curriculum and therefore already play a key role in the curriculum development process. The adoption of this principle means that teachers know their students best (Nunan, 1989) and can create materials that are of "maximal relevance to local needs" (Sheldon, 1988, p. 238). We feel that the curriculum no longer needs to be dependent on professionally produced coursebooks from outside sources. Without coursebooks, teachers are free to create curricular content and assessment specifically targeted to meet the needs of ILER students. Additionally, this first principle seems especially applicable as the ILER does not have the funds to reach out to the myriad of experts that a specialist model would require for the creation of an expert-designed curriculum.

## Backward Design

A great concern that was raised during the coursebook discussions of semesters past had been that the coursebooks were not addressing student needs. In order to better address student needs, we moved from a forward design model to one of backward design. Backward design is a process that starts with student needs. Once student needs are established, teaching objectives and the assessment tasks are created. Lastly, course content and materials are generated (Richards, 2013). We also felt that backward design would help us to provide specific objectives and lead to a standardized assessment plan in order to help address the ILER director's concern that there was too much variation in teachers' practice, leading to different course outcomes. As Director HyeJin Chung expressed in an email to the ILER faculty, she considered standardization of the assessment plan to be of special importance (H. Chung, personal communication, May 6, 2012).

## Teacher Collaboration

We also embraced the concept that for curriculum design and implementation to succeed, teachers would need to work together. This approach was chosen for multiple reasons. The first was that by including all teachers in the development process from the beginning, they would have a stake and an interest in the success of the project (Jennings & Doyle, 1996). When teachers are not given a voice in curriculum implementation, the resulting dissatisfaction can doom a project's chances for success (Wang & Chen, 2005).

We also felt that at the time, the great reservoir of awareness, knowledge, and skills among the teachers was left untapped (Ben-Peretz, 1980) and that "collective efforts empower teachers to use their own knowledge, experiences, and skills to design a context-specific and germane EFL curriculum" (Kasi, 2010, p. 112). By pooling our skills and abilities together, we could make more informed curricular decisions and generate better teaching materials.

Furthermore, teachers generating all their own course materials can be a daunting task given the time, energy, and work required to do so (Cunningsworth, 1995; Graves, 2000; Richards, 2001). We felt that by splitting the work among many collaborating teachers, we would be able to make the workload more manageable. Therefore, in order to increase the chances of success of the project, we concluded that we would need to work together.

## PROCESS AND IMPLEMENTATION

With our three guiding principles in mind, we had to decide on the best way to proceed. Our task was to create a curricular product in the form of two PEC courses and to create a process by which we could create, evaluate, and revise the curriculum on an ongoing basis. The main tool that we arrived upon was to divide the courses into three five-week teaching units. These units would be modular in that they could be shifted, revised, and replaced with little effect on the other units in the PEC courses. The units, henceforth referred to as "modules" due to their nature, would each be generated from a student need. Through our curriculum development practice, we developed a 10-step cyclical process for module development, evaluation, and revision.
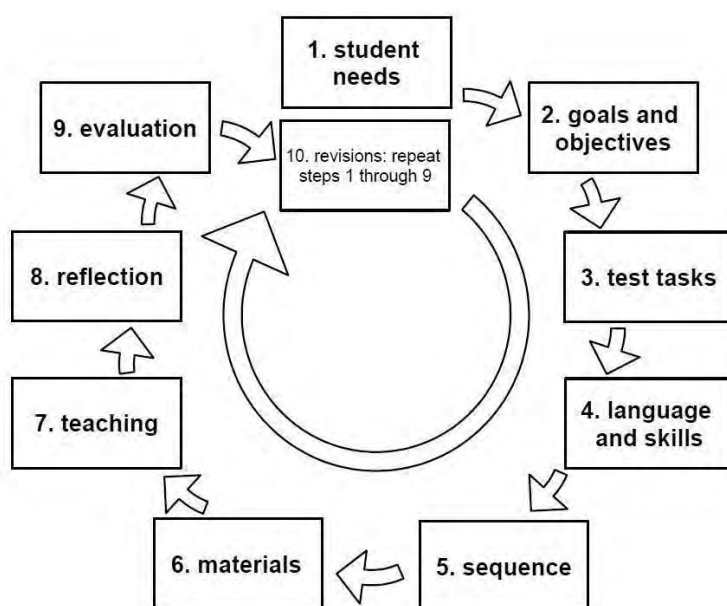


**Figure 1. A cyclical process of course generation and revision.**

As Figure 1 implies, the modules are created and revised in a cyclical process that allows for improvement over time. We begin with an identified student need, use it to generate larger module goals and objectives, and then create a module assessment task to measure student performance in terms of those goals and objectives. Teachers then perform the task themselves and record what language and skills they use to successfully complete the task.

From the results of these teacher performances, the module's specific language, skills, and other teaching points are selected with an eye towards teachability, learnability, and the practical restrictions of the course. With the module goals, objectives, target language, and skills in hand, we devise the sequence of the module and generate the materials needed to teach the module.

After carrying out the necessary preparation, teachers teach the module and take careful notes on what seemed to work and what needed improvement from lesson to lesson. We meet together for weekly course committee meetings to reflect on the challenges and successes of the week. We also have a structured feedback and reflection session after the end of each module. Resulting feedback is then used to evaluate the success of the module vis-à-vis the original need. Finally, the cycle begins again, and we make revisions where necessary.

It should be said that curriculum development is a holistic process and may not proceed in a strictly linear fashion (Graves, 2000, p. 3). It may be necessary to move backward from a step to those that came before it. For example, when teachers are creating the sequence of the module (step 5), it might become apparent that there is too much language content to cover in the time allotted. In this case, teachers should feel free to revisit the test task (step 3), and if necessary, go back to the goals and objectives of the module (step 2). Overall, our curriculum development has followed the ten-step process as outlined above.

## STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION

We did not, however, attain a stable PEC curriculum over the course of a single semester. Rather, it was an ongoing process that was implemented over the course of four semesters. We began the project in the Fall 2011 semester, after the ILER director first requested that we develop and standardize the curriculum.



**Spring 2011**
**pre-project**

little collaboration

coursebook

forward design

**Fall 2011**
**unit creation**

small groups

1/3 T-created

backward design

**Spring 2012**
**pilot curriculum**

large groups

T-created within group

backward design

many revisions

**Fall 2012**
**official adoption**

all faculty

entirely T-created

backward design

some revisions

**Spring 2013**
**stabilized curriculum**

total collaboration

few revisions

**Figure 2. Stages of curriculum implementation.**

## Fall 2011

We began our process by dividing the fall semester into three five-week modules: two based on chapters from the coursebook, which had been used in the spring semester, and the third, a final module to be developed by the teachers themselves. The first two modules were taught from the coursebook and encompassed chapters that had been taught in the previous term, while the final module would completely consist of teacher-generated materials. Teachers in the course were therefore tasked with creating one original module for the fall semester. The teacher-created module was to be based on student needs identified by teachers in our full faculty meetings held during the fall semester. While we would have preferred a more thorough needs analysis (some teachers requested such an analysis), the ILER director requested that we move forward with all possible haste.

We then formed groups of three or more teachers and each group chose a different student need to address for their module. Each group developed, taught, and reflected on their module. At the end of the semester, each of the teacher-created modules was presented to the other teachers. Of the 15 weeks of curriculum taught in each PEC course in the fall of 2011, a full third was completely teacher-generated and based on targeted specific student needs. This teacher-generated curriculum consisted of a total of six five-week modules.

## Spring 2012

The following semester was a pilot of a completely teacher-created curriculum. While all teachers had been required by the ILER administration to participate in the teacher-created module projects in Fall 2011, because of the increased workload and time demand, participation in the pilot curriculum stage of the project was voluntary. The teachers who chose to participate in this stage of development took the six modules created in Fall 2011 and used them to form the core of the pilot curriculum. There was, however, a significant amount of revision work necessary to bring the pilot curriculum to a point where full adoption was possible.

The six existing modules were divided into two groups to form the basis of two 15-week PEC courses, each consisting of three five-week modules. The nine participating teachers were each assigned to teach one of the two courses. Teachers working together on a course formed a committee that met on a weekly basis. The committee discussed and made decisions about the best way to revise and implement the previous semester's modules. The teachers also met in a larger group to discuss decisions that would have an effect on both courses such as the shared assessment plan. Teachers also took on leadership roles, with an academic coordinator position created to lead committee meetings and module facilitator positions to help ensure that the revisions and development of each module occurred at such a pace that they were ready to be taught week by week.

By the end of Spring 2012, the pilot curriculum for both PEC courses was completely teacher-created, the result of extensive collaboration, and based on identified student needs. We had to make heavy revisions from materials originally generated in Fall 2011, which resulted in a heavy unpaid workload on

the part of the participants in this stage of the curriculum development project. We also made presentations to other (non-participating) faculty members and to the ILER director to update them on the progress of the curriculum project. The ILER director approved the pilot curriculum near the end of the Spring 2012 semester for official adoption as the PEC course curricula for the Fall 2012 semester.

## Fall 2012

In the fall of 2012, with the official adoption of the ILER pilot curriculum, all PEC teachers were required to implement the teacher-created curriculum. Teachers new to the curriculum joined the existing committees in Fall 2012. New academic coordinator positions were created to lead each of the committees and ensure that teachers could collaborate and work together in a structured environment. The teachers who had served as module facilitators in the pilot stage continued in their roles for Fall 2012.

We decided that, in order to help new teachers acclimate to the new course curriculum, only teachers returning from the pilot semester would be responsible for carrying out revisions to the curriculum to be taught in Fall 2012. Teachers new to the curriculum would not be required to participate in a module's revision until they had finished teaching the module. The time and work required for revisions were much lighter for this semester. By the end of Fall 2012, all ILER conversation teachers were collaborating together and the courses were entirely teacher-created from identified student needs.

## Spring 2013

By the fourth semester of the project, we saw that the curriculum was beginning to stabilize, and there were fewer revisions to be made in preparation for that semester. We continued to reflect and collaborate through our weekly committee meetings. Teachers who had been new to the PEC1 courses in Fall 2012 took over the roles of module facilitators. The academic coordinators remained in their positions in order to ensure continuity of process and the health of the group dynamic.

## MEASURING SUCCESS

The ILER curriculum development process has seen many successes over the past two years of design and implementation. We have gone from a curriculum that was bound to a coursebook, unstandardized, and in a TENOR environment, to one that is teacher-created, collaborative, and standardized in terms of specific, measurable goals and objectives that are targeted to student needs, and has a common assessment plan.

The PEC curriculum at the end Spring 2013 differed greatly from that of Spring 2011. The curriculum is under a constant process of evaluation and revision in which all teachers have a voice. It is targeted toward student needs and can be revised to address changes in those needs. As the revisions are

performed in-house, the process is faster than if it had to go through several layers of specialists and publishers before reaching the teachers. As the system is based on modules, a change to one module does not require the discarding of the entire course. This was not the case with the earlier coursebook-dependent curricula, which were created and disposed of three times in four semesters. The PEC curriculum, therefore, is more stable than those that preceded it.

By the end of Spring 2013, teachers were granted formal opportunities to share and reflect together in weekly committee meetings. We now had chances to clarify and discuss how best to meet the objectives and goals of the modules and individual lessons. This more regular form of communication ensured that we stayed coordinated and that we continued to meet the same overall goals and objectives through the same means of assessment. The process of revision also allowed us to consult TESOL theory in a way that we did not do before and to better inform our group decisions. Our shared focus and communication ensured that we did not return to the TENOR situation of previous semesters and did not have greatly divergent assessment outcomes in our classrooms.

An additional element of our increased collaboration and communication is that we began to form a community of practice, characterized by shared enterprise, group engagement, and the development of capacity and resources over time (Wenger, 1998). The benefit of such a community includes the sharing of best practices and the generation and transference of new knowledge and skills of professional practice (Cambridge, Kaplan, & Suter, 2005). By pooling our knowledge and resources, we have collaborated to implement the PEC curriculum and to define and meet our needs-based goals and objectives.

Impressively, our curriculum and the accompanying ten-step process were developed in the space of a single academic year. The haste with which we proceeded was requested by the ILER director and not without its downsides, however. Steps in the curriculum development process that we might have taken, if given the time, were not possible. The mandate to begin development for the Fall 2011 semester came at the end of the Spring 2011 semester, which was too late to measure student achievement and attitudes towards the earlier coursebook-based courses. Without a range of data, objective and subjective, qualitative and quantitative, from a number of stakeholder groups, gathered before the curriculum development project, it is difficult to conduct research to measure our success.

The time and financial limitations imposed on this project also meant that our needs analysis was limited to teacher-identified needs. As described above in Fall 2011, the situation limited us to groups of three or four teachers brainstorming needs. While a teacher-executed assessment is a recognized way to identify student needs (Tarone, 1989), there are a number of other useful methods (Long, 2005). We would have preferred to vary our methods of analysis and to perform them in a more systematic fashion than the situation allowed.

Additionally, an important component of needs analysis is the prioritization of needs (West, 1997). By the time that the list of student needs was compiled, there was little time for a lengthy discussion regarding the relative importance of each need. While every module created addressed a need, it is arguable that not all the needs were of equal importance to our students. We would have benefited from discussion time prior to the creation of the first modules.

While we have achieved a teacher-created curriculum with little material and financial cost to ILER, it came at the cost of teacher work, time, and energy. While teacher contracts stipulate that we develop and evaluate curriculum, our supervisors would probably be among the first to admit that the teachers who volunteered their time in Spring 2012 far exceeded their contractual obligations. Two possible ways teachers embarking on a similar project might address this issue would be (a) to require all teachers to participate in the second stage in order to share the workload more evenly and (b) continuous repetition of the first stage until the modules are ready to be integrated into a pilot curriculum with fewer required revisions.

## CONCLUSION

We began with PEC courses that were dependent on externally produced coursebooks, created with little attention paid to student needs and implemented by teachers who did little formal communication or collaboration. This method of course creation led to a TENOR situation wherein PEC courses were divergent in focus, assessment, and outcomes. At the request of the ILER director, we began our curriculum development process in order to target student needs and to standardize our curriculum in terms of assessment and learning outcomes. Over the course of four semesters, we created our PEC curriculum around three guiding principles and a single ten-step process. We were able to create a new curriculum in a very short time with few available resources at our command. Given our limitations, we feel that we have accomplished much and are much more satisfied with our present curriculum than we were at the outset of the process.

It has been our experience that a teacher-driven project such as ours is not common to Korean teaching contexts. Our research shows that mandatory English conversation courses are common to Korean universities (Kroeker, 2010; Kim & Margolis, 2000) and we believe that our project is one of interest to educators teaching at university language centers. If other educators find themselves in a TENOR situation in their teaching context and wish to pursue curriculum reform, we hope that our experience can inform them of the challenges and possibilities of the design, implementation, and planning of an entirely teacher-generated curriculum.

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# Data-Driven Learning Made Easy

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Data-Driven Learning (DDL) is an approach to teaching that puts the learners in the position of language researchers, using corpus data to develop insights into language use. While many teachers find this idea exciting, its use is not widespread for a variety of reasons, including a lack of resources, a lack of training, minimally available DDL materials, time required to train learners in software usage, and a perception that DDL is only useful for advanced learners. This paper gives readers the resources and knowledge to immediately begin creating their own paper-based DDL materials to address learner needs. A step-by-step tutorial on the creation of a DDL activity will be given, along with a summary of Korean L1 learner reactions to this approach. The materials discussed were created with data from the Corpus of Contemporary American English and the Gachon Learner Corpus.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest struggles for teachers is choosing between different approaches and materials for our classrooms. The desire to try something new is often squelched by the perceived limitations of the environment and participants. Teachers might feel that they don't have the time or the proper expertise to bring something new into the classroom. They might not have access to computer labs or costly software. They might fear that students will reject anything unfamiliar. Data-Driven Learning (DDL) is one style of foreign language instruction that inspires a lot of curiosity but is often left out of the syllabus for these reasons. This paper attempts to show that not only is the creation and use of DDL materials reasonably accessible for most language instructors, but learners also have a positive reaction to these activities. Previous research has shown favorable attitudes towards DDL from learners of English as a foreign language and explored the possibility of using DDL with learners at a lower level of proficiency (Boulton, 2009b, 2010).

## WHAT IS DATA-DRIVEN LEARNING?

DDL is a corpus-based approach to language instruction placing the learner in the role of researcher and the instructor in the role of research coordinator. Pioneered by Tim Johns (1991), who claimed that "research is too serious to be left to the researchers" (p. 2), DDL presents learners with authentic examples of language and gives them the chance to develop their own descriptions of it. By

*authentic*, we mean that the texts are not produced for the purpose of teaching language. They are examples of language use in real life. The data is presented to the learner in the form of concordance lines. The text is taken from a corpus, a large body of text searched using concordancing software. The concordance lines are listed with the lexical items, or words, centered on the screen. This centered item is referred to as the *node*. (See the Appendix for an example of concordance lines.)

## Advantages of DDL

By putting a large number of authentic exemplars of the target language (TL) in front of the learners, we create the opportunity for learners to see patterns more easily. The task of using this data to create descriptions of the language and testing those descriptions by calling up more data activates a number of cognitive processes that could increase the possibility of internalizing linguistic input (O'Sullivan, 2007).

## Disadvantages of DDL

A lack of access to computers is one of the greatest barriers to using DDL in classrooms. Further, teachers and learners must be trained in effective use of the concordancing software. Perhaps most troubling is the idea that learners' attention during the activities will be split between navigating the program and focusing on the language, drawing their attention away from the language. These limitations have held back the use of DDL in the classroom.

## Paper-Based DDL

By printing out the concordance lines on paper, we can eliminate many of the reasons instructors are hesitant to try DDL. This style does limit the freedom with which the learners can explore the language, but it also ensures that they focus more of their attention on the language. Further, by pre-selecting the concordance lines presented to the learners, the instructor can create a level of scaffolding necessary for learners at a lower level of proficiency while still activating multiple levels of thought in what has been called *deductive DDL* (Cresswell, 2007). By following several relatively easy steps, we can produce our own DDL worksheets to directly meet our learners' needs within our existing syllabi.

## Data Source

There are numerous corpora available for research and instructional purposes, but the Corpus of Contemporary American English (Davies, 2008) is preferable for several reasons. First, it is free. Second, it is web-based, so no large files need to be downloaded and stored. Third, it is relatively easy to use, even for a novice. The corpus is available online at http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/. Once you register for an account, you will be able to search for the lexical items or grammatical patterns you wish to present in your classroom. The search window is located at the upper left side of the screen. The author has found that using the *LIST* option

provides the best output for copying concordance lines and pasting them into Microsoft Excel or a similar program. Once you find the lines that you feel best represent the patterns you want your students to be aware of, they can easily be formatted in Excel so that the text to the left of the node is in column A, the node is in column B, and the remaining text is in column C. By right-aligning column A, centering column B, and left-aligning column C, you will be left with a set of concordance lines with a centered node that help learners focus on the items you have chosen. (See the Appendix for an example.)

It should be noted here that this method of materials production creates a set of concordance lines that are not exactly the same as they would appear in a concordance software display. Usually, a concordancer will display the lines with a set number of characters to both the right and left of the node. This sometimes leaves not only sentences but also words cut off. Using the method outlined in this paper for deductive paper-based DDL activities produces lines where sentences might be incomplete, but lexical fragments are not present.

## Design Principles for DDL Worksheets

When creating your worksheets, keep in mind the level of proficiency among your students. The lower their level of proficiency, the more attention must be paid to the design of the worksheets. The author proposes four principles for effective activities: simplicity, focus, intuitiveness, and interactivity.

### Simplicity and Focus

Keeping in mind your students' level of proficiency, word the instructions for your activities as simply as possible. If your students are advanced learners, you can create a more inductive DDL activity by simply providing the concordance lines and instructing the students to find the patterns and write their own rules for how the TL is used. For learners at lower levels of proficiency, more guidance is appropriate. Create direct questions that increase in complexity through the exercise, building a scaffold of knowledge. In the example worksheet in the Appendix, the first task is simply "What word most commonly comes after 'most'?" The questions then increase in difficulty and complexity until the final question, which asks learners to define the more abstract semantic meaning of the item. Keep the instructions as short as possible. Always number the concordance lines and refer to them by their numbers in the instructions.

### Intuitiveness and Interactivity

The activities should not require special knowledge or terminology regarding DDL. The instructions should be worded to lead the students to explore the concordance lines rather than give away the answers. Avoid presenting the patterns directly. This can be achieved through formatting the concordance lines non-alphabetically. The example worksheet in the Appendix is designed to focus learners' attention on the patterns following the node. However, the lines are not alphabetized according to the words immediately following the node. This forces learners to spend more time considering and organizing the patterns they see. Let the students find and describe the patterns. Part of the excitement of DDL is the possibility that learners will discover something we teachers haven't previously

considered. Whenever possible, the tasks should be designed to be completed with partners or in groups. If the learners are at a very low level of proficiency and grouped by homogenous first language, it might be appropriate to encourage them to discuss the tasks in their L1. The act of discussion could activate more cognitive processes and possibly help intake and retention of the TL.

## Using Learner Corpora

When creating error-correction or other activities to consolidate knowledge of the patterns, consider using examples from the students' own writing. Creating a learner corpus of your students' work is an excellent way to present examples of both grammatical and ungrammatical use of the TL. The worksheet in the Appendix is the first page in a four-page lesson created by the author. The final page, not shown in the Appendix, is a list of sentences taken from the writing assignments of the author's students, which the author collected as part of the Gachon Learner Corpus (Carlstrom & Price, 2012). Half of the lines contain awkward patterns. The learners are told that these lines are from their homework, and asked to find and correct the lines that contain errors or mark as *correct* the lines that do not. It is hoped that by using data produced by the learners, their motivation to complete the task correctly and remember the patterns will increase (Seidlhofer, 2000).

You can build your own learner corpora in many ways. However, if you do not have funding or server space to host your own collection software, a good alternative is using the free and relatively intuitive product Google Drive. Specific instructions on how to create your own learner corpora can be found at http://koreanlearnercorpusblog.blogspot.com.

## Learner Reception and Perception of DDL

The author used the series of DDL worksheets mentioned earlier at Gachon University in Seongnam, South Korea, during the spring semester of 2013. Participants completed the activities in groups of two or three learners, and immediately completed a questionnaire afterwards. Five classes were involved in the piloting of the activities, all at a lower-intermediate level of proficiency. The university assigned the students to this level according to TOEIC scores of between 380 and 545. The questions and instructions were written in both English and Korean. The response was positive and in line with the responses found in other research of learners' perceptions of DDL (Boulton, 2009a).

A total of 107 participants (N = 107) completed the worksheets and survey. To the question "Did you enjoy this style of language teaching?," 84 participants responded *yes*, while 23 responded *no*. This result is very encouraging and surprising to the author. This surprise is based on a common cultural stereotype that Asian students generally do not prefer exploratory styles of learning, since the traditional classroom dynamic is one where the teacher is the ultimate authority and source of information, where the students are passive receivers (Kim, 2006; Li, 1998). Boulton (2009a) makes an excellent point regarding this issue, stating, "[I]t would seem ethically dubious to deny learners the opportunity even to try a potentially useful set of tools and skills on the assumption that they

will all adhere to the precepts of that culture" (p. 87).

To the question "Do you prefer to discover new information or be told new information directly?," 62 participants responded *be told*, while 45 responded *discover*. To the question "Were these worksheets more difficult or less difficult than the way we usually study grammar?," 60 participants responded *less difficult*, while 47 responded *more difficult*. However, Figure 1 shows that most of the participants found the tasks at least somewhat difficult, nonetheless.
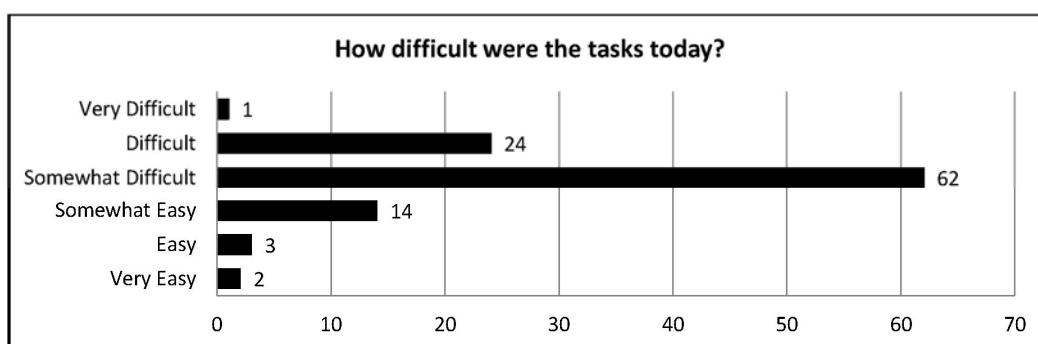


**Figure 1. How difficult were the tasks today?** This figure represents participant responses.

To the question "Which style of grammar teaching would you prefer: this style or the way we usually study?," 62 responded *this style*, and 45 responded *the way we usally study*. Figure 2 shows that more participants felt that more traditional ways of studying grammar were at least somewhat effective, but Figure 3 shows that participants considered DDL to be effective by a large margin.
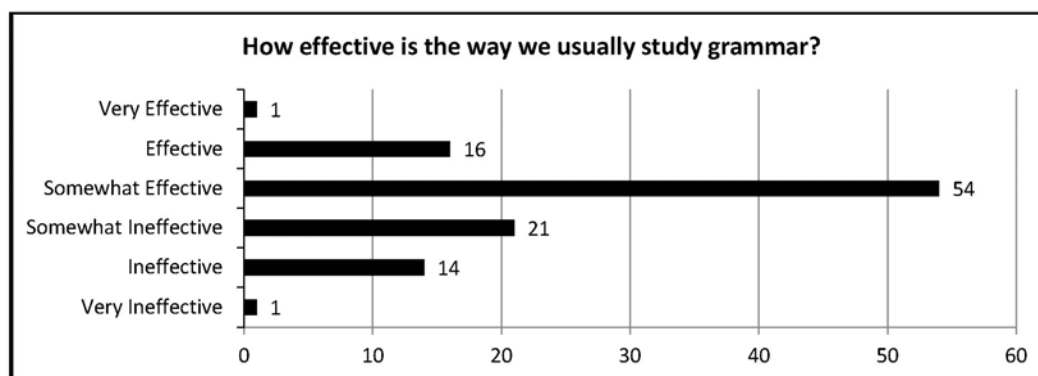


**Figure 2. How effective is the way we usually study grammar?** This figure represents participant responses.

All the participants responded *yes* to the question "Do you think you learned something new from this lesson?," and 93 participants responded *yes* to the question "Do you think you will remember the grammar rules we learned today?," with only 14 responding *no*.

The results are very encouraging overall and suggest that at least with

lower-intermediate level university students in Korea, DDL might be generally welcomed into the classroom.

**How effective is this way of learning grammar?**

| | |
|---|---|
| Very Effective | 9 |
| Effective | 43 |
| Somewhat Effective | 53 |
| Somewhat Ineffective | 2 |
| Ineffective | |
| Very Ineffective | |

(Chart x-axis: 0, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60)
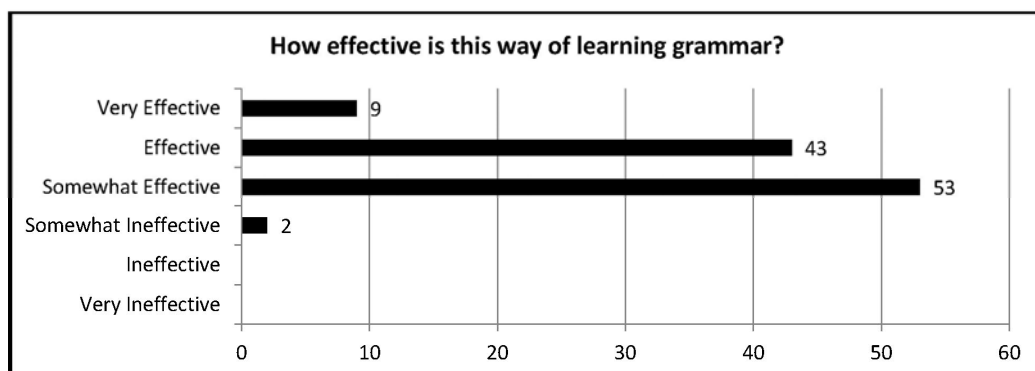
**Figure 3. How effective is this way of learning grammar?** This figure represents participant responses.

## CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The creation of DDL materials and their use in language classrooms should increase. The information presented in this paper will hopefully encourage hesitant instructors to incorporate this approach into their teaching. The fact that Korean learners, at the level and in the context studied by the author, perceive DDL as effective is not enough, however, to presume that DDL can increase their retention and improve their use of grammatical structures. The author will conduct an experiment in the spring semester of 2014 at Gachon University to test the effectiveness of the worksheets mentioned in this paper. In addition to pre- and post-tests, a corpus of writing assignments will also be gathered from all students in the weeks before and after the treatment and analyzed for improvements in language production. It is hoped that this will add meaningful data regarding the effectiveness of DDL.

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## APPENDIX

### Example of a Paper-Based DDL Worksheet

**Read lines 1 through 20 and try to answer the questions with a partner.**

| # | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | interest at a rate far lower -- 3 percent -- than | most | American banks offer. And, as city officials continue to |
| 2. | and prosecutions of criminal cases. But | most | of the time she was satisfied. Although her work consumed |
| 3. | living, Castleberry Hill has continued to grow. | Most | buildings have been converted and some new construction |
| 4. | intelligent criticism. But that's not what we see in | most | of these books. Where did the prosecution go wrong |
| 5. | decorative artists as well as print makers, and | most | of them were women. Like needlepoint and hooked rugs |
| 6. | to Detroit and met with a small group of friends. | Most | of them had stayed in the city putting down roots that had |
| 7. | of the federally sponsored Farm Credit System. | Most | of the money was to pay the IRS; the rest was to cover |
| 8. | For the body is "absent" from our awareness | most | of the time: While in one sense the body is the most abiding |
| 9. | work for you. In fact, you have an inside track that | most | lobbyists don't have with your home representatives since |
| 10. | is not the subject matter. The subject matter is, | most | of the time, ordinary. What's extraordinary about the |
| 11. | change. It won't happen overnight. But in | most | parts of East and West Oakland, residents are still waiting |
| 12. | some kind of ancient warrior-king on a throne." | Most | of my classmates don't get the point of jokes," she said |
| 13. | to strangers they are astonished. That fact is this: | most | enlisted men had to serve a total of only one year in |
| 14. | Though tools like pitchforks were common in | most | agricultural societies, the first known table fork, from |
| 15. | to a Government Accountability Office study. | Most | of the programs are used to improve services, such as |
| 16. | name to his grandmother's surname, Cruz. | Most | of his friends and family call him Bill. He grew up in |
| 17. | to you and me) to recover properly. And since | most | of us don't get enough sleep to begin with, it's a safe bet |
| 18. | turn to the "informal" economy, which touches | most | of life and breeds pilferage, corruption, and theft. Common |
| 19. | furnace? Mr-HOPKINS: Well, the key here is that | most | people never go down in their basement to check the |
| 20. | the average woman -- or man -- to go eat soy. | Most | Americans are not going to rush out and buy tofu or tempeh |

1. **What word most commonly comes after 'most'?** _____

2. **Write the 9 different word or words that come after the answer to Question 1.**

   _____     _____
   _____     _____
   _____     _____
   _____     _____
   _____

3. **Write the other 8 word or words that come after 'most'.**

   _____     _____
   _____     _____
   _____     _____
   _____     _____

4. **How are the words in Question 3 similar?** _____

   _____

5. **Mark on the scale what you think 'most' means:**

   none                      some                  all

   ←———+———+———+———+———+———→
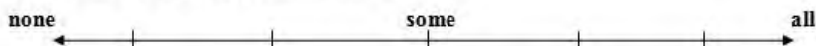
# Language Anxiety in Second Language Writing: Is It Really a Stumbling Block?

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This study investigates how foreign language anxiety is related to second language writing anxiety among second language (L2) English learners in Korea and how English writing anxiety affects second language writing performance. It also investigates possible sources of anxiety from the learners' perspective, which should provide a better understanding of possible obstacles that L2 learners may face during language learning. The data came from two survey instruments, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS; Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986) and the English Writing Anxiety Scale (EWAS; Lee, 2005), as well as a background questionnaire. The surveys were administered to an intact class of 26 junior high school students of English as a foreign language, where the teacher had implemented an innovative writing portfolio assignment. The study's results indicate that there is a significant positive correlation between the FLCAS and the EWAS. There was not a significant correlation between EWAS and writing performance as observed in the student portfolios, but students with high EWAS scores did tend to show poor performance on the writing portfolio. Several causes of anxiety in the classroom from the students' point of view were uncovered. The research findings suggest that instructors should seek more effective ways to ease the anxiety that students might feel when learning and writing English so as to support successful language learning experiences.

## INTRODUCTION

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) defined anxiety as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (p. 125). Most L2 learners would not deny the fact that they have experienced this tension more often than not while learning an L2. Many might feel embarrassed without knowing what to do about this subjective feeling of anxiety. How do we address the issue of anxiety in second language acquisition? Gardner (1980) argued that affective variables play an integral role in second language acquisition, and we cannot have a thorough understanding of second language learning if we ignore these socio-psychological factors. Out of many affective variables, anxiety is one that it may indeed be possible to quantify, and developing hypothesis-driven research on the impact of anxiety on language learning may facilitate the process of guiding L2 learners towards a more pleasant learning experience in the long run.

Although there has been some research on the correlation between anxiety and language acquisition, most of it has been conducted in an ESL context with

college-level students. Therefore, one goal of this study is to expand research on anxiety in language learning by conducting research in an EFL context with junior high school students. More specifically, the research was designed to find out whether general language learning anxiety is related to anxiety in second language writing and to uncover possible sources of anxiety related to English writing performance. By focusing on the role of anxiety in writing performance among L2 English learners in Korea, I hope to provide some genuine understanding of anxiety and how it can be addressed in order to support successful second language acquisition in EFL high school and junior high school contexts.

## Review of the Literature

Anxiety researchers commonly divide anxiety into three categories: trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation specific anxiety. Trait anxiety refers to "a stable predisposition to become anxious in a wide range of situations" (Spielberger, 1983, as cited in MacIntyre, 1995, p. 93). State anxiety refers to "an immediate, transitory and emotional experience with immediate cognitive effects" (Spielberger, 1983, as cited in MacIntyre, 1995, p. 93). The term "situation specific anxiety" was coined by MacIntyre and Gardner (as cited in Horwitz, 2001, p. 113) and refers to the continuous and varied nature of some anxieties. According to Gardner (1979) and Horwitz et al. (1986), foreign language anxiety should be understood as situation specific anxiety, which can give researchers or instructors an opportunity to see how anxiety triggered by specific learning environments affects language learning itself. Horwitz et al. (1986) expected learners to show three major performance anxiety (communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation) in general foreign language learning classrooms, and they concluded that anxiety could take place in any setting intertwined with language performance.

Researchers soon realized that they needed to measure anxiety itself by using objective tools if they wanted to see whether a high level of anxiety hinders language learning or not. With the increasing demand for tools to measure anxiety, Horwitz et al. (1986) developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). Many researchers have since used or adapted the FLCAS to measure foreign language classroom anxiety among learners and tried to correlate anxiety to students' language performance.

Most of the research done on anxiety, however, has focused on finding correlations between anxiety and oral performance (Hewitt & Stephenson, 2011; Horwitz, 2001; Liu, 2007; Phillip, 1992; Young, 1986; Zhang, 2004). That is because many researchers believe that speaking is the most anxiety-provoking of the four language skills. It requires risk-taking from students and asks for students to reveal their possibly insufficient linguistic knowledge in front of the whole class (Daly, 1991; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Moreover, when anxiety began to be investigated during the 1980s, it was a time filled with interest and enthusiasm for communicative language teaching, which of course emphasized orally oriented classroom activities. Therefore, it seemed natural that many researchers showered interest in speaking. Recently, however, more researchers have started to look into the relationship between anxiety and the other language skills as well: reading (Brantmeier, 2005; Saito, Garza, & Horwitz, 1999), listening

(Elkhafaifi, 2005; Vogely, 1998), and writing (Cheng, 2004).

The majority of findings have implied that anxiety plays a detrimental role in language acquisition. MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) found that there was a significant negative correlation between anxiety and performance on a vocabulary learning task among 104 psychology students, and Aida (1994) also found a significant negative correlation between foreign language classroom anxiety and final grades among Americans majoring in Japanese, when looking at speech and negative evaluation. Moreover, Elkhafaifi (2005) did an empirical study of the effect of foreign language learning anxiety on students' achievement in Arabic and showed low listening comprehension scores among anxious students.

According to Cheng (2002), there have been only a few studies that directly deal with L2 writing anxiety. Those that exist have been done with ESL students from heterogeneous first language backgrounds. Thus, there is even less research on anxiety among linguistically homogenous second language groups studying in EFL contexts. Therefore, we should turn the research spotlight on L2 writing anxiety in EFL contexts. Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert (1999) stated that writing anxiety is a "language-skill specific anxiety," which is different from a general classroom type of anxiety (p. 417). Also, according to Daly (1978), writing apprehension is a "situation- and subject-specific individual difference" (p. 10), and highly apprehensive writers have a tendency to avoid the very activities they need to be successful writers: writing, practicing writing, and getting feedback on writing. As a result, many apprehensive learners end up showing quite poor performances in writing. Faigley, Daly, and Witte (1981) also mentioned that highly anxious writers produced shorter and less fluent writing than writers with low anxiety.

Although some researchers agree that there is a significant negative correlation between language anxiety and writing performance (e.g., Cheng et al., 1999; Daly, 1978; Faigley et al., 1981), there are other researchers who argue that the focus should be not on anxiety per se but on students' beliefs about their own capability or competence, which is what brings about different outcomes in students' actual writing performance (e.g., Pajares and Johnson, 1994). In other words, these researchers say that anxiety itself is not an independent variable but a "common mechanism"(p. 164), which is heavily influenced by the confidence or self-efficacy that students might have when performing tasks, and eventually influences academic outcome. While Pajares and Johnson acknowledge that there is a correlation between anxiety and students' writing, they think writing anxiety does not directly influence students' writing performance. The present study will not address this matter because there have been few empirical investigations to explore the influence of the role of students' perceptions on their own competence. This could be a new research area in the future.

## Purpose of the Study

This study addresses the issue of how foreign language classroom anxiety and English writing anxiety are related among junior high school L2 English learners in Korea. The major goal was to see whether students who demonstrate general language anxiety in the classroom will also be anxious about L2 writing and vice versa. The secondary aim was to explore how English writing anxiety affects learners' actual writing performance during their EFL course. Although there are

not many writing tasks done in traditional Korean English classrooms, the learners targeted in this study had free writing in English classes on a biweekly basis. They wrote freely about various topics such as family, hobbies, favorite movies, and songs assigned by the instructor during a 45-minute class. The students eventually compiled this free writing into a performance-based portfolio assignment that their teacher formally graded. Thus, the students seemed to have enough experience to participate in the survey and share their personal experience related to L2 writing. Finally, the third aim of this study was to reveal the learners' own explanations about their L2 writing anxiety and to see what made these Korean L2 learners feel frustrated or less motivated in their L2 writing in this junior high school class. This study addresses these three research questions:

1. Is English writing anxiety related to general foreign language classroom anxiety?
2. How does English writing anxiety affect English writing performance on the performance-based portfolio assignment implemented in this course?
3. What do the students identify as the sources of their English writing anxiety?

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

A total of 26 ninth-graders (13 females and 13 males) who were enrolled in an advanced English track in their junior high school in Korea participated in the study, as did their EFL teacher. The age of the students ranged from 14 to 15 years old; the average age was 14.7 years old. None of them had any experience going abroad to take intensive English courses. One of the students had visited an English-speaking country for two months, but did not take any intensive course or classes while abroad. The majority (20 out of 26 students) reported that they had taken an English writing class outside of school. Each student's total years of studying English ranged from 4 to 10 years, with an average of 7.2 years. As ninth-graders in junior high school, they take a 50-minute English class three times a week as a required course, and there are no other second language classes. These students had free writing on a biweekly basis as part of a final portfolio assignment, for which their final scores were based on the total scores for all the biweekly writings. They did not engage in any genres of writing other than free writing in the classroom.

### Instruments

The participants completed two anxiety surveys designed to measure (a) foreign language classroom anxiety and (b) English writing anxiety.

The first anxiety survey was the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), originally designed by Horwitz et al. (1986) and consisting of two parts (see Appendix A). The first part was designed to elicit basic background information including gender, age, number of years of English study, any experience going abroad to study English, and exposure to extra English writing

courses outside the classroom. The second part was intended to measure students' general foreign language anxiety in the classroom. I adapted the original FLCAS survey for Korean junior high school EFL students by eliminating eight unnecessary items that did not fit into EFL contexts and translating the questionnaire into Korean. The 25 items asked participants to respond in a 5-point Likert-scale format. The response continuum was: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree. For each participant, an anxiety score was derived by adding his or her ratings of the 25 items. Lower scores showed lower anxiety and higher scores, higher anxiety. When statements in the FLCAS were negatively worded, responses were reverse-coded so that in all instances a high score represented high anxiety in the English classroom.

The second anxiety survey was an adaptation of Lee's (2005) English Writing Anxiety Scale (EWAS), which was designed for assessing English writing anxiety among students (see Appendix B). The EWAS, was adapted, like the FLCAS, for Korean junior high school EFL students and translated into Korean. The EWAS, as administered, consisted of two sections. The first section had 15 items, each to be rated on a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree. As with the FLCAS, each student's English writing anxiety score was calculated by adding the student's ratings of the 15 items. Again, when statements were negatively worded, responses were reverse-coded so that higher scores always represented higher anxiety. The second section was an open-ended question that asked the students to explain, from their own perspective, what factors make them nervous when they write in English for class assignments. This question was not part of the original EWAS questionnaire, but developed and added specifically for this study. While individual interviews would have provided more information, there was no opportunity to interview the students; this open-ended question was an alternative measure to find out students' own explanations for their nervousness about English writing.

# RESULTS

Before addressing the three research questions, this section first presents the descriptive statistics of the data collected from the three sources. As shown in Table 1, the total scores on the FLCAS ranged from 48 to 108 out of a possible total score of 125, with a mean of 72.62 ($SD$ = 16.69). When the ratio between the mean and the total score of this study (56%) is compared to the ratio of other studies, Elkhafaifi (54%), Aida (58%), and Horwitz (57%) reported in previous studies that have used the FLCAS with other L2 learning populations, we see that the participants in the present study, as a whole, are anxious overall. Elkhafaifi (2005) studied the effect of general FL learning anxiety on university students' performance; that study's participants' mean score was 90.06 ($SD$ = 23.81). Aida (1994) investigated the general FL anxiety of 96 first-year university students learning Japanese. These students had a mean score of 96.7 ($SD$ = 22.1), which was slightly higher than the mean score of 94.5 ($SD$ = 21.4) found in the Horwitz et al. (1986) study of general foreign language classroom anxiety among students enrolled in an introductory university Spanish class.

With the EWAS, as also shown in Table 1, the total scores in this study

ranged from 30 to 69 out of a possible total score of 75, with a mean of 45 (*SD* = 8.15). It is impossible to compare these numerical results to those found in the only previous study to use the EWAS, that in which it was developed. Lee (2005) reported separate scores for four indicators: enjoyment of writing (writing anxiety 1), confidence in writing (writing anxiety 2), fear of writing (writing anxiety 3), and avoidance of writing (writing anxiety 4), wherein this study calculates a single final score as one indicator of general English writing anxiety. This was done because the purpose of the present study is to focus on students' general second language writing anxiety while doing class assignments rather than on understanding the different characteristics of writing anxiety.

Finally, the average cumulative score for the students' free writing portfolio, which 18 of the 26 students completed, was 77.89 out of 100 points (*SD* = 14.49). As Table 1 shows, individual student scores on the portfolio ranged from a rather low 52 to a perfect 100.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics**

| Variable | N | M | Mdn | SD | Min-Max |
|----------|-----|-------|------|-------|---------|
| FLCAS | 26 | 72.62 | 68.5 | 16.69 | 48 – 108 |
| EWAS | 26 | 45.96 | 45 | 8.15 | 30 – 69 |
| Portfolio | 18 | 77.89 | 77.5 | 14.49 | 52 – 100 |

*Note.* FLCAS = Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale; EWAS = English Writing Anxiety Scale. The highest possible score was 125 for FLCAS, 75 for EWAS, and 100 for the portfolio assignment.

## Research Question 1:
## Is English writing anxiety related to general FL classroom anxiety?

While the FLCAS showed good internal reliability of .89, the EWAS did show relatively low internal reliability of .67 (Cronbach's alpha, *N* = 26). This suggests that the FLCAS scale measures foreign language anxiety adequately but the EWAS might not. The index of relationship between the FLCAS and the EWAS was a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The Pearson *r* (see Table 2) indicated a statistically significant positive relationship between the two sets of scores (*r* = .58, *p* < .05). The shared variance was $r^2$ = .33, indicating that 33% of variance in foreign language anxiety is shared with English writing anxiety. In other words, students with high foreign language anxiety seemed to have relatively high levels of writing anxiety and vice versa.

**Table 2. Correlation Between FLCAS and EWAS**

| | | FLCAS | EWAS |
|-------|---------------------|--------|--------|
| FLCAS | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .581** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .002 |
| | N | 26 | 26 |
| EWAS | Pearson Correlation | .581** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .002 | |
| | N | 26 | 26 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Research Question 2:**
**How does English writing anxiety affect English writing performance in the course?**

It will be remembered that out of the 26 students who took the EWAS survey – the measure of the students' English writing anxiety – only 18 students completed the final writing portfolio and had writing scores – the measure of the students' writing performance in the course. The index of relationship between the EWAS and the portfolio scores was a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The Pearson $r$ indicated a non-significant correlation between English writing anxiety and English writing performance ($r = -.40$, $p = .099$). In other words, as it was not significant, this otherwise sizeable, negative correlation coefficient could have occurred by chance alone. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that there is a significant correlation between these students' English writing anxiety and their English writing performance in the course, but there is a tendency for high anxiety to indicate poor performance.

**Research Question 3:**
**What do the students identify as the sources of their English writing anxiety?**

Of the students' comments in response to the open-ended question at the end of the EWAS survey (Table 3), half (50.2%) were related to the fact that students were afraid that they might make grammatical mistakes in English writing. The second most reported source of anxiety was insufficient vocabulary knowledge (15.3%). The third most common reason that the students gave for being nervous about writing was lack of confidence and anxiety (13.4%).

**Table 3. Sources of Student English Writing Anxiety: EWAS Part II**

| Source of Anxiety | Examples of Student Comments | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Grammatical Mistakes** | • I am afraid that I might make grammatical mistakes in English writing.<br>• Grammar is too difficult in English writing.<br>• I don't know which grammatical forms I should use in writing.<br>• I do not want to show others my lack of grammatical knowledge. | 50.2% |
| **Insufficient Vocabulary Knowledge** | • I don't have much vocabulary.<br>• Whenever I try to write in English, I fail to come up with appropriate English words. | 15.3% |
| **Lack of Confidence or Anxiety** | • I feel anxious that I might make mistakes in front of others.<br>• I am afraid of using English because of my lack of confidence.<br>• I am afraid my peers would make fun of my mistakes in writing. | 13.4% |
| **Other Comments** | • I could not express my ideas well in English.<br>• I am afraid that I might be off the topic in English.<br>• I do not feel like writing in English because there is no one to provide me with help.<br>• I do not know how to start writing in English.<br>• I am afraid English writing has a negative impact on my Korean writing ability. | 21.1% |

*Note.* All comments were written in Korean so that students could write their answers as freely and informatively as possible. After classifying students' comments into four major categories, the researcher translated them into English.

The "other" category comprised a mixed, but large, category (21.1%) and offered many interesting insights. For example, one of the students perceived salient differences between Korean and English writing and worried about negative transfer from L2 to L1. Another student stated their unwillingness to write in English, attributing it to lack of assistance. Other students did not feel comfortable with writing in English without knowing how to express their own ideas.

# CONCLUSION

## Pedagogical Implications

In this research, some, but not all, of the junior high school EFL student participants exhibited considerable levels of foreign language classroom anxiety as well as English writing anxiety, and there was also a significant correlation between these two types of anxiety. As previously mentioned, many researchers and instructors believe that speaking is the main anxiety-provoking area in second language education. The findings of this research suggest that writing anxiety should also be considerable in EFL contexts. In this section, I discuss some pedagogical implications that could help instructors facilitate learners' language learning in the future.

First of all, there should be more English writing instruction because lack of opportunities to write in English might be one of the reasons that this activity produces anxiety among students. This suggestion is based on comments students made in this study. Some students expressed a lack of confidence in English writing, and a few said they had no idea how to start writing in English even when they were engaged in free writing. Whether this lack of confidence and uncertainty comes from previous L1 writing experience or from L2 writing experience requires further research, but it is clear that many students were not confident enough to write in English and took writing not as enjoyable communication between a writer and a reader but as a demanding test. If instructors carefully design more writing tasks that consider students' proficiency levels in English as well as previous L1 and L2 writing experience, and if they provide learning aids such as teaching common expressions and giving supportive feedback, students themselves may see writing as a less daunting and more pleasant experience in the classroom.

Second, the fact that there is a relatively high correlation between foreign language classroom anxiety and English writing anxiety could imply that reducing classroom anxiety in general is a prerequisite for easing English writing anxiety. Horwitz et al. (1986) suggested that there were two ways to deal with anxious students: one is to help them cope with the situation causing anxiety, and the other is to make the learning context less stressful. One of the most effective ways to alleviate classroom anxiety as well as help students to be less anxious about writing may be to establish collaborative writing activities. Collaborative writing could be a particularly good alternative for those students who have struggled in L2 writing because they consider writing an extremely solitary act in which they do not have much assistance from others. Unlike individual writing, collaborative

writing engages students in interaction, and writing itself becomes a reciprocal and pleasant experience instead of a solitary and dreary one. Shehadeh (2011), who recently investigated this topic, mentioned that "writing does not need to be a solitary act and collaborative writing can be used as a pedagogical tool to encourage student collaboration and create a positive social atmosphere in the classroom" (p. 297). In sum, reducing anxiety levels through collaborative writing can establish a learner-friendly classroom and create a positive environment for English writing without much fear or stress among students. Specialized teacher training and good implementation of collaborative writing tasks are not only important but absolutely necessary to guarantee successful outcomes.

Furthermore, when instructors plan and organize assignments, they should take into consideration whether the students' writing should be made public or not in order to address students' potential feelings of vulnerability and fear about sharing their writing with others. As writing can remain available for inspection and frozen in time with mistakes that writers make, it is natural that students would feel uncomfortable about making mistakes, and even more so once they realize their writing, including mistakes, might be shared. Therefore, it is important for teachers and students to jointly decide in advance what to share and how to share in order not to create unpleasant feelings among the students. It could also be a good idea for the students themselves to select their best pieces of writing to share with others, which would help students feel more motivated and less daunted at the idea of sharing their writing, and more importantly, help students develop ownership and autonomy in writing in the long run (Lam & Lee, 2009).

Third, instructors should ensure that students are well-informed about possible sources of help whenever they are faced with problems in writing by allowing the use of dictionaries and online sources during writing activities. Including these tools in the design of writing tasks would show students without much experience in L2 writing, who often feel frustrated about producing logical and coherent writing on a topic, that writing can be supported in many ways that are self-regulated. Instructors could also provide students with opportunities for peer review, peer feedback, and instructor-guided conferences, which would increase sources of support as well as the sense that writing is not a solitary but a social act.

Fourth, this study shows that vocabulary is a source of anxiety for students, which suggests the importance of considering instructional strategies that support vocabulary learning. Unfortunately, vocabulary instruction has been de-emphasized in Korea because many EFL instructors focus heavily on reading instruction and believe that knowledge of vocabulary will follow reading incidentally. According to Paltridge, Woodrow, Harbon, Shen, Phakiti, Stevenson, and Hirsh (2009), vocabulary learning starts with needs analysis, setting learning goals, and providing opportunities to use newly learned words in written contexts. Vocabulary learning is not peripheral to writing (or reading) and needs more attention than it is receiving now. There should be indirect as well as direct approaches to help develop students' receptive and productive knowledge of vocabulary in order to help increase the quality of their writing and to boost their confidence about word choices when doing actual writing in the classroom.

Finally, instructors should make efforts to provide balanced evaluation and ask

for support for developing more effective and reliable evaluation tools from researchers or other teachers to increase the validity of their assessment of writing. It is important that fluency and accuracy are assessed in a balanced way, and that students are aware of this. Over half of the students in this study were worried about making grammatical mistakes in writing because writing assignments were perceived to be summative assessments to see whether students achieved the goals of the course, which included linguistic accuracy as one of the assessment criteria. Although the instructor encouraged students to enjoy free writing without feeling too burdened by grammar, she felt she had no choice but to include linguistic accuracy in her rubric to assess writing adequately. While conducting this research, the researcher found how difficult it is for instructors to strike a balance between accuracy and fluency in writing assessment. It is not impossible to attain both accuracy and fluency strategically with a careful design of the class. Lam and Lee (2009) argued that portfolio assessment is usually considered as a summative assessment tool, but it is possible to let it play "dual summative-formative roles" in the classroom by maximizing the formative aspect of portfolio assessment by promoting learner choice, providing conferencing or peer evaluation, and incorporating delayed evaluation with interim drafts. In addition, instructors themselves should try their best to design appropriate assessment tools with the assistance of researchers or peers.

## THE AUTHOR

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# APPENDIX A

## Background Questionnaire & Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

### PART I

| Background Questionnaire | | |
|---|---|---|
| What is your name? | | |
| Are you a male or female? | ☐ Male | ☐ Female |
| How old are you? | | |
| How long have you studied English? | | |
| Have you ever studied English abroad? (If your answer is YES, please explain how long you have studied; e.g., 3 months, 1 year) | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| Have you ever taken any English writing class? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |

This questionnaire was adapted from Horwitz et al. (1986).

### PART II

Statements (1) through (25) describe how you may feel about learning English. Please indicate whether you (1) *strongly disagree*, (2) *disagree*, (3) *neither agree nor disagree*, (4) *agree*, or (5) *strongly agree*. Please read each statement carefully, give your *first* reaction to each statement, and mark an answer for every statement.

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.     1   2   3   4   5

2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.     1   2   3   4   5

3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.     1   2   3   4   5

4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.     1   2   3   4   5

5. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.     1   2   3   4   5

6. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.     1   2   3   4   5

7. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.     1   2   3   4   5

8. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.     1   2   3   4   5

9. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.     1   2   3   4   5

10. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things     1   2   3   4   5

11. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.     1   2   3   4   5

12. I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.     1   2   3   4   5

13. Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.     1   2   3   4   5

14. I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.     1   2   3   4   5

15. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.   1   2   3   4   5

16. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.   1   2   3   4   5

17. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.   1   2   3   4   5

18. I feel every self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.   1   2   3   4   5

19. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.   1   2   3   4   5

20. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.   1   2   3   4   5

21. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.   1   2   3   4   5

22. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.   1   2   3   4   5

23. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak in a foreign language.   1   2   3   4   5

24. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.   1   2   3   4   5

25. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions that I haven't prepared for in advance.   1   2   3   4   5

# APPENDIX B

**English Writing Anxiety Scale**

This questionnaire was adapted from Lee (2005).

## PART I

Below are a series of statements about English writing. There is no right or wrong answers to these statements. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by circling whether you (1) *strongly disagree*, (2) *disagree*, (3) are *uncertain*, *(4) agree*, or (5) *strongly agree* with the statement. While some of the statements may seem repetitious, take your time and try to be as honest as possible.

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I avoid writing. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | I have no fear of my writing being evaluated. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | I look forward to writing down my ideas. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | Handing in a composition makes me feel good. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on a composition. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. | I like writing down my ideas. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. | I feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas in writing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. | I like to have my friends read what I have written. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. | I'm nervous about writing. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. | People seem to enjoy what I write. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. | I enjoy writing. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. | I never seem to be able to clearly write down my ideas. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. | Writing is a lot of fun. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## PART II

Answer the following question as specific as possible.
What kinds of things make you nervous when you have to write in English for a class activity?

Language Anxiety in Second Language Writing: Is It Really a Stumbling Block?

# Discourse Markers in the Spoken Discourse of Korean University Students in Manila

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With the influx of South Koreans seeking to improve their communicative competence in English at a convenient cost, the Philippines has become a breeding ground of various language centers offering language programs. A Manila-based university created an English certificate program to improve adaptability (in classroom discussions) of South Koreans intending to pursue tertiary education. One of the ways in which the progress of the students is measured is by the spontaneity in their spoken discourse. The current study investigated the variations of discourse markers (DMs), which are said to be indicative of a learner's pragmatic fluency. Adopting Liao's (2008) scholarly work as a framework, impromptu speeches and interviews with eight freshman Korean students were audio-recorded and transcribed. Results indicate variations of the use of DMs of Koreans in comparison with previous literature. Implications for language acquisition and sociolinguistics, and identification of features of Korean English through quantitative and qualitative data on the use of DMs, are discussed in the study.

## INTRODUCTION

The Philippine Bureau of Immigration records show that in 2006, there were more than 570,000 South Korean tourists who visited the Philippines (Quimpo-Espino, 2007), making the East Asian nationals the top tourists in the Southeast Asian archipelago; hence, the popularization of the term *Korean invasion*. Alongside this phenomenal diaspora caused by the waves of South Koreans are varied social and economic implications. Korean students come to the Philippines to take advantage of the relatively cheaper cost of education and of the Filipinos' known fluency in English. As evidence, there has been a proliferation of *hagwons* or "language academies" all over the country. In this manner, large universities are also directly involved by means of devising language programs.

The purpose of the current study is to investigate the discourse markers (DMs) employed by Korean nationals in their spoken utterances, specifically during an impromptu speaking activity and an informal interview, as it is said that a learner's use of DMs provides an overview of a learner's level of language acquisition. Schiffrin (2001) states that DMs reflect the cognitive, expressive, and

social organization of one's discourse; hence, DMs could be classified as a measurement tool for language development and interactional competence.

DMs are a set of linguistic features that are commonly present in spoken English but not in written English (Carter & McCarthy, 2006). Different terms are used by linguists to refer to the said linguistic expressions. For example, Labov and Fanshel (1977) termed these as "discourse particles," Blakemore (1987) called them "discourse connectives," and Redeker (1991) referred to them as "pragmatic operators." Due to easy identification and retrieval in corpus-based research, the exploration for definitions of DMs may not be too difficult as there is a plethora of literature on their function and structural patterns. One comprehensive scholarly work that extensively focused on DMs was that of Schiffrin (1987) in which eleven DMs were analyzed in different types of utterances. Schiffrin classifies DMs as a broad category encompassing a varied set of words and phrases that range from coordinate conjunctions *and*, *or,* and *but* to less accepted interjections such as, *well*, or *oh*, verbs, *look*, *see*, and phrases like *what I mean to say* and *overall*. However, other studies reject the idea that interjections can be considered as DMs (Fraser, 2011), which shows some inconsistency as to the classification of DMs. Due to the openness of the issue of coinage, definition, and classification of DMs, the current study adopts the functional definition of DMs as a set of linguistic items in the cognitive, social, expressive, and textual domains (Bright, 1992; Fraser, 1990; Schiffrin, 1987).

Although DMs are considered inevitable in English spoken discourse, their use is often criticized as signifying poor fluency in speech (Crystal, 1988), and Cameron (2001) even calls them verbal garbage because the use of DMs such as *um* could signify the absence of an idea, giving an impression of lower credibility. Contrary to this belief, it is speculated that the use of DMs might also indicate a high level of competence in English syntax as discourse markers enter into a construction syntactically (Sankoff et al., 1997). This idea is supported by Schiffrin (1985), since DMs are indicative of coherence in discourse, creating what is termed "strategic discourse competence," especially among non-native speakers of English. Bublitz (1996, cited in Muller, 2005) termed DMs "gambits" that enhance pragmatic fluency. Heeman and Allen (1999) add that DMs are parts of "edit phrases" that signal speech repair, thus enhancing speech fluency.

It is claimed that the lack of fluency of speakers can be manifested by their misuse of DMs. This problem could be attributed to the fact that DMs are not given special attention by learning institutions; thus, they are not included in the curriculum. De Klerk (2005, cited in Liao, 2008) observes that the reason for the exclusion might be because of "their [DMs'] lack of clear semantic denotation and syntactic role, which makes formal or explicit commentary on their use fairly difficult" (p. 275). Considering the commonality of DMs in everyday communication, the explicit learning of DMs is suggested in order to avoid pragmatic fossilization (Lee & Hsieh, 2004).

The current study is intended to describe Korean English in the Philippines through Korean students who completed an English short-course in a Manila university, as well as those who were exempted from taking it. Including both students who completed the course and those who were exempt from taking it enables us to assess whether the program objectives were met. Additionally, the study aimed to contribute to the field of discourse analysis and sociolinguistics in

providing a comprehensive discussion on the use of DMs by EFL learners in an ESL environment. The participants in the present study, Koreans, are considered to be EFL learners pursuing their tertiary education in a Philippine university where the majority of students are considered ESL learners. Adopting Liao's (2008) study as a framework, the data obtained and its discussion attempt to provide additional characterization of Korean English through the learners' use of DMs and add to the literature on DMs of Koreans in a country dominated by ESL learners.

The current study sought to answer the following questions:

1. Do Korean students use DMs in their spoken discourse?
2. How do EFL speakers' patterns of DM use compare with NSs?
3. What are the roles of gender and genre in Korean students' use of DMs?

## METHODOLOGY

Four male and four female first-year college students at a university in Manila participated in the study. All eight students were Korean. All participants took the diagnostic test for the university's short-course during the enrollment period prior to the first semester of school year 2012-13. The participants were enrolled at the university at the time the study was conducted, which enabled the researchers to recruit participants with less difficulty. To their advantage, the researchers have a certain level of knowledge of the participants' general English backgrounds because they are faculty members of the same institution. The participants were chosen based on the initial assessment in their records to have a *very good* or e*xcellent* rating. Four of them had to attend the 80-hour program, and the other four were exempted, which gave them an automatic *excellent* rating.

In an interview with a researcher, the participants stated that this university was the first university that they have ever attended. It should be noted that all of the students had attended at least one language academy in Korea and in the Philippines. During the data collection process, all the participants were enrolled in a Speech 1 class that focused on accent neutralization and public speaking. The participants further claimed that although they started studying English in grade 3 in Korea, the audio-lingual strategy did not enhance their spoken fluency as there was no opportunity for them to speak the language; all they had to do was familiarize themselves with the pronunciation of lexical samples given by the teacher. Table 1 gives additional information about the participants.

The DMs that prominently appear in the impromptu speech of EFL learners include vocal hiccups *um, uh, like*, and *you know* (Croucher, 2004). *Well, I mean,* and *oh* were also selected for analysis because of their frequent appearance in Fuller (2003) and *actually* was selected because it appeared to be frequently present in the spoken discourse of non-native speakers (Liao, 2008). Meanwhile, *and* and *but* were also included for analysis because of their function as discourse connectives, *so* as a marker of result, and *then* as a temporal adverb used for time reference (Schiffrin, 1987). The DMs *OK (okay)* and *right* were omitted from the target linguistic features since in Liao's (2008) study, their prominence as DMs was a result of participants' position in the classroom as teaching assistants

conducting lectures in which the DMs functioned as progression checks. Overall, the 12 DMs were chosen to be the focus of investigation because of their prevalence in the spoken discourse of EFL learners in different studies (Fuller, 2003; Schleef, 2004). In order to obtain the data, a laptop with a built-in monitor camera was used for recording the spoken discourse of the participants.

**Table 1. Profile of the Participants**

|  | Chang | Joo | Hyeon | Kim | Jhung | Nam | Yoon | Lee |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Male | Male | Female | Male | Female | Female | Female | Male |
| **Age** | 17 | 20 | 22 | 17 | 17 | 16 | 18 | 19 |
| **Birth place** | Ulsan | Seoul | Seoul | Pyeongtaek | Gwangju | Busan | Daegu | Daegu |
| **Years in the Philippines** | 5 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| **Degree being pursued** | AB Mass Comm | BS Education | AB English | AB English | BS Biology | AB English | BS Education | AB English |
| **Certificate Program** | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | Yes |

The researchers reviewed the files of the Korean students who were previously enrolled in the short-course for the preliminary screening. The eight participants were contacted for inquiry on their willingness to take part in the study, and all of them agreed to participate. The researchers talked to the Speech 1 teacher of each participant and informed them that their speech would be used for analysis in research. The schedules of each participant to deliver their impromptu speech were obtained from the respective teachers, and arrangements were made for the recording process. The recordings were conducted on six separate occasions in August 2013. A laptop with a built-in camera was placed on the teacher's table in front of the class. In terms of the topic choice in the students' impromptu speech, the students were either given the topic or were allowed to choose their own. The duration of all the impromptu speeches ranged from five to seven minutes.

After the speech, the participants were asked to attend an interview on September 2, 2013. All the participants were requested to come at 9 a.m. to a classroom, and they were interviewed on a first-come-first-served basis. Questions revolved around the education of the participants and their relationship with their friends and families. The duration of all the interviews was between five and ten minutes. The target discourse features analyzed were not disclosed to the class teachers or to the student participants to ensure the naturalness of the speakers in talking.

The impromptu speeches and interviews were transcribed for analysis of the 12 target DMs for three days after the informal interview sessions. A colleague of the researchers was requested to verify the accuracy of the transcription. This was done by providing the colleague with a copy of the transcripts. The current study adopted Fuller's (2003) criteria in counting the DMs. The first criterion focuses on the semantic aspect of the utterance. The condition posits that utterances

should still maintain the intended meaning with the DMs' removal. Secondly, the grammatical aspect of the utterances should still be correct if the DMs are removed. Extracts 1 and 2 exemplify the said criteria.

(1) Joo:   a. Ever since I was born I was with my grandparents. *Actually* my grandparents raised me.
          b. Ever since I was born I was with my grandparents. My grandparents raised me.
(2) Joo:   a. They've been having a dispute over the heritage; *I mean* the money of my grandparents.
          b. They've been having a dispute over the heritage; the money of my grandparents.

As soon as the DMs were filtered as valid tokens for the study, they were tabulated and analyzed qualitatively for their functions. Since both discourse types ranged from five to seven minutes, only the tokens for the first 500 words of each participant were analyzed because it was rare that the participants produced more than 1000 words in the allotted time. A linguistics professor in another university was asked to validate the DMs in the extracts. Lastly, a conference was conducted among the researchers and the linguistics professor regarding the classification of DMs.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tables 2 and 3 show the frequency of DMs in the impromptu speech and informal interview of the Korean students. Based on the data, it could be said that the Koreans have acquired a certain level of proficiency in their spoken discourse through the manifestation of DMs in both the impromptu speech and the informal interview. Schiffrin (2011) states that DMs are indicative of cognitive, expressive, textual, and social organization of a discourse; hence, they demonstrate language development and interactional ability.

**Table 2. Frequency of DMs of Korean Students in Impromptu Speeches** (tokens per 500 words)

|  | Chang | Joo | Hyeon | Kim | Jhung | Nam | Yoon | Lee | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **and** | 10 | 10 | 11 | 9 | 12 | 8 | 10 | 1 | 71 |
| **but** | 6 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 21 |
| **so** | 7 | 14 | 6 | 4 | 10 | 14 | 24 | 12 | 84 |
| **Then** | 1 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 14 |
| **I mean** | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| **Like** | 2 | 3 | 0 | 13 | 1 | 12 | 5 | 4 | 38 |
| **you know** | 1 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| **Well** | 5 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| **Um** | 19 | 23 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 48 |
| **Uh** | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 11 | 23 |
| **oh** | 1 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 7 |
| **Actually** | 0 | 13 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 0 | 1 | 33 |
| **Total** | 55 | 77 | 32 | 61 | 39 | 60 | 48 | 38 | 372 |

The production of DMs in the spoken discourse of the selected participants could have been influenced by several factors. Firstly, it might have been due to the fact that the participants have stayed in the Philippines for at least three to six years as opposed to the teaching assistants in Liao's (2008) study, who had been in the United States for two to four years. Secondly, the participants' length of stay in the Philippines could have prompted them to interact with various ESL learners using English. Additionally, some of the participants had attended private English learning schools.

In comparison with the discourse of non-native speakers, Croucher's (2004) study indicated that students use *um* and *uh* in the EFL learners' extemporaneous and impromptu speech. These markers are said to represent pauses cognitively processed by the learners (Schiffrin, 1987), and the participants could have thought that their use of the said markers would be more tolerable than dead air. Liao (2008) explained that Chinese immigrants in the United States use the said DMs because of the non-equivalence of delaying devices *well* and *I mean* in Mandarin. The same reason could be cited for the frequent use of *uh* and *um* by Korean learners. Moreover, the current study found that the DMs *and* and *so* were the most frequently used in both impromptu speeches and interviews. Surprisingly, the finding seems to be different from the results of previous studies. This could be because of a scarcity of studies that focus on the DMs most specifically used by Korean learners. For instance, Lee (2000) and Kim (2011) investigated the language development of Koreans in the United States. However, the focus of the studies were limited to the use of *you know*, *like, I mean*, and *well* because of their perceived "dominance in speech" (Lee, 2000, p. 102). Liao (2010) found that *OK (okay)* and *right* were prominent in the academic lectures of Chinese teaching assistants. The DMs appear to be absent in the data, but since *OK (okay)* and *right* are said to be progression markers, these may be unnecessary in the impromptu speech and interview of the participants.

**Table 3. Frequency of DMs of Korean Students in Informal Interviews** (tokens per 500 words)

|  | Chang | Joo | Hyeon | Kim | Jhung | Nam | Yoon | Lee | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **and** | 5 | 3 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 12 | 4 | 5 | 52 |
| **but** | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 14 |
| **so** | 7 | 7 | 5 | 10 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 8 | 53 |
| **Then** | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 8 |
| **I mean** | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| **Like** | 13 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 0 | 22 |
| **you know** | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| **Well** | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 6 |
| **Um** | 15 | 26 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 46 |
| **Uh** | 3 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 17 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 32 |
| **oh** | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| **Actually** | 10 | 10 | 11 | 0 | 2 | 11 | 0 | 5 | 49 |
| **Total** | 69 | 58 | 33 | 36 | 38 | 58 | 27 | 25 | 294 |

The DMs in the spoken discourse of native speakers are also found to have differences with the findings of the current study. For instance, Schleef (2004) found frequent use of *OK (okay)* and *right* in academic discourse, but both are scarce in the current data. Both Fuller (2003) and Romero Trillo (2002) found that the DMs *you know, like, oh, well, yeah,* and *I mean* are the most frequently used in native speaker discourse. It can be seen in Tables 3 and 4 that the employment of these DMs by the current study's participants in their spoken discourse was lower than that of four other DMs: namely, *actually, um, and,* and *so*. Additionally, the data suggest a variation in the use of DMs by Philippine-based students. Moreover, the use of *well* as an initial response in interviews was found to be common among native speakers but did not manifest itself in the spoken discourse of the current study's participants. Although *well* may be a small factor as an indicator of native-like competence, it could be an indication that the Koreans in our study have not fully progressed in their English language development. It should be noted that *well* is commonly used in the spoken discourse of English language learners in previous studies.

The DM *so* is the most frequently used marker in the impromptu speech and interview of all participants combined. According to Schiffrin (1987), native speakers use *so* as a complementary marker of main idea units. This role was evident in the impromptu speech of the participants which were usually in the form of a narrative. For instance, Yoon, in the third extract (below) was talking about her first trip to the Philippines. Lines a and b provided the orientation of the narrative and line c is the complicating action that is relevant to the content of Yoon's discourse.

(3) Yoon:          a. It was so suffocating for me to breath
                    b. I was sweating and there were so many people even if it was at night.
                    c. *So* that was my very first day in the Philippines.

In Extract 4, the use of so in line c functioned as a marker of result of the descriptive background material (lines a and b).

(4) Researcher:    So how was your relationship with your classmates back then?
     Nam:         a. I adjusted to their culture.
                   b. And they was also curious about my culture.
                   c. *So* we had a lot of interactions.

Meanwhile, the use of *and* is the second most frequently used DM in the spoken discourse of the EFL learners. Among other pragmatic functions, Schiffrin (1987) posits that *and* functions as a discourse connective. The most common example in the data is that the participants tend to denote continuation of action in their narratives. Also, the students would usually use *and* as an indication of a statement of a narrative. The participants were mostly relating their utterances to their previous experiences and the inclusion of actions performed was somewhat inevitable. An example is seen in Extract 5.

(5) Chang:          a. but when my father the moment my father really feels happy when he goes to places for a poor

      b. *and* helps them
      c. *and* when he built churches for the poor

Schiffin (1987) also cited that the interactional role of *and* is to enable the speaker to continue explanations. In Extract 6, it can be seen that Jhung was giving her thoughts about her Filipino friends when asked about her relationship with Filipinos. The statement in line a was used to directly answer a question, while lines b and c provide support to her answer as to why she had more Filipino friends.

(6) Researcher:    Who are your friends now?
    Jhung:        a. For now, I am really doing well in my Filipino friends
                     b. *and* I have actually have more Filipino friends here in school than Korean friends because I don't really get to meet a lot of Koreans in our college.
                     c. As a whole they are only few Koreans,
                     d. *and* uh I can really enjoy with my Filipino friends as of now because we're going through the same things.

One interesting finding in the study is the frequency of *actually* in the discourse of the participants. Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, and Finnegan (1999, cited in Friginal, 2008) state that the adverb *actually* is used as a DM to indicate an expansion of ideas in which these ideas are followed by additional descriptive information. In analyzing the discourse of Filipino call center agents, Friginal (2008) found *actually* to be a common feature of Philippine English as it is sometimes treated as a mannerism among Filipinos. Due to exposure to this trait of Filipinos, it is possible that the participants have acquired the habit of including *actually* in their discourse. Additional studies may be needed to confirm this phenomenon. An example is shown in Extract 7.

(7) Hyeon:        a. Um when I was in Korea, there was 2 Chinese asking me on how to get in the specific place.
                 b. And I *actually* avoided them
                 c. beside they don't know how to speak in English.

It is said that the use of DMs is based on the gender and style of the speakers. Schleef (2004) suggests that the utilization of DMs depends on the context, role, function, and other factors; thus, the analysis of style may also be relevant to the current study. At this point, the role of gender and style in the employment of DMs by the Korean participants is highlighted since the most frequently used DMs in the current data appear to be different from previous studies. Generally, current data suggests that more DMs were produced by participants when compared to the Liao (2010) study. This result could be explained by the fact that more DMs were aimed to be analyzed in the current study (12 versus 9). Additionally, as mentioned earlier, the participants' length of stay in the Philippines could also explain the finding.

Figure 1 shows the frequency of DMs according to gender (i.e., male versus female) and genre (i.e., impromptu speech versus interview). Based on this data, the male participants employed more DMs in their spoken discourse compared to

the production of females. The finding, however, seems to be incongruent with other studies. Liao (2010), for instance, found that females produced more DMs in their lecture and interview, while Croucher's study (2004) found no significant difference in the use of DMs by males and females in impromptu speeches. In addition, Lee (2000) found that Korean female learners in America use more DMs than males. Consequently, the varying results of previous studies and the current one may imply that the role of gender in the use of DMs may still be inconclusive.
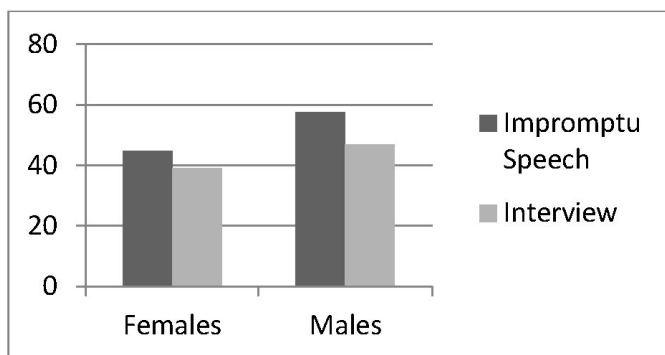


**Figure 1. Frequency of DMs by gender and style** (average DMs per 500 words).
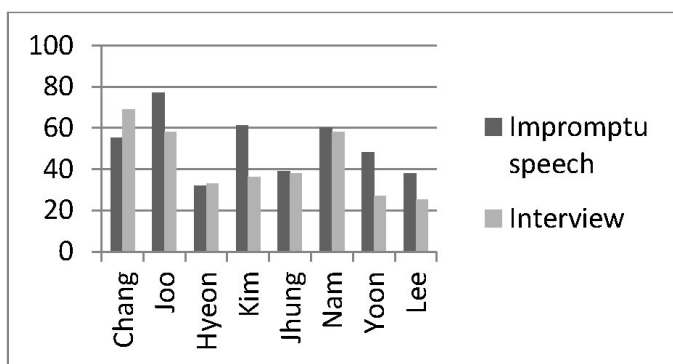


**Figure 2. Frequency of DMs between styles for individual participants** (DMs per 500 words).

Collectively, the male and female participants used more DMs in their impromptu speeches than in their informal interviews. Figure 2 shows how each participant differs in their use of DMs in their impromptu speech and interview. The majority of the participants frequently used more DMs in their impromptu speech than in their interview; only Chang and Hyeon produced more DMs in their interview. The result could be explained by the nature and the context of their discourse. Firstly, although both styles are unplanned, the impromptu speeches are naturally more nerve-wracking compared to the interviews because the participants stand in front of their classmates; thus, they have greater need to facilitate their messages through the use of DMs. Secondly, since the students were given the freedom to choose whatever topic they wanted to talk about, all of

the participants talked about anecdotes of their personal experiences. The top DMs used by the participants were *and* and *so*, which may be common in narratives. Lines b, c, d, and e in Extract 8 show how *and* and *so* are made prevalent in narratives since the focus is on events that took place.

(8) Chang:  a. Like he was saying, "Why are you crying?"
b. *and* I can't say anything because I can't express myself.
c. *And* he just speaking to me. Spank spanking, why are you crying?
d. *So* you see my father gets really mad easily.
e. *So* yeah he is a very hot tempered person.
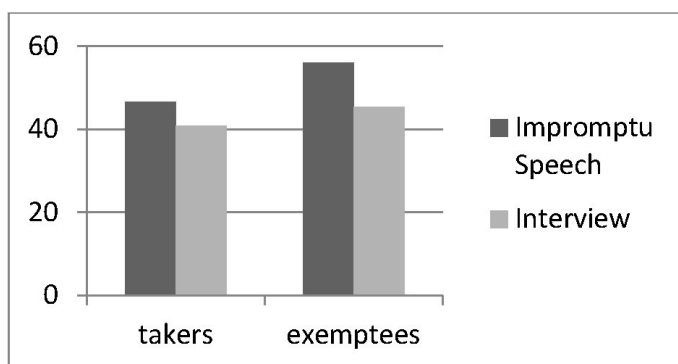


**Figure 3. Overall frequency of DMs by short-course background.**

Figure 3 shows that participants exempted from the tutorial program produced more DMs in both genres. Using the claims of Sankoff et al. (1997) and Schiffrin (1987) that the use of DMs signifies fluency, the result could be due to the level of fluency that the participants had achieved prior to their enrollment. However, the discrepancy of the numbers is not too overwhelming. It could be that those who attended the program may have attained a certain level of fluency after the program and after a few months of contact with their Filipino classmates. (However, this hypothesis is yet to be confirmed by a separate study which would focus on the linguistic progress of those who do and do not attend the program.)

In summary, Koreans learners appear to have achieved a certain level of fluency in speaking through the frequency of DMs in the impromptu speech and informal interview, supporting Schiffrin (1987) and Sankoff, et al. (1997). However, the discrepancy in the findings of studies concerning the frequently used DMs of native speakers suggests that the participants' language acquisition is only partial. The study also found that the length of stay in the Philippines contributes to the manifestation of DMs in the spoken discourse of Koreans. As L2 speakers, Filipinos may have DMs as one of the features of their discourse when speaking in English. It cannot be discounted that the Koreans engage themselves in conversations with the Filipinos for academic and non-academic purposes. EFL learners are likely to use more DMs in their spoken discourse if they have more contact with the culture of the target language. The current study also supports the varying results of previous studies in terms of the role of gender in the use of DMs. It appears that style is more significant than gender among non-native

speakers. Generalizations on the role of gender in the use of DMs may be illogical since no consistency was found among the participants' production of DMs in both styles; hence, individual analysis may also be necessary.

In terms of limitations of the study, the data set may be too small as the impromptu speech of the current study's participants did not last for more than ten minutes. It is suggested that future studies engage the participants in a speaking task (e.g., class report) that would allow the elicitation of the target linguistic features. Additionally, it would also be interesting if the outputs of the participants were compared to other EFL learners' use of DMs in the same setting since the educational environment they are exposed to is dominated by L2 learners, aside from the fact that the majority of their teachers are non-native speakers; hence, there is a possibility that the language that they acquire is directly influenced by non-native speakers.

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# How EFL Teachers Can Effectively Use Peer Review

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Effectively using peer review can be a daunting task for any teacher. This can be especially challenging for EFL teachers in Asia where most students have never been exposed to peer review and have been educated in a context where all assignments are written for the teacher as the sole audience. Results of a survey conducted with 24 EFL teachers at a university in Shanghai, China, showed that teachers often avoided using peer review because they believed their students did not know how to respond to each other's writing. After participating in a training program, teachers felt more comfortable in introducing peer review into their classrooms. A post-training survey showed that teachers who underwent training saw themselves as better facilitators of the peer review process and were more likely to implement peer review as a way to foster collaboration in the language classroom.

## INTRODUCTION

Peer review is a process approach that allows students to focus on the writing process rather than on the finished product (Hyland, 2003). Rather than just submitting a paper for a grade, student writing undergoes multiple drafts, and students focus on the development of content, the organization of main ideas, and the understanding of the need for a strong thesis, body, and conclusion for every piece of writing they do. It is an engaging process as peer review allows students the chance to collaborate as a team and to make suggestions to each other (Rollinson, 2005). Peer review is a developmental process, contributing to students' own growth as writers.

In peer review, the role of the teacher is that of facilitator; students look to each other to guide themselves in the writing process. As students learn to rely on their classmates, and on their own ability to critique their writing and that of their team members, they become more autonomous and thus rely less on the teacher (Zhang, 2008). This is crucial for preparing students for life-long learning after they graduate.

In Asia, teachers seldom introduce peer review into their classrooms. Most lessons are teacher-fronted, and the opinion of the teacher is the only one that counts. This is especially true of EFL classrooms in Asia, where most teachers believe that students do not possess enough knowledge of the English language in order to assist their classmates in revising written assignments.

However, my years of experience in utilizing peer review in various EFL university classrooms in Korea, Japan, and China have shown that peer review

can be successful, and in fact, can even be enjoyable for students if introduced correctly. In this paper, I share my experiences in training English teachers at a university in Shanghai, China, about peer review, and then discuss the ways in which their beliefs about peer review changed after this training.

# METHOD

## Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:
1. What are EFL teachers' attitudes towards using peer review in their classes?
2. Can training lead to changes in teacher attitudes about peer review?

## Participants

This study was undertaken at a university in Shanghai, China, in the spring of 2013. All participants were at the assistant, associate, or full professor rank in the English department at the university and had been teaching an average of 10.3 years. They were all native Chinese-speakers although many of them (40%) had completed a degree in an English-speaking country. There were 19 females and 5 males in the study, with the average age of the group being 43.

All participants in this study were required to attend my training session and to complete pre- and post-training surveys used to gather data about their attitudes towards peer review.

## Data Collection

### The Surveys

As an invited speaker at the university, I was asked to train the 24 participants in this study in ways to effectively use peer review in their English classrooms. The reason for the invitation was that the department head had noticed in class observations that this technique was seldom, if ever, utilized. As a way to correct this pedagogical void, the head suggested that all teachers in the department undergo two hours of training on the topic.

Prior to my visit to the university, the participants were asked to complete a brief survey (see Appendix A) so that I could analyze their beliefs about peer review and identify ways to help them overcome the barriers that they felt existed with introducing peer review into their classes.

My visit to the university in May 2013 allowed me to gather more data from teachers via informal interviews both before and after the training session. Additionally, three teachers stayed in touch via email after my visit and provided more feedback about their recent experiences with peer review, which were more successful than attempts in the past.

Finally, all participants filled out the post-training survey that was sent to them five months after the training in May. The post-training survey was the same as the pre-training survey. The two surveys were compared against each other for before- and after-training results.

The survey consisted of nine questions where respondents could answer on a Likert scale of 1-5, with 1 being "strongly agree" and 5 being "strongly disagree." The surveys items were selected based on previous research and my experience with using peer review in classes. The reliability and validity of the tool were deemed sufficient for this type of small-scale study. As the sample size for this study was very small, any level of advanced statistical analysis was not possible. However, a bivariate analysis (Kendall's Tau-b Correlation) revealed significance relationships between two items. These relationships were (a) positive changes towards peer review due to training and (b) the teacher's enthusiasm for peer review (1.000**). The survey was piloted with a group of colleagues prior to distribution to the participants in this study.

**The Training**

As the pre-training surveys suggested that none of the teachers felt completely comfortable with having their students do peer review, I felt that the training had to be as detailed as possible so that teachers would have an understanding of what steps they needed to follow in order to make peer review as effective as possible. The training that I used was adapted from Lam (2010) and had three phases:

1. Instruction/modeling phase
2. Practice phase
3. Analyzing phase

In the first phase of instruction and modeling, I stressed the importance of teachers letting students recognize the purpose and value of peer review. This included having students (a) define peer review and give examples of how peer review is used in their daily lives, (b) identify the ways in which peer review will help them to improve their writing, (c) recognize the importance of negotiating meaning with their classmates, and (d) see how their teacher will evaluate their assignment. Once students recognize the importance of peer review, they are more likely to want to participate in the process. Part of the instruction phase is also letting students have the chance to voice their concerns about peer review, such as their belief that they might not be qualified to judge another person's English writing. The instruction phase might last ten minutes, or it might be extended over one or more class periods, depending on students' prior knowledge and experiences with using peer review. However, no matter how long the instruction phase lasts, I stressed to the teachers that this is the most fundamental phase, and one that must be done well in order for the following phases to be successful.

Once the definition and benefits of peer review had been made, the teachers were taught how to model the peer review process. I showed them several handouts that they could use for the peer review process (a few are attached in Appendix B). The handouts were examples of rubrics or guides that the students could use as guides in the peer review process. The teachers were encouraged to make guides like these that showed students what was expected of them step by step. The teachers were also given the suggestion to create guides that were at the students' proficiency levels and that would function for only the allotted time that the teacher wanted to dedicate to peer review in one session. The purpose of the

guide was to enable students to identify which points to look for and offer suggestions to, either through checklists or through comments.

In the modeling phase, the teachers were taught to show students how the guide sheets worked. The teacher could select a piece of authentic writing (anonymous, of course), show it on the overhead projector, and display to students how she or he would use the guide sheet to offer feedback on the writing sample. A second model might be used in which students could now complete the guide sheet as a class, practicing how to best answer the questions on the guide sheet, and then to offer feedback for improvements to the paper.

Finally, I suggested that teachers distribute to their students a handout similar to the one below, adapted from Min (2005).

**Table 1. Language Suggestions for Students** (Adapted from Min, 2005)

| 1 | Clarifying | To elucidate writer's intentions | "Do you want to say... ." <br> "What do you mean by... ." <br> "What is the purpose of... ." |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Identifying | To search for problematic areas | "Do you realize that... ." <br> "It sounds to me that this issue is too subjective." |
| 3 | Explaining | To describe the nature of problems | "You may be wrong here because... ." <br> "This example may not be suitable for what you are trying to say." <br> "This quote may not be relevant." |
| 4 | Giving suggestions | To provide suggestions | "Why don't you change... ." <br> "I think you should give more information about... ." <br> "You might use the word... ." |

The next phase of training was the practice phase. Working in groups of four, the teachers were given the roles of students and asked to identify the types of peer review that they would undertake with different groups of students. While observing the example handouts in Appendix B, the teachers were put into jigsaw groups to answer the prompts given to them for group work (see Appendix C). For example, one breakout group had to work on the following prompt:

> You are teaching an extremely Low-Level Beginner's Class. Assume that the example essay is typical of students in your class. What approach to peer review would you take for this class? What type of peer review activity would you do? How would you pre-plan, what would you do in class, and what type of assessment (or feedback) would you elicit after the peer review activity? Explain your choices.

A group of four teachers discussed the prompt and came up with the best peer review technique they could agree upon for this level of learners. They had 15 minutes to discuss the prompt and to come up with a rationale for their answers. After the 15-minute discussion period, they shared their answers with the other groups.

The final training phase was the analyzing stage. In this phase, the teachers were trained on how to get students to take up the suggestions made by their partners. Suggestions were given to them to ask students to keep logs or to comment on the side of the paper about which corrections they made and why.

# RESULTS

## Data Analysis

Results from the pre-training survey showed that teachers were reluctant to introduce peer review into their EFL classrooms. Some of the comments that they gave on the surveys included the following:

"Difficult to do peer review. Students played games on phone instead" (T3, Question 4).
"I have never tried peer review because I don't know how" (T12, Question 3).
"Students don't enjoy peer review. They only want teacher's help" (T15, Question 5).
"Students are not serious about peer review. They think it wastes time" (T13, Question 3).

Results from the pre- and post-training survey are in Table 2 below. A lower number means stronger agreement with the statement. There are significant differences in the means.

**Table 2. Means of Pre- and Post-training Surveys**

| # | Sentence | Pre-training | Post-training |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I use peer review at least once a semester in each of my classes. | 2.5 | 1.4 |
| 2 | I believe that peer review is helpful for students. | 3.8 | 1.2 |
| 3 | My peer review classes are successful. | 4.0 | 2.1 |
| 4 | My students know how to do peer review. | 4.3 | 1.8 |
| 5 | My students enjoy doing peer review. | 3.0 | 1.4 |
| 6 | My students prefer teacher feedback more than peer feedback. | 1.0 | 1.8 |
| 7 | I have my students write multiple drafts of papers. | 2.2 | 1.6 |
| 8 | My students use peer feedback in revisions. | 4.5 | 2.0 |
| 9 | I know how to prepare students for peer review. | 3.5 | 1.8 |

As can be seen from Table 2, attitudes began to change after training. The post-training survey showed that teachers now felt generally more comfortable in using peer review, and they felt more adequately prepared for "selling" peer review to their students. The most drastic changes could be seen in items 2 (I believe that peer review is helpful for students) and 4 (My students know how to do peer review). With the mean differences being 2.6 and 2.5, this points to the fact that instructing the teachers in how to do peer review was instrumental in getting students on board in believing that peer review is helpful.

Comments from the emails received from the teachers as well as on the post-training surveys included the following:

"I now use peer review multiple times in each class." (T2, Question 1)
"I feel more comfortable in using peer review since your training." (T1, email)
"Thank you for your workshop. I think I now know how to tell students about peer review. I will try it soon in the following class." (T10, email)

The survey results after training and the email correspondence clearly show that teachers' attitudes towards peer review had changed. They all admitted (100%) to feeling like they were more prepared to conduct peer review than they had been before the training.

# DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

## Discussion

This study investigated the attitudes of 24 Chinese university EFL teachers towards utilizing peer review in their classes. The findings suggest that teachers can better acquaint students with peer review if they fully understand methods that allow students to see the benefits of peer review and the ways they can be more successful at revising their classmates' writing.

This study sought to answer two questions. First, what are EFL teachers' attitudes towards using peer review in their classes? The results described above show that teachers felt more negative about peer review before the training than they did after the training. In fact, as a whole, the mood became positive, and teachers were more likely to use peer review after the training session. The teachers first had to be trained in how to conduct peer reviews, before they became equipped to train their students about the peer review process.

The second research question was "Can training lead to changes in teacher attitudes about peer review?" The result to this question was unanimously "yes." Training had a huge effect on the ways in which the teachers thought about peer review. After the training, more teachers tried peer review and reported that their students believed it was helpful, knew how to do it, enjoyed doing it, and came to value peer feedback and the use of peer feedback in the revisions of their subsequent drafts. As question 9, which asked teachers if they "know how to prepare students for peer review," increased significantly, this points to the success of the training session.

This research is not without its limitations. First, there were constraints in time. The training lasted for two hours, which is too short to realize any drastic improvements in teachers' attitudes. Also, due to the scope of the study, I did not inquire into students' feedback for the teachers who were involved in the study. That is, no students were surveyed about their beliefs about peer review. Further studies into training teachers about peer review should address the amount of peer review that teachers allow students to do and the amount of satisfaction that students have with doing peer review. Finally, the number of teachers participating in the study was too small to be able to generalize the conclusions of the study to a wider Chinese population or to other populations. It is hoped that this study be replicated on a much wider scale.

## Conclusions

This study was an experiment on Chinese EFL teachers' attitudes toward peer review and the effects of training about the peer review process. The results of a pre- and post-training survey showed that teachers who received training and

practice in peer review were able to introduce the process successfully to their students, further confirming findings by Mo (2005). Their positive attitudes were further confirmed through email correspondence.

If executed correctly, peer review can help students to boost their confidence in writing in English, to engage more freely with their classmates, and to even increase their writing skills. Although some students may continue to value feedback from the teacher more than that from their peers, it is undeniable that students can reap the rewards of the peer review process. If teachers spend enough time in pre-planning and choosing the correct manner in which to implement peer review, it can be a valuable technique for students to use in working on their drafts and to develop an appreciation for the writing process.

## THE AUTHOR

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# APPENDIX A

## Survey to English Teachers Regarding Peer Review

**Part 1: Using a scale of 1-5 below, choose the answer you most agree with.**
第二部分：下列**1-5**分别代表不同的观点，选择你认为最合适的选项。
1. Strongly agree非常同意                    2. Somewhat agree稍同意
3. Neither agree nor disagree 中立          4. Somewhat disagree稍不同意
5. Strongly disagree非常不同意

1. I use peer review at least once a semester in          1     2     3     4     5
each of my classes.

> Comments:

2. I believe that peer review is helpful for students.     1     2     3     4     5

> Comments:

3. My peer review classes are successful.                  1     2     3     4     5

> Comments:

4. My students know how to do peer review.                 1     2     3     4     5

> Comments:

5. My students enjoy doing peer review.                    1     2     3     4     5

> Comments:

6. My students prefer teacher feedback more                1     2     3     4     5
than peer feedback.

> Comments:

7. I have my students write multiple drafts                1     2     3     4     5
of papers.

> Comments:

**8. My students use peer feedback in revisions.**       1       2       3       4       5

Comments:

**9. I know how to prepare students for peer review.**       1       2       3       4       5

Comments:

## APPENDIX B

**Examples of Handouts to Students**

Peer Review Assignment Guidelines
<u>Lower level: 10-minute review</u>
Read the essay and answer the following questions.
1. What do you like the best about the paper?
2. Do you understand all parts of the paper?
3. What advice do you have for your partner?
4. Are there paragraphs with indention?
5. Does this paper address the topic?


<u>Lower-intermediate level: 20-minute review</u>
Read the essay once and answer the following questions.
1. What is your first impression?
2. What is the paper about?
3. Is there a clear thesis?
4. What are the writer's supporting ideas?
5. Is there a conclusion?
6. What advice do you have for your partner?


<u>Intermediate level: 20-40 minute review</u>
Read the essay once and answer the following questions.
1. Summarize the main points of your partner's paper.
2. Underline the thesis and the supporting details.
3. Does the paper use transition words?
4. Does the conclusion restate the thesis?
5. Look for the grammar issues suggested by your teacher, such as tense issues or subject-verb agreement.
6. Look for spelling errors.


<u>Upper level: 60-minute review</u>
Read the essay once and answer the following questions.
1. Does the paper flow?
2. Does the author use appropriate transition words?
3. What content needs to be further elaborated?
4. Is the writing clear in acceptable English?
5. Identify any grammar mistakes you see.
6. Think of three questions you would like to know more about.

# APPENDIX C

## Jigsaw Work for Practice Phase

### Expert Group 1

You are teaching an extremely <u>Low-Level Beginner's Class</u>. Assume that the example essay is typical of students in your class. What approach to peer review would you take for this class? What type of peer review activity would you do? How would you pre-plan, what would you do in class, and what type of assessment (or feedback) would you elicit after the peer review activity? Explain your choices.

### Expert Group 2

You are teaching a <u>Beginner's Class</u>. Assume that the example essay is typical of students in your class. What approach to peer review would you take for this class? What type of peer review activity would you do? How would you pre-plan, what would you do in class, and what type of assessment (or feedback) would you elicit after the peer review activity? Explain your choices.

### Expert Group 3

You are teaching a <u>High-Beginning/Low-Intermediate Class</u>. Assume that the example essay is typical of students in your class. What approach to peer review would you take for this class? What type of peer review activity would you do? How would you pre-plan, what would you do in class, and what type of assessment (or feedback) would you elicit after the peer review activity? Explain your choices.

### Expert Group 4

You are teaching an <u>Intermediate Class</u>. Assume that the example essay is typical of students in your class. What approach to peer review would you take for this class? What type of peer review activity would you do? How would you pre-plan, what would you do in class, and what type of assessment (or feedback) would you elicit after the peer review activity? Explain your choices.

### Expert Group 5

You are teaching an <u>Intermediate/Advanced Class</u>. Assume that the example essay is typical of students in your class. What approach to peer review would you take for this class? What type of peer review activity would you do? How would you pre-plan, what would you do in class, and what type of assessment (or feedback) would you elicit after the peer review activity? Explain your choices.

### Expert Group 6

You are teaching an extremely <u>Advanced Class</u>. Assume that the example essay is typical of students in your class. What approach to peer review would you take for this class? What type of peer review activity would you do? How would you pre-plan, what would you do in class, and what type of assessment (or feedback) would you elicit after the peer review activity? Explain your choices.

# The Road to a Successful Curriculum: From Practice to Theory

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In 2008, a national Japanese university overhauled its general English program in order to meet the specific needs of its 2,000 first-year students. These needs were determined after an extensive research project inquiring into what the learners desired from their English language studies, the results demonstrating that these students wanted a more tailored approach to their English language learning. The reinvention of the curriculum took a four-pronged approach: to create a textbook for each of the four macroskill-themed classes taught; to make a common test for each class; to implement a comprehensive e-learning program; and to initiate an "English Professional Course" aimed at advanced-level students. This paper outlines the specific steps taken to create this program and details both the successes and failures along the way.

## INTRODUCTION

With the forces of globalization now visibly evident across the world, and with the massive changes they bring, administrators and educators at Asian universities must adapt their programs to meet the new realities we see daily in the lives of students. In a similar vein, teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) and the programs in which they are involved must also adapt their teaching styles and methods in order to suit the students in their classrooms; for in order to successfully prepare them for the rapidly changing world we live in, we must do our utmost to prepare our students for what they will face outside the classroom (Oi, 2005; Tanaka, 2009).

In 2008, the English Education Center (EEC) at Ehime University – a national Japanese university in southwestern Japan – overhauled its English program in order to cater to the specific needs of its approximately 2,000 first-year students. This reinvention took a four-pronged approach: for the eight permanent faculty members to work on teams to create a textbook for each of the four macro skill-themed classes taught; to make a common test for these classes; to implement a comprehensive e-learning program; and to initiate an "English Professional Course" catering to advanced-level second- to fourth-year students. All four elements were enacted after the results of research that indicated that first-year students at the university desired a more tailored approach to their English language learning. The purpose of this paper is to outline the details of the program as it exists and to delineate the origins of the program and both its successes and failures since its inception.

## BACKGROUND

Japanese learners of English often do not have the requisite skills to cope with the English language courses they have to take upon entering university in Japan or elsewhere in the world (Aiga, 1990). In fact, due to the great emphasis placed on both verbal and written communication skills at U.S. and Canadian universities (Fujioka, 2001), the conduct of English-language classes in Japan – and indeed across Asia – needs to be re-evaluated. Warschauer (2000) argues that traditional methods of learning English will be inadequate in preparing students for the changes in global Englishes and a globalized society that relies more and more on critical thinking skills. This is an approach that most Japanese learners are unprepared for, as the English they learn in junior and senior high school from Japanese teachers is based not on a communicative type of approach but rather on a grammar and translation one (Hirayanagi, 1998), which later poses many problems for students when they enter either a Japanese university or a Western university where English is the language of instruction. This leaves those entering university greatly unprepared for the rigors of academic life: for what many teachers expect of their students.

The program described in this paper arose out of attempting to correct this imbalance in Japanese university students' education. That is, the faculty at the EEC set out to provide its first-year students, and a set of highly motivated upper-level students, with a more standardized, more inclusive education that would better prepare them for the world that awaits them upon graduating from university.

## DETAILS OF THE PROGRAM

The first step of this process was to design a textbook for each of the four macroskill-themed classes: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. This was done over a period of three years, and as of this writing, all are in use at the university and also for sale on the general Japanese textbook market. However, any textbooks sold within the university are sold to students at a discounted rate, meaning authors do not receive royalties for any books sold to their own students.

The textbooks were created after extensive research into the needs of Ehime University students. This involved surveying all 2,000 first-year students as to their interests and needs when learning English. As a result, a set of "can-do" lists for each skill were created. The can-do lists were compiled in 2008 after analyzing the data from the students' responses to questionnaires asking them exactly what they expected from their English language studies. From this, a team of two to four authors set out to write textbooks that matched the requirements set out in these can-do lists, but more importantly, that matched the needs and wants of the learners at the university. The resulting textbooks cover themes such as those listed in Table 1:

**Table 1. Outline of Textbooks in Use at Ehime University, Japan**

| Macroskill | Skills Taught |
|---|---|
| Listening | Understanding conversations on the telephone; making plans for everyday arrangements; understanding weather reports; using everyday complaints and requests (Blight, Tanaka, & McCarthy, 2010). |
| Reading | Reading: The environment; different cultures; technology; traveling abroad (Murphy, Heffernan, & Hiromori, 2011). |
| Speaking | Introducing yourself to others; daily life; likes and dislikes; talking on the telephone; events that left an impression (Stafford, Heffernan, Matsumoto, & Nakayama, 2010). |
| Writing | Paragraph writing: hometowns; stating one's opinion; introducing Japanese culture; studying abroad (Stafford, 2013). |

Each unit in the textbooks taught a skill or a learning aim to learners. For example, since the learners at the university can be considered to be at an intermediate level upon entering their first year of classes (i.e., scoring approximately 350-380 on the paper-based version of the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC)), the productive skill of speaking sees the Speaking textbook cover skills such as introducing yourself to someone, asking and answering questions in English, adding information to answers, and using listener expressions when engaged in conversation. Next, the Writing textbook teaches paragraph writing, starting with learning how to write a topic sentence, support sentences, adding detail to support sentences, and then writing a concluding sentence. Moving to the receptive skills, the skills in the Reading textbook include reading for main ideas, scanning and skimming, summarizing, using inference techniques, and guessing for meaning when reading. Finally, the Listening course teaches how to listen in social contexts such as when shopping, looking for an apartment, being at an airport, and when checking into a hotel.

Next, a common test for all first-year students was created for each of the four first-year classes. There are currently four distinct forms for the Listening and Reading tests and a specific rubric focusing on the syllabus in use for the Speaking and Writing classes. The Listening tests consist of 50 multiple-choice questions based on the skills, themes, and vocabulary of each unit of the textbook. Two types of scripts are on each recording: short conversations between two people and one announcement or lecture. The first version of the Listening test was piloted with 908 first-year students in the spring of the 2009-2010 academic year, and subsequently revised and updated. The test was administered for the third time in the spring of 2013, with 1,747 students. All four versions were recorded professionally at a studio in Tokyo.

The Reading test consists of 30 questions based on short texts such as advertisements, recipes, notices, and schedules. Question types include scanning, skimming, main idea, inference, summarizing, guessing meaning, and organization. The first version of the Reading test was piloted in October of 2010 with 807 students. The full version of the Reading test was administered for the third time in February, 2013 with 1,622 students. Both the Listening and the Reading tests require constant revision after each cohort of students takes them. Namely, after each test has been administered to students, the writer and one other faculty member conduct an item analysis on each item of the test to

determine if the questions and/or distractors need to be revised. In this regard, we are quite fortunate as for the past four years the university has provided us with enough funding to be able to travel to Tokyo in order to professionally record the scripts for each version of the Listening test and to pay a printing service to print each set of tests every year allowing us to consistently produce professional-sounding, and -looking, tests for our learners.

Similarly, the creators of the Speaking and Writing tests created a rubric for each test based on the syllabus and the textbooks for each class (see Stafford, 2013; Stafford et al., 2010). A rubric based on each respective textbook was created. Each rubric focuses on exactly what is taught in each of these classes during the semester. These tests have remained basically the same as when they were created in 2010, with some minor changes to each of the rubrics to make them more user-friendly for the teachers using them.

The next step in the process involved instituting an e-learning program for all first-year students. The university currently uses "ALC Net Academy" for its usefulness in training students in answering TOEIC-style questions, as all first-year students at the university must take the TOEIC Bridge test twice a year, counting for 10% of their grades for all four classes mentioned above. The initiation of the e-learning element of the curriculum was a key element of the program, as students consider using the Web a key tool to supplement their studies. ALC Net Academy was also chosen for its cost effectiveness for the university in question. Granted, there are many other more effective e-learning systems available, but the amount of money available to the EEC was limited; hence the choice of a system that many have deemed to be average, at best.

While the e-learning program in use has been acceptable to date, the faculty has noticed some alarming trends in the students' use of the e-learning software. Chiefly, a small percentage of students (approximately 5%) did not do any of the work required of them on the e-learning system. Second, a large portion of the students (approximately 30%) started and finished their work on the TOEIC-style questions within 24 hours before the stated deadline of required completion. This has led the faculty to first try to implement some stricter rules on the students (since the e-learning system itself cannot be altered because the rights to use it were purchased from the company that created it), and to look for an entirely new e-learning system to use in the future. This has created a quandary for the faculty members, as the cost of such systems is the primary concern when considering whether to replace the existing one.

Finally, an "English Professional Course" program was designed for students in their second to fourth years of study at the university who have a TOEIC score of at least 450. Each year, 30 students are chosen from approximately 70 applicants, based on an application form outlining their past English experience, an English essay based on why they want to enter the program, their TOEIC score, and a face-to-face interview. Students were required to complete four compulsory courses: Writing Workshop, Effective English Presentations, Oral Communication, and Speaking and Reading Strategies. The students were also required to choose four more classes from a choice of eight: TOEIC Experience, Business English, Discussion Skills, Writing Strategies, Academic Reading, Introductory Interpretation, English for Tourism, and International English Experience. The compulsory classes are offered to students in the Professional

Course in both the first and second semesters of each academic year, while the elective classes are offered once each academic year. Each class runs for 90 minutes and for 15 weeks in a semester. A distinct focus of each of these classes is instilling critical thinking skills in Japanese learners as this is something they are wholly unused to upon entering university (Kubota, 1997). In keeping with the tenets of critical thinking, each instructor emphasizes "self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored and self-corrective thinking" (Paul & Elder, 2002, p. 15) during the Professional Course classes. While this is often a challenging prospect with Japanese youth (Vandermensbrugghe, 2004), Stapleton (2001) pointed out that critical thinking skills can indeed be explicitly taught in the EFL classroom to Japanese learners; and sometimes with great success (Nishigaki & Leishman, 2001). A final element to the English Professional Course is a study-abroad option that allows students to go to the University of Hawaii for three weeks to study English and stay with a homestay family. This program is partly subsidized by the university.

## RESULTS OF THE PROGRAM

To date, the program outlined in this paper has been extremely successful, so much so that other universities in Japan have been enquiring into the program with the intention of setting up similar programs. First, the textbooks have been useful for our purposes: they suit the needs of our learners and curriculum. Second, the tests have proven to be an effective measure of our students' progress in the four courses taught to first-year students. Figure 1 demonstrates the results of the tests in use to date. This figure includes results from the aforementioned TOEIC Bridge that all students must take twice a year in the first-year General Education studies. It also should be noted that the correlation of the Listening and Reading tests to the TOEIC Bridge are 0.65 and 0.62, respectively. This is important because while these two classes within the EEC curriculum do not specifically prepare students for the TOEIC Bridge, the tests we have created for these classes are loosely based on TOEIC-style questions. That is, we have tried to create an interwoven loop of test awareness and preparedness between the questions in our textbooks, the e-learning questions students see on the ALC Net Academy system, the TOEIC Bridge test itself, and on our common final tests.

As can be seen from Figure 1, the results from the Speaking and Writing tests display the highest averages among all the tests. This can possibly be attributed to the nature of the skills taught in each class and to the rubrics created for each test. Specifically, since the students at Ehime University are considered to be of an intermediate level, the speaking and writing skills taught in these classes start from a basic level and build upon these skills on a weekly basis. Further, like any criterion-referenced test, the rubrics for these two tests are designed to measure learners' abilities in correctly performing these skills (i.e., introducing oneself at the start of a conversation, asking questions, adding information, using listener expressions, writing a topic sentence, adding support sentences and detail sentences to a paragraph, and writing a concluding paragraph), meaning that by the end of one semester, the test is designed to gauge whether learners can successfully perform well on the minimum requirements for both having a short

conversation and writing a single paragraph in English.
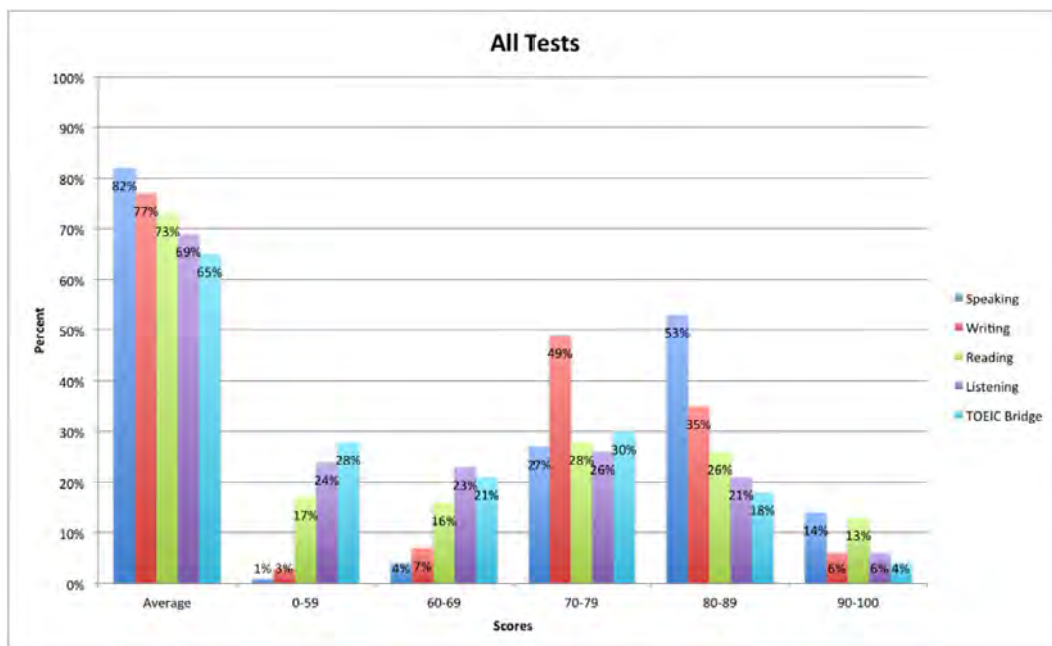


**Figure 1. A comparison of all tests used at the EEC.**

The Listening and Reading tests are perhaps the most challenging aspects of the testing program for the EEC's students. These tests are designed to measure learners' abilities to understand the skills taught in these receptive courses and clearly require more concentration on the part of the students. Thus, the average scores for the tests over the past three years are slightly lower than those of the Speaking and Writing tests. However, as can be seen from Figure 1, the scores on these tests display a higher average than the TOEIC Bridge test that students must take twice a year. One possible explanation for the low average of the TOEIC Bridge is that we do not explicitly teach test-taking skills for the TOEIC in the EEC. The only reason our students must take the test is that the administrators at the university deem the TOEIC to be an internationally recognized arbiter of our students' English abilities – a tenet that many of the faculty at the EEC do not agree with.

Third, while the e-learning program has had some success, the current version of ALC Net Academy has its limits in that it does not fully support student learning. The faculty in the EEC has learned this through a process of trial-and-error. Specifically, when we started the e-learning system in 2011, there was some evidence of students cheating the system in order to gain credit for doing work they have not done. Further, due to limitations in the system itself, there have been numerous reports from students that there are other ways to cheat the system by entering answers first, then checking them and going back and entering the correct answers the second time around. In order to make some effort into eliminating these problems, the faculty members created a program to take all student effort and non-effort into account when assigning each student a

mark out of 10 for the e-learning component of their marks each semester. For example, the program we created only allows students to do each unit of the e-learning once; it takes the total amount of time into account when determining their marks; it calculates the pattern of answered questions (i.e., did students make an honest effort at answering questions or did they simply click on a single distracter all or most of the time); and also calculates when the students actually did each unit (i.e., students who seemed to make an honest effort at doing a unit a week receive higher scores than those who completed all units within three days of the deadline). While these measures are by no means the perfect solution, they have cut down on the number of anomalies we found when assigning marks to students for the e-learning assignments.

Lastly, the English Professional Program saw its first set of graduates in the spring of 2013: a group of 27 students successfully finished the eight required courses and received recognition from the university for doing so. Indeed, the English Professional Course has been one of the most successful elements of the program described in this paper. The students in the course are highly motivated, and, despite not receiving actual credit from the university for their efforts, the work they have produced in the eight classes they took has consistently been of a high level. The faculty in the EEC feels that the Professional Course has accomplished what it set out to do when it was established: to prepare students for entering the work force with the English skills needed to be successful in today's globalized world. Of the 27 graduates of the program in the spring of 2013, many have gone on to graduate schools both in Japan and in North America. Others are preparing for careers in professions at international companies in Japan and South Korea, while one student is currently undergoing testing to enter the United Nations as a low-level diplomat for the Japanese government.

In conclusion, the success of a program of this type largely depends on the work put into it. This program was conceptualized in the spring of 2008 and has been a constant project for the eight permanent faculty members at the university. Having said that, the results are in and they are positive: student outcomes and satisfaction – determined by the common testing program in place and regular questionnaires distributed to students throughout the semester – demonstrate a high satisfaction with the English language program at Ehime University.

# FUTURE PLANS

With the program described here in its fourth full year of operation, the faculty at the university plans to further develop the program in four ways: (a) to decide whether to continue to use the current textbooks that have been in use for – in the cases of the Listening and Reading courses – upwards of four years, to either write new textbooks based on newly created can-do lists, or to simply choose textbooks that are already available on the textbook market; (b) to continue to develop the common tests for each of the courses at the university, which will involve continuing to revise the four current versions of both the Listening and Reading tests so that they are the most reliable and valid measures

of our students' abilities and achievements; (c) expand the e-learning program to include more inclusive and user-friendly systems that will prepare first-year students for the TOEIC Bridge test; and (d) to expand the English Professional Course to include more study-abroad options for students to go to American, Canadian, British, and Australian universities. A further expansion of the English Professional Course may also include adding more courses to the existing twelve on offer for the second- to fourth-year students at the university. However, this will depend on student demand for such courses and faculty availability to teach them.

## CONCLUSION

The program outlined in this paper has been successful in serving the needs of the students at Ehime University. In fact, the university has had several inquiries from other Japanese universities as to how to start such a program. The purpose of this paper is an attempt to disseminate this information to those interested: for only when we can share the type of information that can greatly benefit our learners are we truly doing our jobs as educators in the EFL field (Aiga, 1990).

While the author makes no claims as to the superiority of the methods used in the program described here, it has benefitted our students greatly and allowed the EEC to put in place a standardized curriculum that suits the type of program we have in place. It should be noted that a program of this kind may not appeal to all universities. Indeed, the initial impetus for starting the program was a directive from the administrators at the university. However, after taking this directive and using it to create materials, tests, and courses that specifically serve the needs of our students, the faculty at the EEC feel that the students who have gone through the program since 2008 have profited from the methods employed to increase their knowledge and usage of the English language, thus better preparing them for the future that awaits them upon entering the working world.

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# Teaching Collocations in Asia: How Can a Lexical Approach Work?

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Michael Lewis's *The Lexical Approach* (1993) and *Teaching Collocations* (2000) have recently offered some new, useful insights to English teachers. To what extent do these new teaching methods fit in the Asian context? This paper attempts to explore and demonstrate some effective ways to develop an awareness of learning collocations. In particular, this paper suggests the need for two types of strategies for teaching and learning collocations: remedial and developmental. Examples are given and implications are drawn for more discussion. It is hoped that the suggested strategies will be of use for ESL teachers who wish to promote collocation learning.

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

The pedagogical implications of the lexical approach suggested by Michael Lewis (1997) seem very useful in collocation-specific lessons. However, in Asia, where collocations are yet to be widely known or taught, rarely are there specific lessons devoted to collocation teaching. Few ESL learners have developed the awareness and habit of collocation learning. Lewis's implications did not address the situation in the current ESL classroom in Asia: A great deal of attention is put on rote and list learning, which can be attributed to the retaining of traditional direct-instruction teaching, large class sizes (mass education), and teachers' beliefs. Before Lewis's suggested methods can be adopted (for the next generation), there are measures to be taken for the good of our current students. In light of the present latent period of collocation teaching and learning in Asia, we should not only focus on how to develop collocational awareness but also on how to remedy the current situation. This paper suggests two types of strategies for teaching and learning collocations: remedial and developmental.

### Definitions

The term *collocation* was popularized through Michael Lewis's writing about the lexical approach, a term used by Lewis (1997) for an approach to language teaching based on the idea of lexical "chunks," which refers to socially sanctioned lexical units. The approach identifies three major types of lexical structures; namely, collocations, which are prefabricated word chunks (e.g., *fast food, quick meal*), semi-fixed expressions, which are prefabricated yet editable phrases (e.g., *would like/love to, Could you . . . please?*), as well as fixed expressions, which

are prefabricated and unalterable phrases (e.g., *kick the bucket, by and large*).

Based on Lewis's definitions, Conzett (2000) refined the continuum of lexical partnerships in a more detailed version. From the weakest to the strongest word partnerships are loose-word partnerships known as *free associations* (e.g., *friendly dog* and *old car*); followed by a type of frequent, prefabricated word partnership known as *collocations* (e.g., *strong coffee* and *heavy smoker*); then by a type of frequent, prefabricated word partnership in a fixed form or voice known as *colligations* (e.g., *sibling rivalry* and *mitigating circumstances*); and lastly, by a type of fixed-word partnership usually of more than two words known as *idioms* (e.g., *throw in the towel* and *stars and stripes*).

In this paper, I shall take Conzett's (2000) concepts of collocations and colligations as what Lewis (1997) defined as prefabricated word chunks.

# THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLOCATION LEARNING AND TEACHING

Over the past two decades, many researchers (Ellis, 2001; Hill, 2000; Nation, 2001; Pawley & Syder, 1983) have stressed the importance of learning and teaching collocations in the ESL/EFL classroom. For instance, collocations exist in approximately 70% of everything we receive and produce (Hill, 2000, p. 53); and for all fluent and appropriate language use, collocational knowledge is necessary (Nation, 2001, p. 318).

Some (Hsu & Chiu, 2008; Sung, 2003) have found a significant correlation between knowledge of collocations and learners' English proficiency. Thus, the idea of teaching collocations has begun to influence teaching methodologists (e.g., Lewis, 2000) and materials writers (e.g., McCarthy & O'Dell, 2005; Walter & Woodford, 2010).

## The Status Quo

The father of the lexical approach, Michael Lewis (2000), once contended, "Collocations will become so central to everyday teaching that we will wonder whatever took up so much of our time before" (p. 27). However, in Macao and Hong Kong, while many teachers have heard of the lexical approach and its significant stress on teaching collocations, many have only kept the approach in mind without practically applying it to their teaching. Obviously, there is a gap between what is promoted in the academic world and what is being implemented in teaching practice.

# CHINESE ESL/EFL LEARNERS' META-COGNITIVE STRATEGIES FOR USING COLLOCATIONS

## Previous Research

Many research studies (Huang, 2001; Kuo, 2009; Liu, 1999; Xia, 2013) have shown the influence of negative interlingual transfer in different types of tasks. Some studies have identified various types of intralingual errors such as

overgeneralization (Duan & Qin, 2012; Liu, 1999), oversimplification (Xia, 2013), ignorance of rule restrictions (Li, 2005; Liu, 1999), use of synonyms (Kuo, 2009; Liu 1999), false concepts hypothesized, word coinage, and approximation (Liu, 1999).

In particular, Liu (1999) studied the use of collocations in a group of Taiwanese first-year students' writing. He identified seven types of sources accounting for the collocational errors made by the participants: negative interlingual transfer ("*listen his advice"), ignorance of rule restrictions ("*make Joyce surprise"), false concepts hypothesized ("*do plans"), overgeneralization ("*I'm used to take"), use of synonyms ("*receive opinions"), word coinage ("*sea sun-up"), and approximation ("*middle exam"). Liu's study has indeed guided later research in Taiwan on the cognitive strategies learners tend to apply in collocation-targeted tests.

## The Absent Meta-cognitive Strategies

Based on Liu's (1999) findings, it is noticeable that the absent meta-cognitive strategies of Chinese ESL/EFL learners include training in interlingual transfer, consciousness-raising practice of rule restrictions, explicit vocabulary explanations of light verbs, clarification of confusable items, comparison among synonyms, and concepts of L1-L2 differences. These, as demonstrated below, are aspects that teachers should focus on when developing teaching strategies.

## Remedial and Developmental Strategies for Teaching and Learning Collocations

Until such time as collocations are included or incorporated in the curriculum, students are unlikely to receive proper, systematic training concerning collocations. Until this time arrives, ESL students at the intermediate, upper-intermediate, or advanced level (who typically have somehow acquired a certain amount of confused collocational knowledge) are, as I wish to call them, the first generation (G1) to receive collocational training. On the other hand, students who are taught collocations from the elementary or lower-intermediate level are the second generation (G2).

G1 learners usually share insufficient or confused knowledge of collocations, have little collocational awareness, and are taught collocations only on the teacher's own initiative, while G2 learners' knowledge and awareness of collocations are well-developed and consolidated through scaffolding, and they are taught collocations under a curriculum-directed instruction. I suggest that the former type of learners be taught using remedial teaching and learning strategies, and the latter type using developmental strategies.

## Remedial Teaching and Learning Strategies (for G1)

I have adopted Yoakam and Simpson's definition (as cited in Ediger, 2010) of the new remedial teaching:

Remedial teaching is actually old, since good teachers from time immemorial have

always tried to correct the errors in children's reading and set them on the right track. The new remedial teaching has received a stimulus from the testing movement, however, and has for its purpose the development of effective techniques for the correction of errors in all types of learning. (p.102)

Remedial teaching nowadays places its emphasis on how to recondition habits of erroneous learning. For the first generation of collocation learners, who have already acquired habits of forming mis-collocated word chunks, remedial teaching is essential for reconditioning their long-developed habits. Ediger (2010) has suggested four major steps in a cycle of remedial teaching: diagnosis (test/observation from assessments), planning, lecturing/demonstration/practice/training, and testing/observation in assessments (p. 102). In the case of G1 learners under a curriculum that does not favor collocation teaching, teachers can first conduct a diagnosis by making careful observations from regular assessments, which can be followed by planning, regular collocation instruction, or practice, providing corrective reinforcement for the errors identified; and lastly, by observations through assessments again. Tests and lecturing will be a challenge under this type of curriculum. The following are some suggested strategies.

Remedial teaching strategies:
1. Pointing out the existence of collocations: A one-time workshop can be done to introduce to the students what collocations are, what types and subtypes exist, how students can spot them, and what resources to consult.
2. Clarifying confusable items: Confusable collocations (e.g., those under L1 influence) and colligations (e.g., fixed voices and forms in set phrases) should be explicated; acceptable and unacceptable examples should be given for students to compare.
3. Training in interlingual transfer: Daily or regular five-minute translation practice can be done to raise awareness of differences between L1 and L2 equivalents.
4. Collecting/spotting collocational errors in productive tasks: Errors collected in speaking or writing tasks can be shown and clarified in class; punishment can be enforced if prominent errors are repeated thereafter.

Remedial learning strategies:
1. Clarifying L1-L2 differences (cognate words): Learners should be guided to develop the ability to notice differences between L1 and L2 equivalents.
2. Noting down collocational errors in writing or speaking tasks: Learners shall note down every error related to collocations in productive tasks and check regularly to see if they have been repeated.
3. Consulting collocation dictionaries/reference tools: Collocation dictionaries and online databases can be used habitually when learners are preparing for a productive task.

## Developmental Teaching and Learning Strategies (for G2)

*Developmental teaching and learning* refers to typical curriculum-guided instruction in the daily ESL/EFL classroom. Because it is carefully planned and

structured, a collocation-favoring curriculum will allow and encourage teachers to foster collocation learning inside and outside the classroom. When the climate is successfully created, developmental teaching and learning of collocations will roam each and every classroom on a daily basis, not least with the aid of a textbook and technological materials. The following are some suggested strategies.

Developmental teaching strategies:
1. Consciousness-raising practice for rule restrictions: Grammatical and vocabulary instructions should focus on how grammatical and lexical structures exist in authentic language.
2. Explicit vocabulary explanation of light verbs: Comparison between or among light verbs such as *make* and *do* should be taught explicitly and reinforced in assessments.
3. Comparing the meanings and uses of synonyms: Words with similar meanings should be taught with clear comparisons of their collocational usage.
4. Using corpora and reference tools in teaching: Corpora and collocation dictionaries can be used to guide students in exploring various alternative collocates of a word.
5. Peer teaching: Teachers can guide learners to teach one another one or more collocations on a daily basis.

Developmental learning strategies:
1. Developing concepts of L1-L2 differences (cognate words): Learners gradually develop the ability to notice differences between L1 and L2 equivalents.
2. Note-taking inside and outside the classroom: Learners discipline themselves in taking notes on collocations they notice both inside and outside the English classroom.
3. Planning increasingly spaced repetition of revising collocations: With the use of regular note-taking, learners become autonomous in revising collocations from time to time with or without the teacher's reminders.
4. Fully utilizing corpus-based dictionaries: Learners have the initiative to use, to the extent they feel effective, some corpus-based dictionaries, whether they are collocation-specific or not.

# CONCLUSION

Now that there is sufficient, sound evidence to demonstrate the correlation of collocational competence to English proficiency, we should continue to research collocation teaching and learning methods. In light of the present latent period of collocation teaching and learning in Asia, we should not only focus on how to develop collocational awareness, but also on how to remedy the current situation. Where collocation teaching and learning cannot stand on their own, teachers can adopt or establish remedial measures against the existing quandary for intermediate, upper-intermediate, and advanced ESL learners and developmental training for elementary and lower-intermediate learners.

Two types of strategies have been introduced here regarding teaching and learning collocations: remedial and developmental. It is hoped that the suggested strategies will be of use for ESL teachers who wish to foster collocation learning. While we are planning on a fully fleshed-out curriculum fostering collocation learning in the near future, attention should also be drawn to how to remedy the current situation with our current learners. The first generation, if well taken care of, will truly demonstrate effectively the secret of success in second language learning, and those learners will be role models for the next generation. Therefore, teachers and educators around the globe, particularly in Asia, are strongly urged to consider adopting the remedial and developmental strategies suggested in this paper.

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# Linking Thinking on Reading in English: Vocabulary and Phonemic Awareness

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The research reported here was inspired by hearing from a student that a suggestion that she practice reading with movie DVDs, using closed captions in English only, led to a significant increase in her listening score on the TOEIC, but not on the reading section. This hinted at a need to better understand the link between phonemic awareness and reading comprehension skills. Since both vocabulary size and pronunciation are known to be related to reading skill, this study measured learners' vocabulary size, phonemic distinction ability, and reading comprehension ability, all using well-known standard tests. The results were then examined for any possible correlations and what they might tell us about the relationships between these various abilities.

## INTRODUCTION

The study referred to here is a fairly preliminary examination of the interrelationship between phonological ability, knowledge of vocabulary, and reading comprehension ability. Vocabulary is well-established as a measure of language proficiency and a key factor in predicting performance on reading comprehension tasks (see, for example, Alderson, 1984, 2000; Anderson & Freebody, 1981; Koda, 2005; Waring & Takahashi, 2000), although there is less conclusive research on the role played by phonemic awareness (but see, for example, Koda, 1998; Walter, 2007).

Reading is an extremely complex activity, even in one's own language. It is now generally viewed as a derived skill that builds on spoken language (Tunmer, 1997). Perfetti (2003) further asserts that all writing systems represent spoken languages; they do not encode meaning directly, and there are no writing systems currently in use that bypass language to erect an independent system of signs. There is a common perception, among Japanese people at least, that these characters do encode meaning directly, without the mediation of phonology, however, Kess and Miyamoto (1999) quote a wealth of research that provides evidence of both Japanese and Chinese subjects accessing phonological as well as semantic information during word recognition tasks involving reading Chinese characters (see also Akamatsu, 2005; Hu & Catts, 1993, 1998; Perfetti & Zhang, 1995).

For native speakers of English, phonological activation is early and effective as a decoding strategy (Kess & Miyamoto, p. 200), whereas Japanese speakers reading in their own language tend to rely more on the graphemic/orthographic information available in the early stages of decoding, with phonological activation

occurring relatively late. This appears to be related to the complex nature of the Japanese writing system, which employs a variety of scripts. Chinese style *kanji* characters are used for the root meanings of words, and simpler native *hiragana* script for function words and grammatical inflections. Another even simpler native script, *katakana*, is used for loan words, although an alphabetic transliteration called *romaji* is also employed. Since the *kanji* characters may have several phonetic realizations, depending on the particular word they are used to transcribe, it is often necessary to pay very close attention to the surrounding information on the page. For example, in <u>*chii*</u>(*sa*) = "small," <u>*shougakko*</u> = "elementary school," and <u>*Kobayashi*</u> = a common family name, the underlined syllables are all written with the same character, with the basic meaning of "small."

The question that immediately suggests itself here is what the result of this difference in reading behaviors will be for Japanese learners reading in English as a foreign language. Is there any significant effect for phonological awareness, and therefore a good case for including work on pronunciation even in reading classes, as suggested by Walter (2007)? Does a good knowledge of vocabulary help to offset weakness in this area and/or promote comprehension where both abilities are relatively strong? These are the questions that the current study was designed to examine, albeit in a fairly rough-and-ready way, to test the ground for later, more in-depth research if it should prove warranted. There have been a lot of studies that demonstrate the significance of vocabulary in reading comprehension (Nation & Wang, 1999; Zhang & Anual, 2008, for example), but far less for the role of phonology, thereby warranting closer attention.

## METHOD

Two classes of university students, both comprised entirely of English, or English with Chinese majors, were selected as test subjects. They were one sophomore class (30 students), and one of mixed juniors and seniors (20 students: 5 seniors and 15 juniors). The tests used were chosen for their reputation as standard tests of ability, although the Listening Test was not one specifically designed to test phonemic awareness. However, most of the items on the test do, in fact, rely on the learner's ability to distinguish words containing similar-sounding phonemes (e.g., *shirts/shorts*, *loved/loathed*) in whole-sentence contexts, so it was felt that it might be employed as an initial sampling measure. This was the Oxford Placement Test's Listening Test, from Test Pack 2 (Allan, 1992). Vocabulary was measured using Paul Nation's Vocabulary Size Test (Nation & Beglar, 2007), and the EPER Placement Test Ver. A (Hill, 1992), which is no longer available (see the Extensive Reading Foundation website for details of later replacements), was used to examine reading comprehension ability. The tests were administered at the end of the first semester of the academic year, in July/August, or in the first week of the second semester (September).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results were tabulated and subjected to statistical analysis. Somewhat surprisingly, in the initial analysis using the standard Pearson correlation measure, little correlation was found between vocabulary size and reading comprehension scores. A much stronger relationship appeared to exist between participants' listening scores (phonemic/phonological awareness) and reading comprehension (Table 1).

**Table 1. Correlations between Subjects' Listening (Phonemic/Phonological Awareness), and Reading Comprehension Scores** (All Subjects: N = 40)

| Skill | Vocabulary | Listening | Reading |
|-------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Vocabulary | 1 | **.300**[*] | .230 |
| Listening | **.300**[*] | 1 | **.406**[**] |
| Reading | .230 | **.406**[**] | 1 |

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

However, when non-Pearson correlation measures were used, an effect for vocabulary could be detected, but the stronger link between listening and reading scores was reconfirmed (Table 2). The apparently weak effect on reading comprehension for vocabulary was rather unexpected, and even more unexpected for the much more apparent effect for sound distinction. There seems to be evidence here of some correlation between vocabulary size and phonemic awareness that suggests the two do work together quite intimately in some way, even for learners who might only know the individual vocabulary items as words on a page.

**Table 2: Non-Pearson Correlations for Reading Comprehension with Phonemic/ Phonological Awareness and Vocabulary Size** (N = 40)

| | Skill | Reading | Listening | Vocabulary |
|---|-------|---------|-----------|------------|
| Kendall's tau_b | Reading | 1.000 | **.285**[*] | **.239**[*] |
| | Listening | **.285**[*] | 1.000 | .197 |
| Spearman's rho | Reading | 1.000 | **.436**[**] | .305 |
| | Listening | **.436**[**] | 1.000 | .248 |
| | Vocabulary | .305 | .248 | 1.000 |

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The data were also examined in terms of various other factors that might normally be expected to affect the outcome in some way, namely, students' first language (since several of them were of non-Japanese origin), year of study, and gender. Pearson correlations indicated a strong relationship for first language (.503, significant at 0.01 level) and year of study (-.332, significant at 0.05 level).

These findings are possibly due to the composition of the sophomore class versus the Seminar class consisting of juniors and seniors. There was only one non-Japanese student in the Seminar (Chinese), whereas the sophomore class

included one Sri Lankan, one Vietnamese, two Taiwanese, and five Chinese students (one from Hong Kong, and one Korean/Chinese student). Also, this was the highest level English class in the year, which probably explains the effect for first language, whereas the seminar contained students of various levels of English ability. So, simply put, the younger subjects were generally more linguistically competent, and far more international.

## CONCLUSION

These preliminary findings suggest, as might be predicted from others' research, that phonemic awareness and vocabulary knowledge interact in complex ways with reading comprehension ability.

The evidence appears to indicate that Walter (2007) is right in assuming a significant role for pronunciation practice, which might be achieved through having students read texts aloud in the classroom, and encouraging them to learn the correct pronunciation of new words or expressions when they learn them as vocabulary items. Nation's (Nation, 2001; Laufer & Nation, 2005) encouragement to improve vocabulary size through the use of word cards lends itself well to this, since learners can include personalized notes on pronunciation. Drawing attention to patterns or rules guiding the pronunciation of English names and words may also be of assistance to second language learners, just as it is to native speaker children in the early years of learning to read.

The present study is, of course, too limited and lacking proper control of all factors to be able to make firm pronouncements regarding the actual relationship between phonemic/phonetic awareness and reading comprehension, and much more research is needed in this area, given the potential benefits of relatively simple training.

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# Using a Rubric to Encourage Active Participation

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While classroom participation is often seen as an important and positive part of the learning experience, how it is conceived and subsequently evaluated or assessed can vary. This paper explores the creation of a classroom participation rubric designed to encourage active participation, increase student awareness of an instructor's conception of participation, shift focus from grades received to performance/effort being recognized, promote self-direction and self-efficacy, and hopefully overcome issues of subjective participation grading. The institutional setting in which the rubric was created is outlined; components of the participation rubric, expected levels of performance, and features built into the rubric to assist in evaluation and enhance its use as a self-directed learning tool are also introduced. Additionally, the implementation of the rubric and quantitative data gathered in a short survey that measured student attitudes to the evaluation of participation and the rubric itself are presented. Finally, lessons learned from the experience are discussed.

## INTRODUCTION

Participation is typically considered to be a necessary ingredient of an active EFL classroom. As such, the encouragement of in-class participation and its inclusion as an evaluation criterion are common in tertiary-level English classes in Japan. However, all too often the conception of participation varies between instructors (even those at the same institution) and this is likely to lead students to question (often rightly so) the validity of the various measures used. This paper introduces a pilot study of a rubric of in-class participation that was designed to combat these issues. The rubric and its components will be outlined. Then some early, but nonetheless insightful, data will be presented, and finally the implications of the pilot on the future design and use of the rubric will be discussed. However, as the teaching situation of the rubric designers was integral to its design and implementation, a brief description of the teaching situation seems necessary to begin with.

## WHY A RUBRIC?

### Instructional Reasons

From the 2013 academic year, the Graduate School of Science and

Engineering at Ehime University (a national university in Japan) introduced an elective English course, English for Your Future (EFYF), for upper-class science and engineering majors to bridge the gap between required first-year general English courses and required English for engineering purposes courses. At Ehime University, all first-year students take four compulsory English courses in their first year as part of their general education requirement. Courses are almost exclusively taught by native English speakers with a background in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, follow an established curriculum, encourage student-student interaction, have predominantly learner-centered instruction styles, and are divided between the "four skills": reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In contrast, the engineering English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses are taught by engineering faculty who are predominantly native Japanese speakers without a background in EFL instruction, are primarily geared toward technical vocabulary acquisition, have low levels of student-student interaction, and have predominantly teacher-centered instruction styles.

Early in the needs analysis phase of the EFYF course, it was decided that to best bridge the gap mentioned above several factors needed to be addressed. First, since the course is elective with no prerequisites and as the class is open to second- to fourth-year students, a certain amount of flexibility in the leveling of the course was considered necessary. This has been addressed through small class sizes and taking time during the first few weeks of the course to adjust elements of each class to best meet students' needs.

Next, to encourage communication, but not solely mandate synchronous communication, as many learners are accustomed to teacher-centered classes, the course followed a blended online/face-to-face format. According to Jones et al. (2002), levels of web use can be categorized as informational, supplemental, essential, communal, and immersive. Informational levels provide basic links and course information, supplemental levels add access to notes or other supplemental materials, essential levels add some type of online communication system, communal levels increase the amount of online interaction in a course, and immersive levels change the structure of learning into knowledge creation. Based on these levels of online blend and the need to assist students in working on their electronic interaction skills in English, it was decided that an *essential* level of online use best fit the needs of the students and the goals of the course.

Finally, as students might not have taken any learner-centered English classes or even used English since their first year, a fair amount of apprehension and uncertainty on the part of the students was anticipated. This issue was addressed through relearning and/or re-experiencing content covered in the first-year general English courses, as well as recalibrating the students to the expected norms of an EFL class (preparation, interaction, language use, etc.), while at the same time anchoring the courses to a science and engineering setting. This has been accomplished by the adoption of a learning format based on problem solving and by using rubrics in the evaluation and assessment of learner performance.

## Personal Reasons

The creation of EFYF offered a chance for two of the instructors involved in the research behind this paper (later named as Instructor 1 and Instructor 2) to

Using a Rubric to Encourage Active Participation

expand on work regarding student assessment that they had previously conducted independently of one another. Furthermore, both instructors had previously experienced success using rubrics to assess spoken and written performance. Moreover, the ambiguity associated with assessing participation was discussed in detail during initial course development meetings for EFYF. With the experience of creating and using rubrics and an awareness of the often subjective nature of participation evaluation, a rubric for the assessment of in-class participation, the Classroom Participation Rubric (CPR), seemed a natural choice.

While not getting ahead of the narrative in presenting the research conducted, a short anecdotal interaction between Instructor 1 and a student in one of his classes might serve to highlight the need for the rubric and perhaps illustrate typical student perception of participation assessment. After the CPR was created, Instructor 1 informed a class that participation would be included in their course evaluation. At the mention of participation assessment, one student looked disappointed. When asked about her reaction, the student replied that participation was such a "gray thing."

Although this incident came after the rubric was completed, it had not yet been introduced to the students. This rather anecdotal evidence, therefore, serves to validate the decision to attempt to remove some of the ambiguity, or "grayness" if you will, from the assessment of classroom participation. While the analysis phase of the instructional design process was more detailed than what has been presented here, it is hoped that the relevant analysis information above is enough to set the foundation for the rest of this paper.

## DESIGN

In previous attempts at assessing classroom participation, the authors focused (with mixed results) on addressing preparation, English usage, interaction, self-assessment, and instrument objectivity. These interests, coupled with the successes and shortcomings of past attempts, served as the basis for the overall goal of the Classroom Participation Rubric: to give students a clearer idea of what would be expected of them and guide them in increasing their participation in the course.

In the design of the CPR, three key factors stood out as important for overcoming some of the challenges faced in earlier attempts to address classroom participation. First, it was felt that it needed to be bilingual to aid understanding and usability. Second, wording the rubric in a way to offer students' opportunities to see success or improvement was considered important and it was hoped this might have a positive motivational impact on its adoption and use. Finally, while of course being a tool to help an instructor more objectively evaluate and assess participation, it was designed also to be used by students as a guide for self-directed learning.

On review of past rubrics used by the researchers in this study, along with literature on rubric design (e.g., Andrade, 2000), three areas were chosen as criteria for the CPR: preparedness, interaction, and language use. Five levels of performance were selected to roughly match grading levels that students at Ehime University were already familiar with: exemplary, accomplished, satisfactory,

developing, and beginning.

For the Preparedness criterion (see Appendix A), the driving question in the choice and wording of the descriptors (i.e., items used to describe the level of performance required for evaluation) was: *How can we move from a "homework" mentality to a "preparing for success" mentality?* This was in part due to the recognition that for the rubric to be seen not just as an assessment tool, but also an instrument to promote learner autonomy and self-direction, it would need to nudge students into moving from an external to internal motivation mentality. For example, several descriptors are the same for different performance levels (e.g., Finishes assignments and reviews previous class material just before class) to help students see that some actions can be seen as needing more student awareness to actually move to a higher level of performance. It is for this reason that "does more than required" was added to the Exemplary level of performance: to help students internalize how doing more than required could positively impact their performance in class.

The Interaction criterion (see Appendix B) was shaped by both the recognition that on-task interaction might not always need to be in English, and the focusing question "*How can we promote interaction when it might have been years since students last spoke in English?*" The descriptors for the levels in this criterion were worded to assist students in seeing that not all elements of participation are related to English ability. For example, in contexts where instructors are discouraged, or even forbidden, to use Japanese in the classroom, it is often the case that students who have understood what the instructor has said will relay that information to other students in L1 rather than L2. By taking language ability out of this criterion, students who "act as a facilitator," irrespective of the language they use to facilitate, are assessed according to their level of interaction in the classroom.

Finally, the Language Use criterion (see Appendix C) was also approached from the perspective of seeing the need to use the rubric as a scaffolding tool as well as an assessment tool, and to address the question "*How can we create and promote a learning environment where students feel safe interacting in English?*" It was felt that if the rubric were accepted by students, it could be used to self-assess their language use and guide students to successfully improving their English skills (hence, the majority of the descriptors were written with a positive slant). In addition, the element "tries to use new words and grammar points" was included to assist the self-assessment of performance and encourage students to explicitly push their output.

## DEVELOPMENT

Once the criteria and the overall goal of the rubric were decided, performance descriptors were added to each level. To aid in assessing performance and to recognize that from experience a base level of performance was usually seen in the criteria laid out in the rubric, the "Satisfactory" level served as the initial focus of descriptor choices and wording. Furthermore, the base level, a score of "0," was assigned to this level. From this, performance evaluation of each criterion was Exemplary (+2), Accomplished (+1), Satisfactory (0), Developing (-1),

and Beginning (-2). Setting the base score at "0" meant that instructors only needed to input scores that deviated from this performance default. In addition, Instructor 1 created a spreadsheet to track and score weekly evaluation results from the rubric.

The wording of the descriptors was done in graded English at a level appropriate for university students in Japan. Negatively worded items were generally avoided other than to say some performance was "not" at certain levels of expected performance, for example, "Is not prepared, and doesn't have the required materials." After descriptors were completed, Instructor 1, a native English speaker, translated the descriptors into Japanese. Once the rubric had been translated, the translations were checked and revised where necessary by a native Japanese instructor. This person was chosen for her fluency in English and her EFL teaching background. After the English and Japanese texts were finalized, Instructor 2 created both web and print-friendly versions.

At this time, an instructor involved with the general English courses expressed interest in using the CPR in his classes, and was thus included into the pilot study. He used a copy of the rubric, and in addition, adapted a name card he used in class to assist students in self-assessing their participation according to the rubric criteria (see Appendix D).

## Implementation

The CPR was piloted by three instructors (Instructor 1, Instructor 2, and Instructor 3) during a 15-week semester at a national university in Japan on two courses: The upper-division English for Your Future course (Instructors 1 & 2) offered to science and engineering majors and a communication-focus course (Instructor 3) for first-year students. Table 1 outlines how each instructor implemented the rubric.

**Table 1. Rubric Implementation**

| Instructor 1 | Instructor 2 | Instructor 3 |
|---|---|---|
| Introduced in 1st class<br>Used a training activity<br>Rubric placed in Moodle<br>Reviewed in penultimate class<br>Participation grades on Moodle | Introduced in 1st class<br>Rubric placed in Moodle<br>Participation grades given after each 4-week unit and rubric reviewed at those times<br>Participation grades on Moodle | Introduced in 1st class<br>Used a training activity<br>Printed on reverse of name card<br>Used for self-evaluation after each class<br>Grades on Moodle every 5 weeks |

While there are some similarities in how the CPR was presented to the students, the overall implementation varied with each instructor. Instructors 1 and 3 were more systematic in acclimating students to the CPR through the use of a training activity. Instructor 3 also did more to help students use the rubric as a self-assessment tool by having them evaluate their performance at the end of each class. While all three instructors used Moodle for grading participation, Instructor 3 used it to present grades, whereas Instructors 1 and 2 placed the CPR in Moodle for students to reference, and used Moodle's rubric tool to do the actual grading.

# EVALUATION

## Instrument

A questionnaire was designed to elicit student attitudes to the participation rubric. The following research questions were taken as a starting point for investigation:

1. Did the rubric affect student motivation to participate?
2. Did students think evaluating participation was necessary?
3. Did participants think the criteria for participation was clear?

The questionnaire consisted of three multi-item scales (necessity, motivation, and clarity) containing 18 questions in total. As Japanese students have been found to rely on the "safe" middle choice (Chen, Lee, & Stevenson, 1995), a forced-choice six-point scale was adopted for all questions except those that targeted biographical information. The motivation scale contained five items and had an acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .77$). The scale investigated the effect participation rubric usage had on student motivation. That is, whether or not the rubric encouraged students to use English, interact with other students and the instructor, and appropriately prepare for class. The necessity scale consisted of six questions and also had an acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .77$). The scale measured the extent to which students considered the evaluation of participation necessary. The final scale, clarity, consisted of seven individual items and, although lower than the other two scales, the internal consistency was acceptable ($\alpha = .73$). The scale explored the extent to which students felt the rubric was understandable. In addition to the three scales described above, the questionnaire contained three questions eliciting demographic information. Finally, the questionnaire was translated into the students' L1, Japanese, to aid comprehension.

## Participants

Participants ($n = 135$) were sampled from the classes of the three instructors who took part in the pilot study. Academically, participants ranged from first-year students to fourth-year students. See Table 2 for a description of the participants. Unfortunately, due to logistical reasons, it was not possible to collect information regarding English proficiency. However, future studies should try, where possible, to incorporate proficiency as it may well affect student attitude to the rubric.

**Table 2. Description of Participants**

| Instructor | n | Male | Female | Major(s) | Year |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 1 | 33 | 25 | 8 | engineering | 2-3 |
| 2 | 19 | 15 | 4 | engineering | 2-4 |
| 3 | 83 | 48 | 35 | engineering, medicine, agriculture | 1 |
| Total | 135 | 88 | 47 | engineering, medicine, agriculture | 1-4 |

## Procedure

The questionnaire was administered in the final class of a 15-week semester. Participants were given as much time as they needed to finish. They were also allowed to ask clarifying questions. Data from the questionnaires were entered into Microsoft Excel and then imported into SPSS for analysis.

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The values presented in Table 3 reflect the participants' assessment of whether or not it is necessary to measure participation in a tertiary-level English class. All items on the questionnaire used a six-point scale, with one and six representing negative and positive polarity respectively. Therefore, a score of 3.51 or above indicates a positive assessment. As all means are over the 3.51 threshold, it seems that the students, like the instructors, consider the evaluation of participation necessary. It is important to note, however, that the attitudes represented in the quantitative data may have been influenced by the experience of attending university language classes in which some evaluation of participation is typically included. It may be necessary to investigate the attitudes of freshman students prior to starting a language course to determine if there is indeed a change in attitude.

**Table 3. Description of Results of Necessity Scale by Instructor**

| Instructor | n | Mean | Std. deviation |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 1 | 33 | 3.97 | .67 |
| 2 | 19 | 3.95 | 1.14 |
| 3 | 83 | 4.16 | .66 |
| Total | 135 | 4.01 | .68 |

The mean scores on the motivation scale by instructor are presented in Table 4. Despite small variance between the mean scores of the three instructors, as all are over the 3.51 threshold, it seems that the rubric generally had a motivating effect on students and helped to foster active class participation.

**Table 4. Description of Results of Motivation Scale by Instructor**

| Instructor | n | Mean | Std. deviation |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 1 | 33 | 4.06 | .7 |
| 2 | 19 | 3.74 | 1.16 |
| 3 | 83 | 3.86 | .73 |
| Total | 135 | 3.89 | .74 |

The mean scores presented in Table 5 represent the participants' assessment of the clarity of the rubric. Again, as all scores are above 3.51, it seems that, in general, participants found the rubric clear and understandable.

**Table 5. Description of Results of Clarity Scale by Instructor**

| Instructor | n | Mean | Std. deviation |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 1 | 33 | 4.12 | .68 |
| 2 | 19 | 4.26 | 1.14 |
| 3 | 83 | 4.34 | .63 |
| Total | 135 | 4.19 | .67 |

While the data suggest that student perceptions of the rubric were largely positive, the instructors involved in the pilot raised four areas that require action before the rubric is piloted for a second time.

First, while Instructor 3 felt the self-evaluation aspect of the rubric was beneficial, he reported that, due to logistical reasons, using it in classes with over 25 students was fatiguing and time-consuming. Furthermore, he commented that he was not able to "catch everything" (i.e., always assess each aspect of each student's participation), and on one occasion he forgot to use it.

Next, since Instructors 1 and 2 had primarily made the rubric available online, concerns were voiced regarding whether the students thought in any great depth about the rubric. While Moodle does offer a feature to monitor page access, this data unfortunately was not available as updates and/or changes to pages through inexperience with using Moodle deleted page access information.

Next, the self-evaluation tool created by Instructor 3 and the training activity used by Instructors 1 and 3 were seen as creative and positive ways to engage students in thinking about aspects of their participation in class. They will be incorporated into the next iteration of this study. Closely related to this was the realization that there needed to be more frequent feedback on classroom participation from instructors. A comment from one student highlights this: "Rule book helps us to know how teacher assessment, but I want to know my participation is how good on the first class or second class [sic]."

Finally, Instructors 1 and 2 felt that in its current form Moodle's rubric tool was rather limiting in assessing performance when students might exhibit mixed performance levels in the chosen criteria. To address this, the number of performance descriptors need to be reduced and/or combined into fewer descriptors or even a new rubric criterion.

## SUMMARY

This paper has described a pilot study in which a rubric to measure classroom participation was designed, developed, and implemented by instructors at a national university in Japan. The results of a questionnaire that measured student attitudes toward the assessment of participation and student satisfaction with the rubric show largely positive results. Moreover, the instructors who piloted the rubric reported a positive influence on student participation and noted that the rubric helped to make the assessment of in-class participation more objective.

In spite of initial positive results, both instructors and students suggested some necessary modifications to the rubric. With these suggestions in mind, the rubric and accompanying grading tools are currently being adapted for use in the upcoming academic year.

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# APPENDIX A

## Preparedness Criterion

| Classroom Participation Rubric | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Exemplary 素晴らしい | Accomplished 望ましい | Satisfactory 及第 | Developing もう少し | Beginning 残念 |
| **Preparedness 準備** Thoroughly prepared with required materials. - 必要な教材を持ち、しっかり授業の準備をしていた。<br><br>Does more than the instructor requires. - 教員が望む以上のことをする。<br><br>Reviews previous class material and works diligently in class. - 授業でしっかり勉強し、授業内容を復習する。<br><br>Approaches class with evident enthusiasm and a positive attitude. - 熱心で、前向きな態度で授業に参加している。<br><br>Is on-time for class. - 授業に間に合う。 | Well-prepared with required materials. - 必要な教材を持ち、しっかり授業の準備をしていた。<br><br>Reviews previous class material and works diligently in class. - 積極的に授業でしっかり勉強、授業内容を復習する。<br><br>Approaches class with evident enthusiasm and a positive attitude. - 熱心で、前向きな態度で授業に参加している。<br><br>Is on-time for class. - 授業に間に合う。 | Is prepared with required materials. - 必要な教材を持ち、授業の準備をしていた。<br><br>Finishes assignments and reviews previous class material just before class. - 課題や授業内容の復習をクラス直前に少しする。<br><br>Is quite enthusiastic in-class, but doesn't really have a can-do attitude. - やや熱心だが、前向きな態度では授業に参加してない。<br><br>Is on-time for class. - 授業に間に合う。 | Is not prepared and doesn't have the required materials. - 必要な教材を持たず、授業の準備をしてなかった。<br><br>Finishes assignments and reviews previous class material just before class. - 課題や授業内容の復習をクラス直前に少しする。<br><br>Isn't really enthusiastic and is rather negative. - あまり熱心ではないし、消極的な態度を取っている。<br><br>Is late for class. - 授業に遅刻する。 | Is not prepared and doesn't have the required materials. - 必要な教材を持たず、授業の準備をしてなかった。<br><br>Hasn't finished assignments or reviewed previous class material. - 課題や授業内容の復習をしてない。<br><br>Is not enthusiastic and is rather negative. - 熱心ではないし、消極的な態度を取っている。<br><br>Is late for class. - 授業に遅刻する。 |

# APPENDIX B

## Interaction Criterion

| Classroom Participation Rubric | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Exemplary 素晴らしい | Accomplished 望ましい | Satisfactory 及第 | Developing もう少し | Beginning 残念 |
| **Interaction 交流** Maintains appropriate eye contact. - 適切なアイコンタクトを保っている。<br><br>Actively participates in all class work (e.g. raises hand, will happily talk to all classmates). - 積極的に授業に参加している(例: 手を挙げる、知らないクラスメイトでも遠慮なく会話をしている)<br><br>Always tries to keep conversations going. - 会話を続くように動力している。<br><br>Acts as a facilitator. - 会話の促進的役割になっている。<br><br>Is engaged when talking with others. - 会話にとても積極的に参加している。<br><br>Doesn't hesitate to state opinion. - 遠慮せずに意見を言う。 | Maintains appropriate eye contact. - 適切なアイコンタクトを保っている。<br><br>Actively participates in all class work (e.g. raises hand, will happily talk to all classmates). - 積極的に授業に参加している(例: 手を挙げる、知らないクラスメイトでも遠慮なく会話をしている)<br><br>Always tries to keep conversations going. - 会話を続くように動力している。<br><br>Doesn't often facilitate conversation. - 会話の促進的役割にあまりならない。<br><br>Is engaged when talking with others. - 会話にとても積極的に参加している。<br><br>Often states opinion. - よく意見を言う。 | Maintains eye contact most of the time. - 適切なアイコンタクトをほとんど保っている。<br><br>Is rather passive in class (e.g. rarely raises hand, rarely talks to unfamiliar classmates). - あまり積極的に授業に参加していない(例: 手をめったに挙げない、知らないクラスメイトとあまり会話をしてない)<br><br>Doesn't often facilitate conversation. - 会話の促進的役割にあまりならない。<br><br>Is kind of engaged when talking with others. - 会話に参加している。<br><br>Hesitates to state opinion. - 躊躇しながら意見を述べている。<br><br>Sometimes gives up on conversation. - 時々 会話を続くように動力してない。 | Rarely makes eye contact. - 適切なアイコンタクトをあまり保たない。<br><br>Is passive in class (e.g. doesn't raise hand, doesn't talk to unfamiliar classmates). - 積極的に授業に参加していない(例: 手を挙げない、知らないクラスメイトと会話をしてない)<br><br>Always waits for people to start conversation. - 会話の促進的役割にあまりならない。<br><br>Isn't engaged when talking with others (Doesn't try to keep conversations going). - 会話にほとんど参加していない。<br><br>Doesn't try to state opinion. - ほとんど意見を言わない。<br><br>Often gives up on conversations. - 会話を続くように動力してない。 | Doesn't try to make eye contact. - 適切なアイコンタクトを保たない。<br><br>Is passive in class (e.g. doesn't raise hand, doesn't talk to unfamiliar classmates). - 積極的に授業に参加していない(例: 手を挙げない、知らないクラスメイトと会話をしてない)<br><br>Doesn't try to interact with classmates or instructor. - クラスメイトや教員などとコミュニケーションを取らない。<br><br>Does things to disrupt class (e.g. sleeps, texts, etc.). - 授業を中断させることをしている(例: 眠り、メール) |

Using a Rubric to Encourage Active Participation

# APPENDIX C

## Language Usage Criterion

| | Classroom Participation Rubric | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Exemplary<br>素晴らしい | Accomplished<br>望ましい | Satisfactory<br>及第 | Developing<br>もう少し | Beginning<br>残念 |
| Language Useage 英語使用 | Uses English when talking with classmates as much as possible. - クラスメイトと常に英語で授業の活動をしようとしている。<br><br>Uses English when talking with the instructor as much as possible. - 教員と常に英語で会話をしようとしている。<br><br>Consistently tries to use new words and grammar points. - 一貫して習った単語や文法を使うようにしている。 | Mostly uses English when talking with classmates. - クラスメイトとほとんど英語で授業の活動をしようとする。<br><br>Mostly uses English when talking with the instructor. - 教員とほとんど英語で会話をしようとしている。<br><br>Often tries to use new words and grammar points. - 習った単語や文法をよく使うようにしている。 | Often uses English when talking with classmates. - クラスメイトとよく英語で授業の活動をしようとする。<br><br>Often uses English when talking with the instructor. - 教員とよく英語で会話をしようとしている。<br><br>Sometimes tries to use new words and grammar points. - 習った単語や文法を時々使うようにしている。 | Uses an unnecessary amount of Japanese in class. - クラスで日本語を使い過ぎる。<br><br>Rarely uses new language. - 習った単語や文法をほとんど使わない。 | Doesn't try to use English when talking with classmates. - クラスメイトと英語で授業の活動をしようとしない。<br><br>Doesn't try to use English when talking with the instructor. - 教員と英語で会話しない。<br><br>Doesn't try to use new words and grammar points. - 習った単語や文法を使うようにしてない。 |

# APPENDIX D

## Name Card/Participation Self-Assessment

### Participation

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *English Usage* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *Interaction* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *Preparedness* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

### Scoring

Exemplary = 2          Developing = -1

Accomplished = 1      Underperforming = -2

Satisfactory = 0

name:

# Teaching the Research Paper

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The purpose of this paper is to show how EFL university students can be taught to write a research paper. Initially, a brief overview of the relevant research from applied linguistics is presented, in particular the work in genre theory in analyzing research papers and from sociocultural learning theory, focusing on scaffolding approaches to English language teaching. Following this, the Introduction-Method-Results-Discussion structure of a research paper is described. Teaching suggestions are given based on the use of modeling in language teaching, scaffolding techniques, explicit teaching, and the use of peer evaluation instruments. The paper aims to give a broader understanding of the research paper in general, a greater awareness of the role of the different sections of the research paper, and some suggestions for how the research paper can be taught in university EFL classrooms.

## INTRODUCTION: THE ROLE OF GENRE

Writing a research paper is an important interdisciplinary activity for a wide range of university students, not just those involved in science and engineering courses. However, students majoring in the sciences need the skills to do this, as scientific research papers worldwide are written and published mostly in English. In this paper, the teaching approach taken is underpinned by the systemic functional linguistics (SFL) theory of language (Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Hasan, 1985), in particular the concept of genre. The work of Martin (1985) in developing a theory of genre within SFL, as well as the work of Swales (1990, 2004), Swales and Feak (2004), and Feak and Swales (2011) in analyzing research papers within this theoretical framework, is considered to be of particular importance.

The term *genre* refers to text types and how different types of texts are organized in different ways to achieve different social purposes (Martin, 1985). Within this theoretical framework, a research paper is considered to be a genre. It is argued that if students for whom English is a foreign language (EFL) are unfamiliar with the sociocultural norms of the genre, then these need to be made explicit through the teaching approach. This is referred to as *explicit teaching* (Gibbons, 2002; Lucantonio, 2009). The students in this study were all master's course students in the science and engineering faculties at a national science university in Tokyo, Japan. They were undertaking a graduate-level, five-week scientific English course focusing on how to write a research paper in English. For all of the students, English was a foreign language. Due to scheduling constraints, they were allotted only one ninety-minute class per week with the teacher. In preparation for the course, the students were instructed by their science

professors to translate their undergraduate research thesis from Japanese into English, and to use it as the basis for their research paper in English. It was assumed the students had little or no knowledge of the sociocultural norms of how to do this in the English language.

Drawing on the work of Halliday and Hasan (1985), Martin (1985) developed the definition of genre as a staged, goal-oriented, social process. The term *staged* refers to the steps the text moves through to achieve its goal. Martin (1985) refers to these steps as the generic structure of a text, and they are commonly referred to in educational contexts as its patterning (Lucantonio, 2009). The term *goal-oriented* refers to the purpose of the text. According to Martin and Rose (2003), texts typically move through certain stages to achieve a goal or to reach a conclusion. How the information in a text is patterned or organized reflects its social purpose. It is argued that the EFL students in this study not only needed explicit knowledge of what information needs to be included in each section of a research paper, but also how the information is structured or organized to achieve its goal. This may be very different in Japanese and English. The term *social process* represents what goes on in society. It is social because we participate in genres with other people (Martin & Rose, 2003). It describes the process of how meanings are created and exchanged in society. Genres, then, are not a static collection of structures and formulas. According to Eggins and Slade (1997), they are negotiated interactively in society according to sociocultural norms that have been institutionalized over time, and therefore represent an important social process.

Genres are comprised of both obligatory and optional elements (Eggins & Slade, 1997; Halliday & Hasan, 1985). The obligatory elements are those that are recognized as the defining features of the genre, and the appearance of these elements in a specific order corresponds to our perception that the text is either complete or incomplete. They are likely to occur most of the time. Optional elements are those that are not necessarily defining features. They can be omitted or added depending on the writer. In teaching the genre of a research paper, it is therefore important to make explicit what elements are compulsory and what elements are optional, as well as the specific order in which the elements occur. This issue was incorporated into the design of the student peer evaluation scales (see Appendices A & B), with the optional elements marked by brackets.

According to Swales (1990, 2004) and Swales and Feak (2004), the overall rhetorical shape of the research paper should resemble that of an hour-glass (Figure 1). That is, the research paper should move from a general focus at the beginning of the Introduction (I) section to a specific focus towards the end of the Introduction. It should then continue with a specific focus throughout the Method (M) and Results (R) sections, and finally broaden out once more to a general focus in the Discussion (D) section, which incorporates the Conclusion. While Swales and Feak (2004) do not necessarily make a distinction between the Discussion and Conclusion sections, in this paper it is considered to be pedagogically important to distinguish between the two. Also, the teaching of the Abstract section has not been included in this paper, as it was treated separately for students in another English course. The conceptual image of the hour-glass shape for the IMRD research paper is regarded as a very useful pedagogical tool, as it not only describes what information needs to be included in the research

paper but also how the information needs to be organized in a general-specific-general structure, which culturally may not be known to students for whom English is a foreign language.
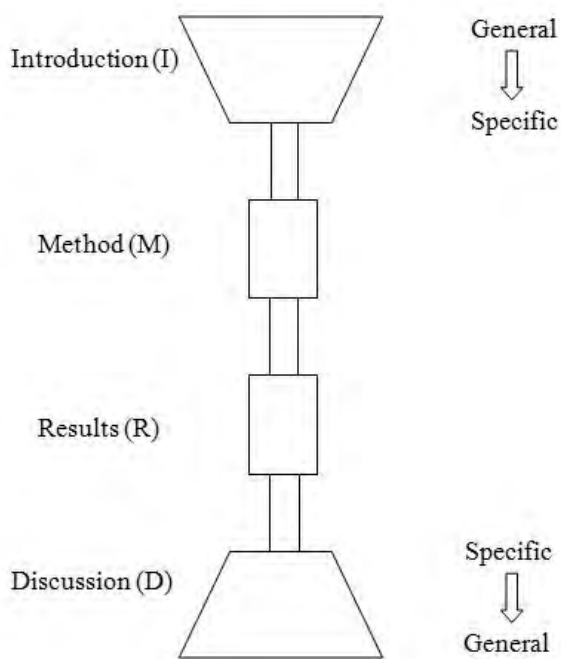


**Figure 1. Overall rhetorical shape of the IMRD** (Swales & Feak, 2004, p. 222).

## THEORY OF LEARNING: SCAFFOLDING APPROACH

According to Gibbons (2002, 2006), scaffolding within the theoretical framework of sociocultural learning theory (Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) is more than just general assistance from the teacher. It is a socially mediated activity. It challenges learners within what they can do alone and what they can achieve with the assistance of a skilled teacher; it involves the teacher making decisions about the need and quality of assistance required; it involves the use of contingency, or the handing over of responsibility to the learners for their own independent learning; and it involves mediation, whereby the teacher acts as a go-between, building linguistic bridges between what learners know and what they need to know. According to Gibbons (2002, 2006), scaffolding is the temporary assistance by which a teacher helps a learner know how to do something, so that the learner will later be able to complete a similar task alone. It should lead to independent learning (Lucantonio, 2009). In this paper, scaffolding is viewed as fundamental to the teaching/learning process. The construction of a research paper is considered a complex task for EFL learners. However, through different degrees of scaffolding, the complexity of the task is broken down and is considered not beyond the capabilities of the students.

# TOWARDS A PEDAGOGY: MODELING, JOINT NEGOTIATION, AND INDEPENDENT CONSTRUCTION

With the advent of the genre movement in Australia, a pedagogical cycle was developed (DSP Literacy Project, 1989) that is considered relevant to all genre-based teaching, not just the teaching of scientific genres (Lucantonio, 2009). The cycle has three basic phases: modeling, joint negotiation, and independent construction. It draws on genre theory and several key concepts from sociocultural learning theory. These include scaffolding, the role of modeling, and the co-construction of language. These concepts are considered to be complementary to the description of language that underpins the approach to teaching/learning in this paper (Lucantonio, 2009).

Students work through the three phases of the pedagogical cycle for each section of the research paper. The modeling phase is usually the first stage of the learning cycle (DSP Literacy Project, 1989). In this phase, the target genre is introduced to the learners. If the learners are to construct a particular genre, then they first need to become familiar with its purpose and its features (Lucantonio, 2009). In this phase, the teacher concentrates mainly on making the generic structure or patterning of the genre explicit to the learners. Students analyze the generic structure of model texts, identifying their main generic stages, and rating them according to the criteria in the peer evaluation rating scales. Once this has been done, attention is then given to the genre's key grammatical features. Following this, students are then asked to write or rewrite their own text for homework, following the criteria in the rating scale. This guides them into the next phase of the pedagogical cycle, the joint negotiation phase.

In the modeling phase, there is usually a high degree of teacher scaffolding, with the teacher usually controlling what the learners do with the text and how they do it (DSP Literacy Project, 1989; Lucantonio, 2009). However, in the joint negotiation phase, the learners begin to move away from analyzing the model text and move towards constructing their own. In this phase, the students peer-evaluate each other's text for each section of the research paper. They do this with the assistance of the teacher and following the criteria described in the rating scales. In sociocultural learning theory, this is known as the co-construction of language (Gibbons, 2002, 2006; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). An important feature of the joint negotiation phase is that the scaffolding is being gradually removed. Greater responsibility is handed over to the learners for the construction and evaluation of their own text. Following the analyses and peer evaluations of their own texts, the students are then asked to rewrite their texts for homework and have them ready to hand in to the teacher in the next class. This leads them into the final phase of the pedagogical cycle, the independent construction phase.

In the independent construction phase, the learners reach the point where the scaffolding is removed. In this phase, learners construct the target genre without assistance from the teacher (DSP Literacy Project, 1989; Lucantonio, 2009). In this phase, the practice and preparation are over. It is now time to see how well the students can independently perform the task of writing a particular section of the research paper following the modeling and joint negotiation that has preceded it. This represents the final step of the pedagogical cycle. The texts are then

collected by the teacher and evaluated based on the criteria in the peer evaluation rating scales.

# MAKING THE CRITERIA EXPLICIT

The criteria described below for each section of the research paper have been adapted mainly from the work of Swales (1990, 2004), Swales and Feak (2004), and Feak and Swales (2011) in analyzing research papers within the theoretical framework of genre theory. These have been developed into teaching materials in the form of peer evaluation rating scales (see Appendices A & B).

The rating scales describe what information needs to be included and the order in which it should occur, using language and labels considered to be understandable and manageable for EFL students. Some criteria have been judged to be compulsory, while others optional. In the modeling and joint negotiation phases, students peer-evaluate each section of the research paper, giving it a score from 1 to 3 points for each of the criteria: firstly, whether the compulsory elements are clearly stated and/or well expressed (category: *Excellent*); whether the compulsory elements are possibly stated but not clearly expressed, and they are quite difficult to understand (category: *So-so*); and whether the compulsory elements are not stated at all, and/or poorly expressed and very difficult to understand (category: *Poor*). Using these three categories, students are able to make judgments that are, in general, relatively accurate and reliable with those of the teacher.

## The Introduction Section

The Introduction section moves from a general to a specific focus of the research (Appendix A). It has two compulsory elements and one optional element. Step 1 establishes the general research area. It provides general background information about what research has been done in the field, from the past leading up to the present situation. It states why the general area of research is important or interesting. It requires the use of references, acknowledging what research has been done in the area. Step 2 is optional. It establishes the need for the research area by showing that something is missing or there is a problem with the previous research in the general field. Step 3 moves from the general field to the specific topic of research. Step 3 has three main parts. Part 1 states the specific purpose of the research. Part 2 states the specific research question or hypothesis. And Part 3 states why the specific research question or hypothesis is important. By following these criteria, students are guided to move from a general to a more specific focus in their research paper. The Introduction section is typically written in the present tense.

## The Method Section

The Method section describes how the research was done. In this section, there are three compulsory elements that are listed as a series of points that can be arranged in any order, rather than steps in a predetermined sequence. Point 1

describes the participants, human and/or non-human, that participated in the research. Point 2 describes the materials that were used in the research. Point 3 describes the step-by-step procedure of how the research was done. The Method section is typically written in the past tense.

## The Results Section

The Results section shows what the raw data is or what the raw data showed. In this section, there is one compulsory and one optional element that are listed as a series of points that can be arranged in any order, rather than steps in a predetermined sequence. Point 1 describes the use of tables, graphs, charts, or other diagrammatic displays that are used to illustrate the results of the data. Point 2, which is optional, deals with brief interpretations of or commentaries on the data, such as highlighting, location, and summary statements. The Results section is typically written in the past tense, though the present tense can also be used.

## The Discussion Section

The Discussion section moves from a specific to a general focus of the research (Appendix B). It interprets the meaning of the data from the Results section. The Discussion deals with what the data mean and also why it is important for the research, moving from a specific to a more general focus. There are four steps in this section, including one optional step. Step 1 has two compulsory elements and two optional elements. Part A of Step 1 reports the major findings of the research, while Part B states why the major findings are important. These are compulsory elements. Part C is optional. This deals with evaluating the data from this research with regard to that of previous research conducted on the topic or in the research field. Part D is also optional. This deals with anticipating and/or dealing with possible criticisms by others of the research. Step 2 examines limitations, weaknesses, or possible problems with the research. Step 3 states how the research findings contribute to the general field, examining how the findings add to or assist the field of research. Step 4 is optional: recommending useful areas for future research. By following these criteria, students are able to move from the specific focus of the Method and Results sections to the broader, more general focus required of the Discussion. Typically, the Discussion section is written in the present tense.

## The Conclusion Section

The Conclusion section is a summary of the research. It has three compulsory elements and one optional element. Step 1 of the Conclusion summarizes the purpose of the research. Step 2 restates the main conclusions. Step 3 states whether the research question was answered or the hypothesis supported. Step 4, which is optional, restates the importance of the research and how it has contributed to the specific and/or general research area. The Conclusion section is typically written in the present tense.

## CONCLUSION

Genre theory can help teachers understand how research papers are organized and the kind of criteria that students need to include. Through the use of a genre-based pedagogical cycle, which utilizes the notion of scaffolding, the complexity of the task can be broken down and taught. By making the criteria explicit, by analyzing model texts, and through peer evaluation activities, students can understand what information needs to be included and how the information needs to be organized in each section of a research paper. This is extremely useful for all students, particularly those from an EFL background, who may not be familiar with the sociocultural norms of writing a research paper in English. By making the criteria explicit, the complexity of the task is demystified for EFL students, making it clear to them what they have to do in order to achieve their goal. This is empowering for all students, particularly those from a foreign language background.

## THE AUTHOR

**Damian Lucantonio** is an associate professor at the University of Electro-Communications, a national science university in Tokyo, Japan. He has a PhD in Applied Linguistics focusing on genre-based approaches to second language development. He has worked as a teacher, teacher trainer, director of studies, and researcher in all areas of English language education in Australia, Indonesia, and Japan. His research interests focus on applications of systemic functional linguistics, in particular genre theory, to English language education.

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# APPENDIX A

**Introduction Section: Peer Evaluation Rating Scale: General to Specific**

Key:
(   ) = Optional
Excellent: Clearly stated &/or well expressed (easy to understand)
So-so: Possibly stated but not clear (quite difficult to understand)
Poor: Not stated &/or poorly expressed (very difficult to understand)

*Step 1: Establishes the general research area.
- Provides *general background information*; e.g., what research has been done in this general area from the past leading up to the present situation; *wh-*information.
- States why the general area of research is important or interesting.
Excellent (3)                          So-so (2)                          Poor (1)
    |————————————————————|————————————————————|

(*Step 2:) Establishes a *need* for the general research area.
- Shows that something is missing or there is a problem with the previous research from the general field.
Excellent (3)                          So-so (2)                          Poor (1)
    |————————————————————|————————————————————|

*Step 3: States the specific research area.
A. States the *purpose* of the specific research.
Excellent (3)                          So-so (2)                          Poor (1)
    |————————————————————|————————————————————|

B. States the *specific research question* and/or *hypothesis.*
Excellent (3)                          So-so (2)                          Poor (1)
    |————————————————————|————————————————————|

C. States *why* the research question or hypothesis is *important.*
Excellent (3)                          So-so (2)                          Poor (1)
    |————————————————————|————————————————————|

*References are used; e.g., According to Lucantonio (2009), ...; Lucantonio & Gallagher (2012) state that ...
Excellent (3)                          So-so (2)                          Poor (1)
    |————————————————————|————————————————————|

*Avoids personal reference: e.g., does not use I / we.
Excellent (3)                          So-so (2)                          Poor (1)
    |————————————————————|————————————————————|

*Uses grammar accurately and appropriately.
Excellent (3)                          So-so (2)                          Poor (1)
    |————————————————————|————————————————————|

## APPENDIX B

**Discussion Section: Peer Evaluation Rating Scale: Specific to General**

Key:
(   ) = Optional
Excellent: Clearly stated &/or well expressed (easy to understand)
So-so: Possibly stated but not clear (quite difficult to understand)
Poor: Not stated &/or poorly expressed (very difficult to understand)

*Step 1: Interprets the meaning of the data; *why* the data is important
A. Reports *major findings* of the research.
Excellent (3)                          So-so (2)                          Poor (1)
  |—————————————————————|—————————————————————|

B. States *why* the major findings are *important.*
Excellent (3)                          So-so (2)                          Poor (1)
  |—————————————————————|—————————————————————|

(C. Evaluates the data with previous research.)
Excellent (3)                          So-so (2)                          Poor (1)
  |—————————————————————|—————————————————————|

(D. Anticipates and/or deals with possible criticisms.)
Excellent (3)                          So-so (2)                          Poor (1)
  |—————————————————————|—————————————————————|

*Step 2: Suggests limitations, weaknesses, or *possible problems* with the research.
Excellent (3)                          So-so (2)                          Poor (1)
  |—————————————————————|—————————————————————|

*Step 3: States how the research findings *contribute to the general research field*;
how the findings add to or assist or help the general research area.
Excellent (3)                          So-so (2)                          Poor (1)
  |—————————————————————|—————————————————————|

(*Step 4: Recommends useful areas for future research.)
Excellent (3)                          So-so (2)                          Poor (1)
  |—————————————————————|—————————————————————|

*Strong and weak expressions of attitude often used: e.g., may / might; would;
possible / possibly; can / could; suggest; indicate; seem; appears; assume; ...
Excellent (3)                          So-so (2)                          Poor (1)
  |—————————————————————|—————————————————————|

*Avoids personal reference; e.g., does not use I / we.
Excellent (3)                          So-so (2)                          Poor (1)
  |—————————————————————|—————————————————————|

*Uses grammar accurately and appropriately.
Excellent (3)                          So-so (2)                          Poor (1)
  |—————————————————————|—————————————————————|

# Primary School Foreign Language Activities: Teacher Responses to Japan's First Steps

## Sean Mahoney
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This paper discusses findings from a nationwide survey on foreign language activity classes, formally introduced in grade-five and -six primary classrooms in 2011. Responses from primary homeroom teachers (n = 1802) and junior high English teachers (n = 515) show that (a) the former group rated their own course goal achievement at between "six" and "seven" on a ten-point scale and that (b) while junior high English teachers noticed more positive (28%) than negative (1.9%) effects on incoming students, influences were perceived mainly as mixed (46%). The nascent program suffers from shortcomings in terms of teacher training, the securing of assistants, and lack of communication and coordination both within and between school levels. Paradoxically, the next step of making English a core, evaluated subject may gradually bring crucial changes for overwhelmed and under-supported primary teachers.

The introduction of English language classes at primary schools in Asia has been contested and all but decided over the last two decades. While Korea introduced English to pupils in grade three at its primary schools in 1997, the debate was prolonged in Japan until "foreign language activities" officially began in the spring of 2011. Both countries have since experienced problems of similar natures in program implementation, and this paper will cover Japan-based data collected from a nationwide, Ministry of Education-sponsored survey of primary and junior high schools conducted in 2013.

Japan's public primary teachers are now required to provide pupils in grades five and six with 35 hours per year of a non-core, non-evaluated subject called "foreign language activities" (FLA). While over 97% of schools had already introduced FLA well ahead of schedule (MEXT, 2008, p. 3), and while schools had been able to offer FLA from the year 2000 in the form of "integrated general studies" for pupils from grade three onward, the shift to make foreign language activities compulsory left many teachers uncomfortable. Just one year before the new classes were to be introduced, for example, fewer than 32% of largely untrained homeroom teachers felt they had confidence in their ability to conduct FLA classes (Benesse, 2010, p. 50).

## PROJECT DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

The chief aim of this three-year project is to assess the degree to which links are being made between the primary and middle school levels in regard to

curriculum continuity. The scope of this paper, however, will be limited to a description of FLA goals, primary school teachers' (n = 1802) levels of English, and team-teaching. It will conclude with findings on the impact so far of primary foreign language education as perceived by junior high English teachers (n = 515). The guiding questions to be explored herein are as follows: How are Japan's first formal steps in primary English education perceived by teachers, and what issues do they feel must be tackled?

In January 2013, questionnaire packages containing introductory letters, two copies of questionnaires in Japanese for fifth- and sixth-grade homeroom teachers (HRTs), and one questionnaire in English for assistant teachers (ALTs, to be explained shortly) were sent to 2000 primary schools throughout Japan. Junior high questionnaires were similarly sent to Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) and their assistants at 1000 schools. The questionnaire was limited to public schools with at least 25 students, and schools were chosen from the national catalogue of school lists (*Zenkoku Gakkou Souran*) at random by student assistants. The questionnaires consisted of both multiple choice and open-ended questions, with the HRT and JTE versions written in Japanese and the ALT versions at both school levels written in English. Responses were accepted over a three-month timeframe. Of the two participant teacher populations to be focused upon, the response rates were 45.1% for primary HRTs and 51.5% for the junior high JTEs.

## GOALS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES (FLA)

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) defines the aims of FLA in expressions that very much resemble those employed in Korea and throughout the world. It stops short, however, of indicating any teaching of skills (*kiso*), instead using the word for "foundations" (*soji*): "… through a foreign language, to foster a positive attitude and willingness to communicate enthusiastically, to deepen experiential understanding of languages and cultures, and to lay the foundations for communicative abilities while becoming familiar with sounds and basic phrases" (MEXT, 2008, p. 7).

Of course, this description of FLA aims has received criticism (e.g., Yukawa & Butler Goto, 2010) for the ambiguity of terms such as "positive attitude," "willingness," "communicative abilities," and "basic"; while MEXT expands on each of these over several pages, they remain difficult to determine. One main problem resides in a MEXT stipulation that no evaluation of primary children's English occur until the subject has been deemed a core subject (or *kyouka*) for grades five and six, a change to be enacted by the year 2020 ("Japan to Move Up," 2013).

Although teachers may feel relieved in not having to produce evaluations, and thereby not be indirectly evaluated themselves, they are encouraged to lead these classes. Further, the lack of pupil evaluation presents difficulties for parents and junior high English teachers in assessing children's ability in English. A strongly recommended textbook, *Hi, Friends!* was released in 2011 with links to junior high texts in mind, however, and its contents are accessible online. According to Benesse (2010), just 2.9% of HRTs chose *not* use the precursor to this text (*Eigo Noto*), so a rough idea of what has and has not been covered may be gathered in

most cases.

Despite weaknesses in the definition of FLA aims above, the current survey asked HRTs simply, "To what degree do you believe FLA course goals have been achieved in the current academic year?" (see Appendix, HRT Q16). The results (Figure 1) indicated a mean score of 6.4 on an ascending scale of 10, with a mode of 7 and standard deviation of 1.5. This implies that most teachers do not see FLA as a failure, but do perceive much room for improvement.
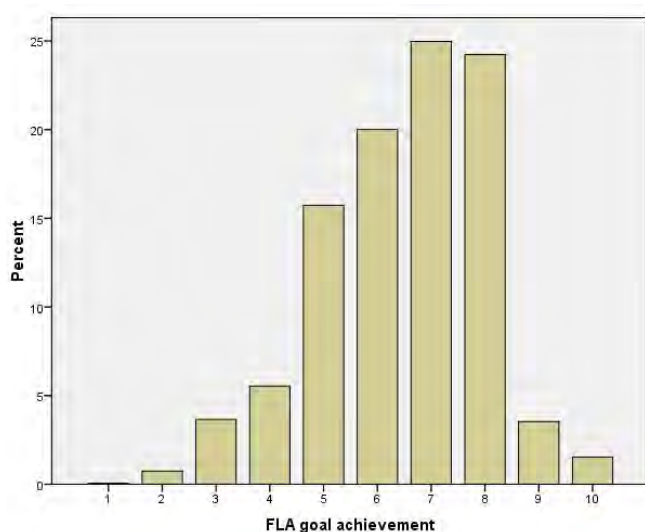


**Figure 1. FLA goal achievement** (1754 responses). 1= Low, 10 = High; Mean = 6.44; SD = 1.54.

But perhaps the most important assessment of FLA, that of professional English teachers (JTEs) at junior highs, who received fresh primary graduates in April 2011 and 2012, will be addressed later in the paper.

## TEACHERS' ENGLISH LEVELS AND ASSISTANCE

In a questionnaire item regarding levels of achievement on English tests, a full 10% of HRTs surveyed had passed at least level two in Japan's Test in Practical English Proficiency (or Eiken), or had obtained a score of 600 or higher on the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). Yet these abilities, which could be considered rather high or at least intermediate, were not reported at the same rate in HRTs' self-evaluations of their English level (Table 1 below), perhaps due to teachers' modesty or to the fact that, for the majority of respondents, decades may have passed since such tests were taken. A more thorough qualification, a MEXT-designed and -approved course for people interested in teaching English at the primary level, J-Shine, does exist, but has been outsourced to private English conversation companies who conduct it for profit. Unfortunately, few public schoolteachers have been given the time off or the funding necessary to complete J-Shine: just 8 of 1802 teachers indicated that they held such certification.

**Table 1. HRT English Ability** (Q11, 1774 responses)

| Ability | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Rather high | 15 | 0.8 |
| Intermediate | 224 | 12.6 |
| Beginner | 1330 | 75.0 |
| None | 205 | 11.6 |
| Total | 1774 | 98.4 |

As stated, questions in this study were self-assessment; while there may be problems associated with this method, it has been found a valuable tool as a placement instrument for language learners (LeBlanc & Painchaud, 1985). And although the assessment here was not as thorough as the 60-item, 20-minute questionnaire in the 1985 study above, HRTs faced a much less complex task: to place themselves in one of these four categories (rather high, intermediate, beginner, no ability).

In the current Japanese survey, 9.6% of teachers (n = 1802) reported that they already happen to have English teaching licenses for junior and/or senior high school (training in English is not yet officially required to teach at the primary level). By way of comparison, in December 1996, on the eve of the official debut of English classes in Korea, fewer than 2.8% of primary teachers held English teaching licenses for secondary schools (Lee, 2000). Yet even an English license may not provide much help without years of experience in teaching younger children.

Thus, while local school boards have invested in some in-service training, the vast majority of teachers rely heavily on assistants, either English native-speaking Japan English Teacher (JET) Program participants (called Assistant Language Teachers or ALTs), locally contracted native English speakers (private ALTs), or Japanese or other proficient English speakers (English Activity Assistants, or EAAs). While this survey revealed great variety in the distribution of such assistants among schools (SD = 29%), about two thirds of FLA classes, on average, were being taught with help, and only half of one percent of teachers said they had to teach *every* class alone. This represents an improvement over conditions described by Benesse in 2010, which had indicated 3.4% of teachers were always teaching English alone.

One caveat to recent improvements revealed in this survey, however, remains in that even when ALTs or EAAs were available for team-teaching, only 29.6% of HRTs claimed they met before classes every time, with 37.2% saying "Yes, generally," leaving a full third of teachers who can meet only "sometimes," "not often," or "not at all." Given the fact that communication problems inevitably occur between HRTs and ALTs in particular, time (and perhaps extra time) must somehow be created for planning and reviewing team-taught classes.
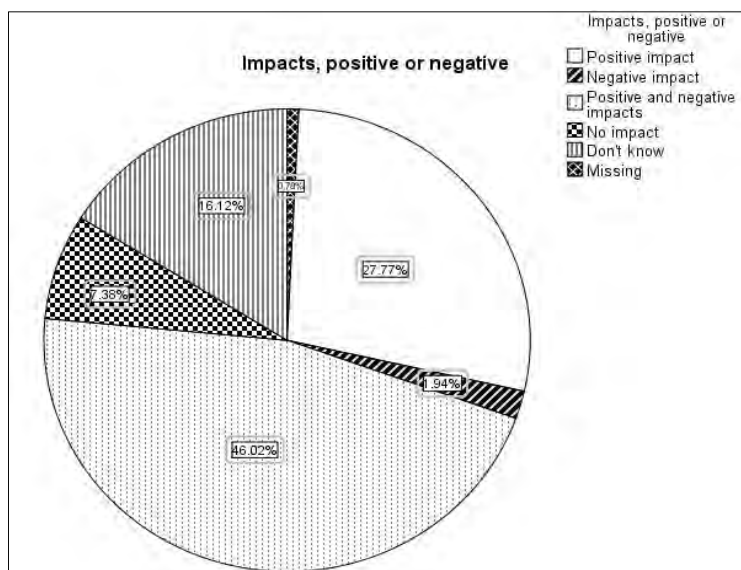
# IMPACT OF FLA ON JUNIOR HIGH

According to Matsukawa and Ohshita (2007), the ratio of third-year junior high school students in Japan who do not understand their English classes was

the highest reported of all subjects (p. 21). The government introduced FLA in the hopes of remedying this prevalent drop in student motivation as formal English instruction continues. The present study polled 515 junior high English teachers (JTEs) on the questions of (a) whether students are more enthusiastic than before FLA and (b) whether FLA has had a positive, negative, mixed, or unnoticeable influence on their students.

In answer to JTE Question 9 (see Appendix), on whether student enthusiasm has increased, 13.1% of teachers said that it has indeed increased. Just under half of the teachers (49.4%) indicated that they supposed it has. Yet about a quarter (24.6%) of JTEs felt that either enthusiasm levels hadn't really risen (21.5%), or that they hadn't risen at all (3.1%).

This generally positive but mixed view of FLA was echoed amongst JTEs again in responses to Question 18 (see Appendix), which focussed not on an improvement in students' attitudes but on whether the influence of FLA *on their teaching* has so far been positive, negative, neither, or both. Very few JTEs (1.9%) felt the new classes have had a negative influence, but those who did mentioned a loss of the former "freshness" of English: that an introduction to a new subject could no longer be made by them, presumably in the way that they felt was best. Another minority of teachers (7.4%) said FLA has had no influence, with many noting that FLA had already existed in their school district for some years. Understandably, 16.1% of JTEs said they did not know what effect these classes have had, with many indicating that more time would be needed to make such a judgment.

Still, 27.8% of junior high teachers claimed that FLA has had a positive influence on their teaching of English, noting that children have got used to listening to English and, to some degree, have gained familiarity with English pronunciation and are more comfortable with foreigners. An even greater percentage of teachers (46.0%), however, indicated that FLA has brought both positive and negative influences on their teaching (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Influences of FLA on junior high students** (JTE Q18, 511 responses).

Important background information on this issue can be gleaned from other JTE questions in this survey. Firstly, 38.3% of junior high teachers have had at least one experience of teaching FLA at primary schools (see Appendix, JTE Q14). However, a Pearson's correlation between these classes taught and reported knowledge of the primary school curriculum and its contents (JTE Q15) was found to be significant ($p < 0.05$) but very weak, at $r = 0.225$. Thus, we may say that even when given opportunities to teach at primary schools, junior high English teachers do not necessarily feel they have gained much understanding of what their future students have been exposed to, let alone what they have learned. Secondly, JTE familiarity with primary FLA curriculum appears very low overall, with 74.5% of teachers indicating they had either "not much" or "no" knowledge, a potentially frustrating situation for junior high teachers. It may also result in boredom or dismay for their students, whose needs may be over- or under-estimated.

## CONCLUSION

Although foreign language activities appear to have produced more positive than negative effects on junior high students, Japan is not yet ready to introduce high quality foreign language activity classes at national level in primary schools. This could change if English were to become a core subject, a move that would grant the subject more status and could allow access to extra funding. It would also motivate universities and local school boards to bolster teacher training and in-service training.

Some suggestions may be made from quantitative data revealed in this paper. As in Korea, Japan appears to be experiencing a discrepancy between teachers' English proficiency and access to support for FLA classes. This may be said not only in regard to in-service foreign language training, time to study, and funding for effective courses (e.g., J-Shine). In many cases, HRTs and ALTs/EAAs are not able to meet before team teaching, a situation that appears to be wasting scarce human resources. One must also keep in mind that homeroom teachers have only recently been asked to conduct FLA for pupils, and that they were presumably busy already. A crucial question at this stage is whether to wait on bringing more English into primary classrooms until enough teachers can be trained or retrained. In the meantime, more input from teachers, pupils, researchers, and boards of education is needed to uncover whether anything else may be done to alleviate HRTs' plight in a way that will allow them to offer FLA with greater confidence. Part of that solution may be provided through establishing or improving links with junior high school English education, the types and perceived usefulness of which will be discussed in future papers based on data collected in this survey.

## THE AUTHOR

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## APPENDIX

**Discussed Questionnaire Items** (Translated by author)

### HRT Questionnaire
Q9. Have you taken any English proficiency tests, such as the Eiken, TOEIC, or the J-Shine course? If so, please indicate level or score.

Q11. How would you rate your own level of English?
1) Rather high        2) Intermediate        3) Beginner      4) None

Q16. To what degree do you believe FLA course goals have been achieved in the current academic year? (Please answer on a scale from 1 (low) to 10 (high))

Q18. How frequently do you meet with your ALT/EAA about class content before team-taught classes?
1) Always      2) Usually     3) Some of the time   4) Rarely     5) Never

### JTE Questionnaire
Q9. Comparing students before and since the introduction of primary school FLA, do you believe enthusiasm levels have risen about learning English?
1) Yes, they have.    2) Yes, I suppose so.        3) No, not really.
4) Definitely not.    5) I don't know.

Q14. Have you ever taught FLA at a primary school?
1) Yes                2) No

Q15. How much do you know about the annual curriculum and teaching content of FLA at primary schools in your locality?
1) Quite a lot        2) Some level        3) Not much          4) None

Q18. Since the introduction of FLA at primary schools, has there been any influence on the teaching of English?
1) Yes, a positive one.        2) Yes, a negative one.
3) Yes, both positive and negative influences.
4) No, no influence.  5) I don't know.

# Training Sessions on Classroom English for Pre-service Teachers in Japan

## Mai Matsunaga
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This study empirically examined the effectiveness of two procedures for practicing classroom English offered to university students in an English teaching certificate program. In one, participants memorized a set of classroom English expressions as an assignment and chorused each expression after the instructor in the following class (chorus group). In the other, participants memorized the same set of classroom English expressions as an assignment and in the following class, they practiced using those expressions through actually teaching a small group (demonstration group). This study also explored the role of self-efficacy in the improvements of the participants' ability. The results indicated that offering the participants either style of training sessions helped to significantly improve their skills and self-efficacy in using classroom English. The results also indicated that the demonstration style was more effective in improving the participants' self-beliefs than the chorus group.

## ENGLISH EDUCATION IN JAPANESE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

In March, 2008, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan (MEXT) introduced a revised course of study for elementary school education (MEXT, 2008b). This new course of study was put into effect in April, 2011. Within this revised course of study, all fifth- and sixth-graders are required to have a foreign language class, i.e., English class, once a week, and homeroom teachers are mainly responsible for teaching it. There are three objectives to this course of study: (a) to foster understanding of languages and cultures, (b) to promote active participation in communication, and (c) to develop basic communication skills. While English activities have been required in public elementary schools in Japan, the issue of the quality of teaching has repeatedly been one of the obstacles elementary schools have faced. In other words, more than 90% of English classes have been taught by homeroom teachers (MEXT, 2008a) who are not necessarily trained English teachers since there have been no required courses on elementary school English education offered in teaching certificate programs for primary education. Therefore, the level of English teachers in elementary schools, in terms of their English ability and teaching skills, has been at the center of discussion among researchers (Butler, 2005; Higuchi, Kanamori, & Kunikata, 2005).

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study explored effective training procedures as part of a methodology class offered to university students in an English teaching certificate program. More specifically, the author empirically examined the effectiveness of two procedures (group A: chorus, and group B: demonstration) on practicing classroom English. Moreover, this study explored the role of self-efficacy in the improvement of the participants' ability in using classroom English. Specifically, this study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1) Do these two treatments lead to significant improvements in the participants' ability to use classroom English?
2) Is there a significant difference between groups A and B in improvement in the participants' ability to use classroom English?
3) Which of the following two factors more directly affects each group's improvements (if any) in their ability to use classroom English: (a) the training sessions of each group or (b) English proficiency?
4) Does self-efficacy in using classroom English increase through the training sessions?

# METHOD

## Participants

The participants in the study were 42 second- to fourth-year university students who were in two Methodology of Teaching English 1 classes taught by two different Japanese instructors (one of whom was the author) in 2012. This methodology class is one of the required classes in an English teaching certificate program. The students in this program plan to teach English at the secondary level in the future, and some of them take additional courses to obtain a teaching certificate for the primary level as well. In order to take the methodology class, the students are required to have a minimum TOEIC score of 400. The average TOEIC score of the participants in this study was 520, ranging from 405 to 665. In this study, the 42 participants were divided into two groups: 22 students who took the author's class (group A), and 20 students who took the other instructor's class (group B). The participants in each group were also divided into two groups according to their TOEIC scores: above the average, high (525-665); and below the average, low (405-520). Group A had 10 high-level students and 12 low-level ones; group B had 9 in the high-level and 11 in the low-level grouping.

## Materials

### Test Materials
Classroom English was chosen as the specific training element for this study because it has been one of the most typical skills required in English classes at the elementary school level in Japan (MEXT, 2008b). The same test materials were employed for both pre- and post-tests, where the participants were evaluated

on their ability in using classroom English with proper pronunciation, intonation, and gestures. Thirty-four expressions were chosen from a list of 182 classroom English expressions, from a text, *Classroom English* (Gardner & Gardner, 2005). This list of expressions was also used in training sessions for both groups. The 34 expressions on the test were chosen randomly from the list, but they were organized in a way that might follow the flow of a typical elementary school English class, e.g., first, starting the lesson, then singing, then giving instructions, and finally ending the lesson.

### Rating Scales

The author developed her own rating scale in order to evaluate a participant's level of classroom English language use, and this rubric was examined for its content by the other instructor and then revised by the author. The rubric focused on the following five aspects in using classroom English: (a) accuracy (grammar), (b) pronunciation and intonation, (c) loudness of voice, (d) speed, and (e) gestures and facial expressions. The rating scale employed four levels, covering these five aspects: (a) level zero (zero points), insufficient production to assess; (b) level one (one point), limited competence; (c) level two (two points), adequate competence; and (d) level three (three points), professional competence, with level two being set as the satisfactory level. Utilizing this rating scale, the participants' performance in using classroom English for each item (of the 34 items) was separately assessed, based on the four levels, in the range of 0 to 3 points (the highest possible total score was 102 points). An average point level of 2 or higher (out of 3) or a total score of 68 or higher (out of 102) was considered satisfactory in this study (see the level descriptions for evaluating use of classroom English in the Appendix).

### Self-Efficacy Questionnaire

This study explored developments not only in pre-service teachers' ability in using classroom English, but also in their self-efficacy in using it since self-efficacy plays an important role in one's successful performance. In the social cognitivist Albert Bandura's article (1977), self-efficacy was defined as the strength of expectations people maintain about their ability to perform a behavior that will lead to a certain outcome successfully. In addition, Bandura (1997) described perceived self-efficacy as people's beliefs in their capabilities to produce given attainments, and explained the importance of self-efficacy and its influence on human behavior.

In order to evaluate the self-efficacy level of the participants in using classroom English before and after the practice sessions, a self-efficacy questionnaire was developed and conducted twice, once before and once after the practice sessions. The same 34 items on the pre- and post-tests were used on the questionnaire; however, they were put in random order, regardless of difficulty level, so that the participants would pay close attention to each item. For each item, participants were asked to evaluate their self-efficacy in using that specific classroom English expression in the range of 1 (I cannot do it at all), 2 (I probably cannot do it), 3 (Maybe I cannot do it), 4 (Maybe I can do it), 5 (I probably can do it), and 6 (I can definitely do it.) The pre- and post-questionnaires were identical except for the post-questionnaire including a

free description section for participants to write their ideas and opinions on any changes in their level of self-efficacy through the practice sessions.

## Procedures

### Instructional Materials

Although taught by two different instructors, the two Methodology of Teaching English 1 classes, i.e., groups A and B, shared the same syllabus and were conducted in virtually identical ways. Both groups received 15- to 20-minute classroom English practice sessions in nine classes from weeks 4 to 12 of the academic semester (total of 15 classes). Both groups practiced the same nine sets of classroom English expressions in various classroom situations, such as starting the lesson and speaking practice. The nine sets of expressions were taken from a list of classroom English expressions in a book, *Classroom English* (Gardner & Gardner, 2005), and each set had about 20 expressions, totaling 182 expressions. At the end of each session, both groups had the opportunity to learn a set of expressions for the following week, through chorusing each expression after their instructor modelled the expression, using proper pronunciation, intonation, gestures, and facial expressions. The participants in both groups were expected to practice and memorize those target expressions for the following week on their own outside class.

The only difference between the groups was how the main part of the sessions was conducted. Group A (the author's group) received nine sessions, and in each session, the participants spoke aloud each of the memorized classroom English expressions with proper gestures and facial expressions, without looking at the list, after the instructor read each expression aloud in Japanese. The group spoke the same set of expressions aloud twice in each session. However, the participants in group B (the other instructor's group) had to actually teach in groups of three using the memorized classroom English expressions, following the procedures written on a worksheet distributed by the instructor. The instructor of group B prepared a worksheet for each session, and the worksheet included information about the setting of the class, the order of the target expressions the teacher was supposed to use, and the expected responses on the students' side. After the participants' actual teaching, the instructor gave them feedback as a class on their instructional language and interaction with students. These two procedures for training sessions were chosen in this study since the former (group A) is instructor-centered and is one of the most feasible training styles that can be easily adopted in any training sessions. The latter (group B), on the other hand, is participant-centered and is a training style that the author considered potentially effective since this style focuses on participants' actual practice using target expressions in an actual teaching situation, in comparison to that of group A. The style of group B, however, requires more preparation on the instructor's side, making the style less feasible compared to that of group A.

### Pre- and Post-tests

The participants in both groups took an interview-style, practical pre-test in the second or third week of the class and took the same test as a post-test in the 14th or 15th week of the class. The practical test consisted of 34 classroom

English expressions taken from the list in the book used for the practice sessions and was given individually by the instructor in his/her office for 5 to 7 minutes. The 34 items were organized following a typical elementary school English class: starting the lesson (5 items), singing (3 items), giving instructions (24 items), and ending the lesson (2 items). On the practical test, each participant was instructed to stand up in front of the whiteboard as if he/she was standing in front of his/her students, and then was asked to speak out each expression with proper pronunciation, intonation, gestures, and facial expressions, by looking at a Japanese translation of each expression on a paper shown by the instructor. In addition, all practical tests were video-recorded, with the permission of the participants. In order to evaluate the tests, the instructor of each group served as both interviewer and rater. After the initial practical test, the original interviewer reviewed the video-recording and rated it based on the rating scale described in the section "Rating Scales" (above). Then, on a different day, the other interviewer reviewed the same video-recording and re-rated it in order to confirm the reliability of the first rating. Inter-rater reliability of the two raters on the ratings of the 34 items in the pre- and post-tests was separately examined through computing correlation coefficients, and the results confirmed the reliability of the first ratings on both tests (pre-test: $r$ (42) = .87, $p < .01$; post-test: $r$ (42) = .89, $p < .01$).

### Self-Efficacy Questionnaire

The participants in both groups completed a self-efficacy questionnaire on use of classroom English in the first class, before the pre-test, and in the 13th class, before the post-test. For data analysis purposes, the participants were instructed to write their identification numbers on both pre- and post-questionnaires.

# RESULTS

### Research Question 1: Improvements in Participants' Ability to Use Classroom English

The ANOVA (one-way analysis of variance) results on the practical pre-test scores between groups A and B indicated that there was no significant difference in the scores between the groups ($F$ (2, 40) = .20, $p = .82$). This suggested that groups A and B exhibited a level of skills in using classroom English similar enough to justify continuing statistical analyses on the data.

In order to evaluate the effects and ascertain whether pre-service teachers in group A (chorus group) were able to improve their ability to use classroom English, a paired-samples $t$ test was conducted. The results indicated that the mean score for the post-test was significantly greater than that for the pre-test, $t$ (21) = 23. 84, $p = .00$. In addition, the average post-test score of the group indicated that the group on average reached the satisfactory level, level 2 or higher and the total score of 68 or higher ($M = 87.77$). These results suggested that nine training sessions where the participants had to memorize and chorus a set of classroom English expressions with proper pronunciation, intonation, gestures, and facial expressions helped to improve their ability in using classroom English to a satisfactory level in the study.

In order to evaluate the effects and ascertain whether pre-service teachers in group B (demonstration group) were able to improve their ability, a paired-samples $t$ test was conducted. The results indicated that the mean score for the post-test was significantly greater than that for the pre-test, $t$ (19) = 23.54, $p$ = .00. In addition, the average post-test score of the group indicated that the group on average reached the satisfactory level ($M$ = 83.40). These results suggested that nine training sessions where the participants had to memorize a set of classroom English expressions and actually teach a class using those memorized expressions with proper pronunciation, intonation, gestures, and facial expressions helped to improve their ability in using classroom English to a satisfactory level in the study.

### Research Question 2: Difference in Gain Scores Between the Two Groups

An ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the styles of the training sessions and any apparent difference in the score gains from the pre- to post-practical tests. The independent variable, the styles of training sessions, included two levels: chorus group (group A) and demonstration group (group B). The dependent variable was gains in the test scores. The results of the ANOVA showed that there was no significant difference in gains between the two groups ($F$ (1, 40) = 2.06, $p$ = .16).

### Research Question 3: Relationship Between English Proficiency and Gain Scores

In order to clarify which of the following two factors more directly affected the participants' improvements in their ability to use classroom English: (a) the nine training sessions of each group or (b) English proficiency, a 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of the nine training sessions of each group (groups A and B) and English proficiency (high and low TOEIC scores) on the gains from the pre- to post-practical test scores. The means and standard deviations for the score gains as a function of the two factors are presented in Table 1. The ANOVA results indicated no significant main effect for English proficiency, $F$ (3, 38) = .065, $p$ = .80, partial $\eta^2$ = .002, and also no significant interaction between the styles of training sessions and English proficiency, $F$ (3, 38) = 4.44, $p$ = .62 partial $\eta^2$ = .11. Additionally, the ANOVA result indicated no significant main effect for groups, $F$ (3, 38) = 1.62, $p$ = .21 partial $\eta^2$ = .04. In sum, these results suggested that English proficiency (TOEIC levels) did not significantly affect the gain scores of groups A and B. And these findings helped to answer research question 3: Participation in the nine training sessions affected the participants' improvements in their ability to use classroom English, whereas the participants' level of English proficiency did not.

### Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of Gain Scores of High and Low Groups in Groups A & B

| | Group A ($n$ = 22) | | | | Group B ($n$ = 20) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | High ($n$ = 10) | | Low ($n$ = 12) | | High ($n$ = 9) | | Low ($n$ = 11) | |
| | $M$ | $SD$ | $M$ | $SD$ | $M$ | $SD$ | $M$ | $SD$ |
| Gains | 56.30 | 15.14 | 64.58 | 8.92 | 59.22 | 10.16 | 52.73 | 10.44 |

**Research Question 4: Relationship Between Training Sessions and Self-Efficacy**

In order to evaluate whether pre-service teachers in groups A (chorus group) and B (demonstration group) increased their level of self-efficacy in using classroom English through the practice sessions, paired-sample *t* tests were conducted. The results indicate that the mean score for the post-test was significantly greater than the mean score for the pre-test for both groups, $t$ (21) = 4.65, $p$ = .00 for group A, and $t$ (19) = 8.26, $p$ = .00 for group B. These results suggest that the nine training sessions for both groups helped to increase the participants' self-beliefs in using classroom English.

In addition, a 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of the nine training sessions of each group and English proficiency (high and low TOEIC scores) on the gains from the pre- to post-self-efficacy questionnaire scores. The means and standard deviations for the score gains as a function of the two factors are presented in Table 2. The ANOVA results indicated no significant main effect for English proficiency, $F$ (3, 38) = .14, $p$ = .72, partial $\eta^2$ = .004, and also no significant interaction between the styles of training sessions and English proficiency, $F$ (3, 38) = .65 $p$ = .42 partial $\eta^2$ = .02. On the other hand, the ANOVA results indicated a significant main effect for groups, $F$ (3, 38) = 7.73, $p$ = .01 partial $\eta^2$ = .17. This group main effect indicated that there was a significant difference in the gain scores between groups A and B, yielding higher scores for group B (demonstration group). In sum, these results suggested that English proficiency (TOEIC levels) did not significantly affect the gain scores of groups A and B. In other words, participation in the nine training sessions affected the participants' self-efficacy in their ability to use classroom English, whereas the participants' level of English proficiency did not. The results also indicated that group B (demonstration group) increased their level of self-efficacy in using classroom English significantly more than their counterparts in group A (chorus group).

**Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations of Self-Efficacy Gain Scores of High and Low Groups in Groups A & B**

|  | Group A (*n* = 22) | | | | Group B (*n* = 20) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | High (*n* = 10) | | Low (*n* = 12) | | High (*n* = 9) | | Low (*n* = 11) | |
|  | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| SE Gains | 15.60 | 2.02 | 17.92 | 1.80 | 34.44* | 3.96 | 28.27* | 3.71 |

*Note.* SE = self-efficacy. \*$p$ < .05.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of statistical analyses indicated that offering the participants either style of training sessions helped to significantly improve their skills in using classroom English. Moreover, there was no significant difference in gain scores between the two groups. The positive results obtained from this study suggest that training sessions as part of class content in a methodology class would help pre-service teachers improve their English ability to a practical extent, and therefore, future classes should consider incorporating more practical training sessions into their syllabi.

The results of further statistical analyses also suggest that high or low English proficiency levels did not affect the gain scores of either group A or B to a statistically significant degree. The findings imply that the nine training sessions of each group, not the participants' English proficiency, helped to improve each group's ability in using classroom English. The results were understandable since all the participants of groups A and B, regardless of their TOEIC scores, improved their ability in using classroom English through the practice sessions.

Although it is obvious that, in the long run, a successful pre-service teacher should have both proper English ability and teaching skills, the results in this study indicate that allotting more time to actually practicing certain skills may better prepare pre-service teachers with limited English proficiency to conduct English activities. This finding may be encouraging to pre- and even in-service elementary school teachers in Japan who usually have little confidence in their English ability and, therefore, convince themselves that they cannot teach English well.

The results of statistical analyses on the pre- and post-self-efficacy questionnaires indicate that offering the participants either style of training sessions helped to significantly improve their self-beliefs (self-efficacy) in using classroom English. The results also show that the demonstration style (group B) was more effective in improving the participants' self-beliefs than the chorus style (group A). This result was not consistent with the results of the test score gains, where there was no significant difference between the two styles. However, as the author more thoroughly observed and analyzed the video-recorded performances of both groups A and B on the post-test, she realized that actual teaching practice using target classroom English expressions may have led the participants in group B (demonstration group) to become more self-efficacious than their group A counterparts in properly using the expressions with suitable gestures and facial expressions. The participants in group B seemed to be relaxed and even enjoy acting out the classroom English expressions on the post-test. Moreover, free description of the participants about changes in their levels of self-efficacy through the practice sessions revealed that the majority of both groups felt they improved their self-efficacy in using classroom English through the training sessions. However, some participants in only group B wrote that they improved their self-efficacy in using classroom English since they experienced actually using the expressions in a classroom situation and learned how important using classroom English and other elements such as gestures, facial expressions, and voice were in instructing their students. Actual interaction with their students (other group members) using not only target expressions but also other unprepared expressions may have helped the participants in group B learn more about how it will feel to be teaching in a real-life classroom situation. The challenges they faced and overcame through this experience helped them to feel more confident and learn more about teaching. These comments suggested that the participants in group B not only improved their ability to use classroom English, but also enhanced their self-efficacy as English teachers. They seemed to start thinking and acting as an actual classroom teacher, which was not observed with their counterparts in group A. It is obvious that students enjoy classes and learn more from self-efficacious teachers with proper ability and skills in teaching the target subject. Although the demonstration style requires instructors to spend

more time preparing sessions and worksheets, it is still worthwhile, since this style cultivates pre-service teachers' self-efficacy as an English teacher.

The author hopes that this study offers valuable implications for future research on effective training sessions for pre-service elementary school teachers in Japan. For instance, the research method in this study can be applied to different areas of training sessions. The author believes that empirical research of this kind will contribute to developing a more effective pre-service teacher training system for elementary school English education in Japan.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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# APPENDIX

## Level Description for Evaluating Use of Classroom English

| Level | Description |
|---|---|
| 3 (3 points) | All of the five categories were performed at a satisfactory level. |
| 2 (2 points) | At least three to four categories were satisfactorily performed. Overall, sufficient enough for students to understand. Typical mistakes at this level: missing articles, intonation is slightly unnatural. |
| 1 (1 point) | At least one to two categories were satisfactorily performed, but students may not understand the expressions. Typical mistakes at this level: wrong pronunciation, low volume of voice. |
| 0 (0 points) | None of the five categories was performed at a satisfactory level. Typical mistakes at this level: incomplete expressions. |

*Note*. The five categories were (a) accuracy (grammar), (b) pronunciation and intonation, (c) loudness of voice, (d) speed, and (e) gestures and facial expressions. Level 2 is designated as a satisfactory level.

# Returnee and Non-returnee Narratives for Intercultural Understanding

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Despite the attention given by Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) toward developing intercultural understanding, documentation of such development is lacking. Based on an eight-month study, this paper sheds light on how intercultural communicative competence (ICC) can be monitored through narratives from returnee and non-returnee first-year high school students in Japan. Using Byram's (2000) model for self-assessment of intercultural experience, qualitative data in this study cited past intercultural experience and suggested that ICC developed in all students. Findings from the study highlight the rich intercultural experiences displayed through both returnees and non-returnees' narratives and how those narratives can mediate student knowledge of concepts of cross-cultural understanding.

## INTRODUCTION

MEXT's (Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology) National Course of Study states its objective for the high school course, Cross-Cultural Understanding, as follows, "to develop appropriate attitudes toward and basic abilities for engaging in proactive communication with people of diverse cultural backgrounds through the English language, while deepening understanding toward countries and cultures" (MEXT, 2011, p. 2). Due to an increase in travel and international exchange, modern Japanese students bring a diverse collection of intercultural experiences to the classroom.

From a sociocultural perspective, narratives of intercultural experiences can be used to mediate understanding of scientific and everyday concepts (Swain, Kinnear, & Steinman, 2011). However, little is known about the use of student narratives in a high school classroom of both returnees and non-returnees to mediate knowledge of concepts related to cross-cultural understanding. Using two sources of data, this study reveals how narratives can cite intercultural experience and mediate understanding of cross-cultural understanding concepts.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Narratives have recently gained acceptance as a valid form of data. According to Taniguchi (2009), narratives make up a key component of Sociocultural Theory. Narratives look at the past, present, and future where development can both track and serve as sites of development (Swain et al., 2011). The personal

narrative, according to Lantolf (2000), "is an important verbal artifact for bringing past events (i.e., occurrences involving other people) into the present and for projecting the present into the future" (p. 171). These experiences when storied into a narrative can mediate understanding of scientific and everyday concepts (Swain et al., 2011).

Using narratives to assess intercultural communicative competence (ICC) can be complex due to the numerous definitions used to describe the ability to communicate across cultures (see Chen & Starosta, 1996; Cui & van den Berg, 1991; Ting-Toomey, 1999). Spitzberg and Cupach (1987) performed a review of the literature in the United States alone and found 167 definitions of communicative competence. Byram (1997) explained that someone with ICC is able to communicate with people from another country and culture in a foreign language; they are able to communicate in a manner that is both acceptable for themselves as well as the person with whom they are communicating. Based on their knowledge of the variety of aspects of culture (e.g., values, norms, and language), they can act both as a communicator and mediator across cultures.

Byram (2000) created a format for self-assessment of ICC titled "A Self-Assessment of My Intercultural Experience" (p. 11). The table below contains examples to demonstrate the five categories of Byram's (1997) model of ICC: attitudes, knowledge, skills of interaction, and critical cultural awareness, or political education. The model for self-assessment can also allow instructors to assess the learners' ICC and determine what areas may need to be further developed.

**Table 1. Self-Assessment of Intercultural Experience** (Byram, 2000)

| Categories | Examples |
|---|---|
| *(a)* Interest in other people's way of life | *I am interested in other people's experience of daily life, particularly those things not usually presented to outsiders through the media.* |
| *(b)* Ability to change perspective | *I have realized that I can understand other cultures by seeing things from a different point of view and by looking at my culture from their perspective.* |
| *(c)* Ability to cope with living in a different culture | *I am able to cope with a range of reactions I have to living in a different culture (euphoria, homesickness, physical and mental discomfort etc)* |
| *(d)* Knowledge about another country and culture | *I know some important facts about living in the other culture and about the country, state and people.* |
| *(e)* Knowledge about intercultural communication | *I know how to resolve misunderstandings which arise from people's lack of awareness of the view point of another culture* |

Research using Byram's self-assessment guidelines for assessing narratives of high school students' intercultural experiences is sparse. Elola and Oskoz (2008) used Byram's guidelines to reveal different components of ICC through university students studying abroad in Spain blogging their experiences with their classmates back in the US. Byram's (1997) components were utilized to assess participants' ICC in studies conducted by Nakano, Fukui, Nuspliger, and Gilbert (2011) and Liaw (1997). The Nakano et al. study (2011) suggested heightened ICC through pre-test and post-test surveys in Japanese university students based on

presentations from speakers from Nepal and Singapore. In Liaw (1997), Taiwanese EFL learners' four competencies of ICC were demonstrated through Taiwanese EFL learners' e-forum entries sharing Taiwanese culture with American university students. Mindful that not every classroom study is able to incorporate e-learning and international exchanges, this study used Byram's (2000) guidelines to explore how intercultural experiences from the narratives of returnees and non-returnees could be monitored in the secondary classroom context.

## PARTICIPANTS AND METHOD

Eight participants from a class of 20 first-year Japanese high school students in an urban Japanese high school's Intercultural Division participated in this action research study. Three returnees lived in English-speaking environments (REE; n = 3). Three returnees lived in non-English speaking environments (RNEE; n = 3). Two non-returnees; (NR; n = 2) had lived in Japan their entire lives, but had been abroad on short, family vacations. The six returnees had lived in countries outside of Japan. Three of these learners were returnees from the United States, an English-speaking environment (REE); three returnees were from non-English speaking environments (RNEE) including Belgium, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Table 2 shows the demographic information of each participant. Pseudonyms were given to participants to protect their privacy.

**Table 2. Demographic Data of Participants** (N=8)

| Name | Gender | International Experience | Time |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aya | F | NR | |
| Taro | M | NR | |
| Nahoko | F | Indonesia (RNEE) | 2 years |
| Yuka | F | Malaysia (RNEE) | 7 years, 3 months |
| Yasu | M | Belgium (RNEE) | 3 years |
| Ai | F | US (REE) | 1 year |
| Asuka | F | US (REE) | 5 years |
| Ken | M | US (REE) | 3 years |

*Note*: NR = Non-returnee, REE = Returnee from English-speaking environments, RNEE = Returnee from non-English speaking environment

The Japanese teacher of English (JTE) and I, the assistant English teacher (AET), used the textbook, *This is Culture* (Kajiura & Goodmacher, 2005), to guide the Cross-Cultural Understanding (CCU) course. The topics covered over the study period from April to December included the following: hidden and visible culture, norms, stereotypes, identity, and values. The class met twice a week for 50 minutes.

## DATA COLLECTION

Responses from journals, class reflections, and interviews were analyzed to

find evidence of intercultural experience in narratives of selected returnee and non-returnee participants.

## Learner Journals and Class Reflections

Learners in this Cross-Cultural Understanding course used a journal to record their reflections of class activities. The learner journals were collected weekly, and the learners' reflections made up the sole content of the class newsletter to be read and discussed in the following week's classes. Concluding each class, learners were asked the following questions for their journals: (a) What did you like and dislike about class? (b) What did you learn in class? (c) What happened in the skit or group work today?

## Semi-structured Interviews

Participants were interviewed in July and December. Both times the same interview questions (see the Appendix) were followed up with questions based on the participant's individual reflections in his or her journal.

# RESULTS

Participants' journal reflections and interview responses displayed five aspects of ICC consistent with Byram's (2000) categories (as shown in Table 1). The following original student writings and quotations on selected topics are labeled *(a)*, *(b)*, *(c)*, *(d)*, or *(e)*, according to Byram's categories. Labels are placed before the student statement.

## Hidden and Visible Culture

In the first class, students examined beliefs towards material cultural objects. Participants observed a skit involving a critical incident where the JTE presented the AET with an American flag with a birthday message written on it. Critical incidents, according to Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009), represent an unsatisfactory interaction and a portrayal of the interaction to achieve a pedagogical objective. Selected participants' writings are consistent with all of Byram's (2000) categories.

> It was really interesting. *(d)* It reminded me of when my friend dropped the US flag and we had to burn it. (Ken REE)

> I was very surprised because *(d)*, *(c)* I had an experience like that before, I said, "It (to write on a Japanese flag) is okay? Really?" My homeroom teacher answered, "Yes, of course." However, I felt unhappy. (Yuka RNEE)

> I think Americans is very proud. *(e)* So I think it's very important to know a culture in different countries. I may do something get angry in foreign country if I don't know a culture. *(a)* I want to learn many cultures in a foreign county through Kevin's lesson. (Aya. NR)

In summary, the cumulative student narratives were consistent with four categories after observing a skit featuring a critical incident involving beliefs toward material culture. Notably, Aya, a non-returnee, was able to project into the future a possible misunderstanding she might have abroad, and have it serve as motivation to increase her knowledge of other cultures.

## Norms

In the third class, students studied the concept of folkways through a skit involving a critical incident where the AET ate a rice ball with a fork and knife instead of with his hands. The following narratives are consistent with all of Byram's (2000) categories. Included is an example of how one non-returnee's comment spurred further narratives.

At home I usually use spoons, forks, and knives. I don't really use chopsticks because I'm not sure why. But my mom always tells me to not do in public! *(b)* I didn't get why though. I didn't think it was weird. But now that I've seen someone eat something weirdly. I'll think I'll get it. *(d)* It's just not one of the folkways in Japan. (Asuka REE)

I thought to know other countries culture with fun stuff (ex., skit, video, activities) is very good. *(d)* In Europe, I forgot where, but people eat pizza with fork and knife. *(b)* At first, I thought it was very strange but when I eat pizza. Because the hand doesn't get dirty and the mouth doesn't get dirty. *(c)* From that day when there is a fork and a knife I use it. So I think I'm getting in another countries folkway is a good thing. (Yasu RNEE)

Kevin was foreigner. So it isn't strange Kevin used a fork and a knife to eat *onigiri*, it's culture and custom in Kevin's country. In Japan too, when Japanese eat foods they usually use chopsticks. But it may be strange side of foreigners. *(e)* I think we have to understand about foreign culture and norms, if we can understand that properly, we'll not felt strange. (Nahoko RNEE)

I enjoyed the skit very much! I had same situations. When I lived in Malaysia, I went to the Japanese school. That school has an international exchange programs. We invite the Malaysian students to the school and introduce Japanese culture and know each other. We make an *onigiri* to introduce our food culture. We made them and we began to eat. But they didn't eat them. I said to them, "You can eat rice ball now!" They asked, "But how?" I was surprised and I answered, "With your hand!" They looked very surprised!! *(b)* Now I know why they so surprised. *(a)* I think it is interesting to know other countries culture. (Yuka RNEE)

The following comment from a non-returnee developed a thread that spurred a debate and more narratives from returnees.

I have never seen a person eat an *onigiri* with knife and fork in Japan. But in a foreign country. It's generally to eat *onigiri* with knife and fork. We often say, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." *(c)*, *(e)* I think this word is important. If we go against the word, we may will be seen by strange eyes. So I think folkways each country is very important, and we have to understand each other. (Aya NR)

In the following class several students made comments related to the comment, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do."

Everyone has wonderful ideas. So I felt surprised: "When in Rome do as the Romans do." I don't think so it. I love country. So I want to reserve to my country culture. (Masa NR)

*(c)* I think we have to obey the rules in the country we live, because we live there. *(d)* Almost Indonesian people don't shake hand with the left hand. In Indonesia, there are many Muslims. And they think left hand is dirty hand. So they don't shake hand with left hand. I think we have to shake hand with right hand in Indonesia. *(c)* I don't believe left hand is dirty. But I think I should use right hand. (Nahoko RNEE)

I think we don't have to "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" because we should cherish own culture. *(c)* When I lived in Belgium, I spoke Japanese. I ate Japanese food, I took my shoes when I entered my house and I didn't kiss for a greeting. I think we don't have to do "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." But we mustn't hurt the other people. *(e)* Because if we don't understand each country and culture, we can led to intercultural problems, and we hurt the other people." (Kana RNEE)

In summary, after observing a critical incident involving food norms, participants shared an increased amount of narratives consistent with all of Byram's (2000) categories of ICC. Moreover, a comment from a non-returnee about following cultural norms developed into a thread where other learners shared their own narratives

## Identity

In weeks 10 and 11, students learned about the concept of identity. The whole class took an identity survey and discussed it with each other. The AET and JTE performed a skit involving a critical incident where the JTE disagreed with the AET over his personal views on his identity. The participants also listened to an audio narrative from a lady named Chiho concerning her bicultural identity. The following narratives are consistent with three of Byram's (2000) categories.

Same thing happened to me when I was living abroad. *(e)* Just like Chiho said, I act differently in front of Japanese people and Americans. I don't know why, but it's just been that was from the beginning when it happened to me was a little annoying because everyone said, "I thought Japanese were . . ." And I was like, well I'm not that all time. So I think she might have felt annoyed and a little frustrated like I did. (Asuka REE)

When we discussed about the newsletter, *(b)* I was surprised to know there is a person who loves Japan and has a strong cultural identity because I always thought Japanese were not so interested in their own culture. And *(e)* I totally sympathized with his/her story about being mistaken as a Korean. *(b)* At first, I thought people that called me Chinese or Korean were very rude and inconsiderate. Later on, I got used to being treated as a Korean or Chinese. Asian people may make the same mistake about European people. (Ai REE)

I think strong cultural identity is the best because knowing own's country is important. *(e)* If I don't know my own my country's culture, I can't answer the question when foreigner ask me about Japan. (Aya NR)

In short, participants were able to share their narratives about identity that demonstrated three categories consistently with ICC. Two returnee participants exhibited the frustration that can occur with cultural identity. Again, Aya's narrative projects into the future a possible misunderstanding and places importance on the knowledge of one's culture.

## Values

In week 16, students studied the concept of values. Learners took time in class listening to audio clips from people talking about values they had learned from their family rules. In class, learners shared their family rules and the values they had learned. The following narratives are consistent with four of Byram's (2000) categories. Knowledge of other cultures and intercultural communication are repeatedly observed.

*(d)* Each family has different rules . . . . So what they value differs from to other . . . . For example, my mom always told my brother and I to clean up after ourselves, have responsibility in what we do and say, think about others first and take actions, always be nice and kind, and most all, never tell a lie no matter how small it is . . . . Although all of these are natural to me, I appreciate my mom for teaching me these values. (Asuka REE)

*(a)* There was something that surprised me in Japan . . . . I was going to open the (taxi) door by yourself. I was confused. The door a taxi door opened automatically like invisible man opened the door. I was surprised about it. So I think *(e)* it is important to understand the rules for normal behavior before going to foreign countries. (Yuka RNEE)

*(d)* When I went to Vancouver, Canada, people don't make line before they get on the train and bus. So if I make a line earlier than other people, sometimes they get ahead of me. It was surprised to me. I think Japan is the politest country. But Canada hasn't a priority seat. Because giving own seat to elderly is common sense. Canada is kind, too. Rules and manner are different between countries." Taro (NR)

In summary, from these selected classes, after hearing narratives from the AET, fellow classmates, and other selected recordings, returnee and non-returnee participants were able to share their narratives that were consistent with all of Byram's (2000) categories of ICC.

## INTERVIEWS

Participants reflected on their class experience in interviews. In Table 3, some comments are categorized according to Byram's (2000) categories.

**Table 3. Student Interview Comments**

| Categories | Interview Statements |
|---|---|
| *Interest in other people's way of life (a)* | Hearing people's personal stories is more interesting. I think other students feel the same way. It is very interesting to hear other students experience in foreign countries . . . . It affects my mind. (Yuka RNEE)<br><br>I think the newsletter is better than reading your own journal, because the point of the CCU is to learn what others think. So the newsletter helps us. (Ai REE)<br><br>It (the newsletter) was good because what everyone in class was thinking. I could see how what I wrote was different from others. (Aya NR) |
| *Narratives and ICC - change of perspective (b)* | There is a lot of different people with different opinions, so I thought about things I have never thought before (Nahoko RNEE)<br><br>People's experience caused me to change from April. (Aya NR) |
| *Knowledge about another country and culture (d)* | Newsletter help me. Because other returnees in this class have many identities, so I think it is interesting. So I can know more about Chinese and other people. (Taro NR)<br><br>Returnees know the differences between Japanese culture and foreign cultures. (Aya NR) |
| *Knowledge about intercultural communication (e)* | I learned opinions from the newsletter, and I can their opinions, so it is interesting. For example, reading people experiences from China was really interesting. I could develop empathy or sympathy for others. (Nahoko RNEE)<br><br>Why (share my experience)? I guess it helps people understand more easier. I think it might help other people understand. (Yuka RNEE)<br><br>The discussions are good because we can practice our English in class and improve our understanding of CCU. (Ai REE) |

In short, students showed positive attitudes towards hearing other narratives. Comments mentioned that the narratives were both interesting and useful. The weekly newsletters were repeatedly mentioned as a helpful tool to learn about other learners' experiences.

## IMPLICATIONS

This study may imply that if monitoring ICC in the classroom setting is an objective, narratives can serve as a useful tool toward meeting that objective. First, ICC can be monitored through narratives. Byram's (2000) categories of ICC were displayed through students' narratives. Students' narratives showed interest, change of perspective, an ability to cope with living within a different culture, knowledge about other cultures, and about intercultural communication. Additionally, narrative tellings can be contagious (Sato, 2002) and can promote the sharing of narratives. When asked to reflect on class in their journal, students shared their narratives after reading narratives or observing the AET's narratives through skits. Finally, narratives can cite development of ICC. Participants' narratives displayed instances where their perspective changed, they increased their knowledge of another country and cultures, and increased their knowledge

about intercultural communication.

In conclusion, both returnees and non-returnees shared narratives that demonstrate ICC. Returnees' narratives by far outnumbered the non-returnees' narratives. Further studies are needed in which participants can engage in self-assessment of ICC. Learners could assess and classify their writing in a portfolio. Additional investigations into the use of online discussion platforms where learners share narratives and comment on them outside of class are also needed in order to promote an increase in discussion threads and learner autonomy.

## THE AUTHOR

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# APPENDIX

**Interview Questions**

1. Walk me through your experience in this class.
2. Talk to me about sharing stories in class.
3. How did you feel about sharing your experiences in class?
4. Could you explain to me why you wrote about your personal experience in the journal writings?
5. Did seeing personal stories in the newsletter help you think of your own experience? Please explain.
6. Talk to me about your attitude towards cross-culture understanding from April until now.
7. Tell me about the skits that Kevin and "F" sensei performed in class
8. What helped you understand how others feel?
9. What could help us improve this course in the future?

# Teach Bilingually or Monolingually? Teacher Use of the Students' L1 in the Classroom

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Teacher use of the student's L1 in EFL classrooms is a controversial issue with the preference among native English-speaking teachers toward monolingual classrooms using only English. Although trained to use only English in the classroom, the author found that as his ability in the student's L1 improved, his interactions with students were decreasingly in English and that the students seemed less likely to use English. An action research project was initiated to see if the teacher no longer used the student's L1, this would increase their use of English. Two Japanese university English courses were selected. In one course the teacher used both languages and in the other used only English. It was found that students preferred their teacher to use both languages and used English more in the bilingual classroom, while many students did not attempt to communicate at all in English in the monolingual classroom. An "English first" policy is suggested for use in the classroom, with the teacher switching to the students' L1 and allowing students to do so, when necessary.

## INTRODUCTION

Teacher use of the student's L1 in the EFL classroom is a controversial issue (Brown, 2000; Freeman & Freeman, 1998) with the preference among native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) toward monolingual classrooms using only the target language (Medgyes, 2001). In fact, many teaching methodologies specifically require the teacher to use only the target language (Celce-Murcia, 2001; Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Yet teachers working in an EFL environment often find the "English only" policies restrictive (Burden, 2000) and struggle with when and how to use the students' L1.

My first teaching job in 1998 was at an English conversation school in Japan. With no background in language teaching or education in general, I was excited to begin my career with a week of training. Throughout the week our trainers insisted on one rule: no matter what, never use the student's first language (in this case Japanese) in the classroom. Later, during graduate school in the United States, I found myself teaching in a pre-academic program at a university where the "English only" rule was enforced in the classroom as a matter of policy. In this instance, not to prevent the teachers from using a language other than English, as the students were from all parts of the world, but to prevent the students from using their native languages in the classroom.

I found myself back in Japan after graduate school working in tertiary education where, in contrast to my prior experience, I was required to use

Japanese for communicating with the administration and faculty; thus, I made a serious effort to learn Japanese. As my Japanese language ability improved, I began to notice that I was using it in class more. At first, I spoke Japanese with the students regarding administrative matters or to "fast-track" instructions for various language-learning activities used in the classroom, but I began to notice that my students would speak to me in Japanese almost exclusively, using little to no English. I reached a watershed moment when I approached a group of students enthusiastically doing a speaking activity in English, and encouraged by their enthusiasm, I participated in the activity in Japanese. This led to a "crisis of faith," as my previous training and experience was rooted in "English only" methodologies and practices. Although I was trained to use these methodologies, I found that each year as my ability in the students' L1 improved, my comments were increasingly in the students' L1 instead of English. Furthermore, it seemed to me that my students were less likely to use English and more likely to communicate with me in Japanese, both for administrative purposes and during classroom activities. I wondered if a teacher's use of the students' L1 decreased a student's motivation to use English.

Reflecting upon this, I decided to start an action research project to see if by no longer using the student's L1 myself in the classroom, their use of English would increase.

## METHODOLOGY

Two low-level, first-year compulsory English classes at a Japanese university were chosen for the project: one class in the Economics Department on Monday mornings at 9:20 a.m., and one class in the Business Administration Department on Wednesday mornings also at 9:20 a.m. The Monday class was designated as the "monolingual" class, where the instructor spoke only English. The Wednesday morning class was designated as the "bilingual" class, where the instructor spoke both English and Japanese. These classes were chosen because they were two classes similar to each other in terms of student English abilities, general academic abilities, physical location (both in the same classroom), etc.

Over the course of the 14-week semester, data was collected in both classes by two methods: nonreactive behavior observation (Kellehear, 1993) and a student survey.

The behavior observation occurred during the normal course of classroom teaching and activities. The students' behavior was observed, specifically when and how often they interacted with the teacher using either their L1 (Japanese) or the target language (English), and their behavior was recorded using the jotting method and a predetermined behavior checklist (Zieman, 2012). (See Appendix A for an example of how data was collected.)

The student survey was an end-of-semester class evaluation survey. Students were asked to express their agreement with eight statements in Japanese, four regarding their general opinions of the class. These included questions regarding their opinions of the textbook, difficulty of homework, etc. (See Appendix B for a list of the survey statements.) Additionally, the students were asked to express their degree of agreement with four statements concerned with the study. The

monolingual class saw these four statements:

1. I am happy that my teacher spoke only English.
2. I learned more because my teacher spoke only English.
3. Because my teacher speaks only English, I tried to speak to him in English.
4. I want my teacher to speak both English and Japanese in class.

Students in the bilingual class saw these four statements:

1. I am happy that my teacher speaks both Japanese and English.
2. I learned more because my teacher speaks both English and Japanese.
3. Because my teacher speaks both Japanese and English, I tried to speak to him in English.
4. I want my teacher to speak only English in class.

# RESULTS

## Behavior Observation

Over 200 teacher-student interactions were recorded by behavior observation. In the bilingual class, the students were observed to use English and Japanese in a roughly 50:50 ratio. Of the 102 interactions observed, 52 times the student spoke to the teacher in Japanese, and 50 times they spoke with the teacher in English. For example, when asked if they had done their homework, students responded with "Here you are" (handing over their paper) or "Sorry, I didn't do it" in English or phrases like, "*onegashimasu*" [please] or "*gomennasai*" [sorry] in Japanese.

In the monolingual class, students interacted with the teacher in English less than 20% of the time. Of the 103 interactions recorded, 19 were in English, 47 were in Japanese, and in the remaining 37 interactions, students reacted non-verbally or refused to interact at all. For example, when asked for their homework, students handed it to the teacher, or raised their arms in a cross, indicating they had not done it, and in several cases, the student turned away from the teacher.

Two particular after-class interactions stood out. First, in the bilingual class, a student came during office hours with a page of notes in English to explain that her grandmother was ill, and that she would be away from class for several weeks while she went back to her hometown to be with her family. In the monolingual class, a student who missed the mid-term exam came to the podium after class with a friend and proceeded to have a conversation with their friend in Japanese in front of the teacher/researcher about what he should say to the teacher. His friend and he concluded that because he didn't know how to explain in English that he had overslept that he would be better off speaking with the teacher the next week. The student never spoke with the teacher on the subject of the missed midterm and subsequently took a zero. (It should be noted that class and department policy at the time was no make-up exams for students with unexcused absences, and speaking with the teacher would have only resulted in a

reaffirmation of the policy that oversleeping was an unexcused absence. It is therefore difficult to know if the student didn't attempt to speak with the teacher the next week because he didn't know what to say in English or if he knew the policy and knew it wouldn't matter.)

### End-of-Semester Class Evaluation Survey

Of the participants, 37 students turned in the survey for the bilingual class and 34 students submitted the survey for the monolingual class.

In the bilingual class, students mostly agreed or strongly agreed that they were happy that their teacher spoke both languages, and that they learned more because of it. They mostly "somewhat agreed" that the teacher's use of both languages inspired them to speak in English, and they disagreed that they wanted a teacher who spoke only English.

In the monolingual class, students were equally spilt between agreeing and disagreeing about being happy that the teacher only spoke English. The students mostly "somewhat agreed" that they learned more and were inspired to speak with the teacher in English because the teacher did not speak Japanese. Finally, they mostly agreed or somewhat agreed that they wanted a teacher who spoke both English and Japanese. (See Tables 1 and 2 for the exact breakdown of student responses.)

**Table 1. Student Responses from the Bilingual Class**

| Statement | Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Happy | 9 | 18 | 9 | 1 | - | 37 |
| Learned more | 8 | 14 | 11 | 4 | - | 37 |
| Tried English | 3 | 10 | 16 | 8 | - | 37 |
| Only English | - | - | 3 | 24 | 10 | 37 |

**Table 2. Student Responses from the Monolingual Class**

| Statement | Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Happy | 1 | 8 | 8 | 16 | 1 | 34 |
| Learned more | 1 | 12 | 15 | 6 | - | 34 |
| Tried English | 3 | 10 | 16 | 5 | - | 34 |
| Only English | 7 | 4 | 14 | 6 | 3 | 34 |

## DISCUSSION

As this was an action research project mainly concerned with the issue of whether or not the teacher should be using the students' L1 in the classroom, the following discussion will focus on this issue.

**Behavior Observation**

More instances of students using the target language to communicate with the teacher were observed in the bilingual class. This coupled with the disturbingly high number of students disengaging from the teacher and not attempting to communicate at all in the monolingual class clearly indicates that it is better for the teacher to be using both languages in the classroom. Furthermore, if the two standout interactions observed are indicative of the students' attitudes regarding communicating with the teacher for important issues such as attendance, the teacher should make the students feel comfortable communicating with the teacher.

**End-of-Semester Class Evaluation Survey**

The survey data from both classes seems to indicate the students in the bilingual class were happy that their teacher used both languages, and the students in the monolingual class were unhappy.

The majority of responses to both surveys regarding the statement connecting the teacher's use of the students' L1 (or lack thereof) with their own use of the target language were neutral and fell in the middle with the students "somewhat agreeing." It seems that the students did not consciously make a connection between the teacher's abilities and their own. This was also true of the statement concerning their belief that their teacher's use of Japanese was related to their ability to learn English.

The responses to the final question on the student survey seem to indicate that students want a bilingual teacher. Students in the bilingual class overwhelmingly indicated this, and the mixed/neutral responses in the monolingual class may be a result of the students not knowing what having a bilingual teacher is like.

Taken in total, the survey data seems to indicate that these students, in this context, want a bilingual teacher.

## CONCLUSION

As an action research project primarily concerned with whether or not I should be using the students' L1 in the classroom, my take away from this project has been three things: First, my classroom needs to be a bilingual classroom that allows both the students and the teacher to use Japanese; second, that although Japanese is allowed in the classroom, English should be the primary language and students should be encouraged to use English first and then, if need be, especially for administrative matters, use Japanese; and finally, in order to mitigate the need for Japanese for instructions, procedures, and administrative purposes, students need to be explicitly taught and given the opportunity to practice classroom English.

## THE AUTHOR

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# APPENDIX A

## Scanned Example of Behavior Checklist with Jotting Method Notes

Class: (MONO) BI                     Week ⁶__

| | Target | L1 | Non-Verbal |
|---|---|---|---|
| Count | ||⁄| | ╫⁄ | ⁄⁄ |
| Notes | "Thank you<br>"How are you | "おねがい | |

Notes:

After class student asked
how many times can be absent
in Japanese... ended with
pointing to Attendance Card and
"How many?"
Friend helped

## APPENDIX B

### Survey Statements in English for the Bilingual Class

1. This class was difficult.
2. The textbook was difficult.
3. The homework was difficult.
4. I understood what I needed to do in class.
5. I am happy that my teacher speaks both Japanese and English.
6. I learned more because my teacher speaks both English and Japanese.
7. Because my teacher speaks both Japanese and English, I tried to speak to him in English.
8. I want my teacher to speak only English in class.

### Survey Statements in English for the Monolingual Class

1. This class was difficult.
2. The textbook was difficult.
3. The homework was difficult.
4. I understood what I needed to do in class.
5. I am happy that my teacher speaks only English.
6. I learned more because my teacher spoke only English.
7. Because my teacher speaks only English, I tried to speak to him in English.
8. I want my teacher to speak both English and Japanese in class.

### Survey Statement in Japanese for the Bilingual Class

1. この授業は難しかった
2. 教科書は難しかった
3. 宿題は難しかった
4. 授業で何をすればよいかわかった
5. 先生が日本語と英語の両方を話したので嬉しかった
6. 先生が日本語と英語の両方を話したのでより多くを学んだ
7. 先生が日本語と英語の両方を話したので、先生に英語で話すよう努力した
8. 授業中、先生には英語だけで話してほしい

### Survey Statements in Japanese for the Monolingual Class

1. この授業は難しかった
2. 教科書は難しかった
3. 宿題は難しかった
4. 授業で何をすればよいかわかった
5. 先生が英語しか話さないので嬉しかった
6. 先生が英語しか話さないのでより多くを学んだ
7. 先生が英語しか話さないので、先生に英語で話すよう努力した
8. 授業中、先生には英語と日本語の両方を話してほしい

# Analysis of EFL Learners' Task Strategies for a Listening Comprehension Test

## Huei-Chun Teng

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This study aims to investigate EFL learners' task strategies for a listening comprehension test. Participants were 104 freshmen from a university in northern Taiwan. After taking a standardized listening proficiency test, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire on listening test-taking strategies. Interviews were then held with thirty of the participants to probe how they perceived their test-taking strategies. Results show that "test-wise" has the highest average frequency among the five categories of listening test-taking strategies. The strategy most often used by the participants among the 42 test-taking strategies is "I used the process of elimination." Proficient EFL listeners used significantly more top-down and affective strategies than did less proficient listeners. Through providing insights into the response behaviors prompted by the listening tasks, the study can facilitate our understanding of EFL listeners' test-taking strategies.

## INTRODUCTION

For the past decades, there has been growing interest in how second/foreign language learners solve their learning and communication problems. The research of learning strategies has gained prominence in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). However, Vann and Abraham (1990) indicate that the way strategies are used by learners in assessment tasks remains neglected. Moreover, second language (L2) test validation has been mostly focused on the outcomes of testing, such as item performance, test reliability, the correlation of subtests, the relationship between the test and other tests or criterion variables, and the effects of different test methods. As claimed by Cohen (2006), little is known about what the test takers are actually doing to produce answers to questions. Test-taking behaviors bring together test awareness, knowing how to get started, test-wiseness, and the extent to which the test-taker puts this knowledge into practice to complete the task (Paris & Winograd, 1990; Paris & van Kraayenoord, 1992). The test-taking processes that the test-takers have selected and are conscious of can be defined as test-taking strategies (Cohen & Upton, 2007). According to Nikolov (2006), test-taking strategies refer to the strategies learners apply while solving language test tasks. They can be regarded simply as learner strategies applied to the area of assessment, and belong to a common set of strategies activated for the task encountered (Cohen, 1998).

Since strategic behavior has hardly been explored in L2 listening tests (Macaro, Graham, & Vanderplank, 2007), it is worth investigating the issue by examining the test-taking strategies utilized in an EFL listening test. The purpose

of the present study is to investigate the test-taking strategies used by EFL listeners in Taiwan. This study mainly addresses the following research questions: (1) What strategies do EFL learners' use when they take a listening test? (2) Are there significant differences in the test-taking strategies used by proficient and less proficient EFL listeners? (3) What are EFL listeners' perceptions of their test-taking strategies?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In accordance with the purpose of the current research, a number of recent studies examining the strategies used for listening tasks are reviewed below. Cohen (1993) proposed three categories of test-taking strategies: language learner strategies, test-management strategies, and test-wiseness strategies. Language learner strategies, in the present study, mainly include the ways that respondents operationalize the basic skills of listening (e.g., predicting incoming information). As for test-management strategies, they are the strategies for responding meaningfully to the test items and tasks (Cohen, 1993). According to Allan (1992), test-wiseness strategies refer to strategies for using knowledge of test formats and other peripheral information to answer test items without going through the expected linguistic and cognitive processes.

Teng (1998) investigated the EFL listening comprehension strategies used by college freshmen in Taiwan. Findings showed that the strategy "translating" was most frequently used, followed by "repeating." In addition, a study conducted by Yi'an (1998) looked into the test-taking processes of Chinese EFL listeners for taking a multiple-choice (MC) task. Results showed that linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge were activated in a parallel manner with input of various difficulty levels and that the MC method posed threats to the construct validity of the test. In Taguchi's (2001) study, 54 Japanese college EFL students took an English listening test and completed a strategy questionnaire immediately after the test. Findings revealed a significant difference between more proficient and less proficient listeners in their perceived use of top-down strategies. Yoshizawa (2002) examined the text-processing strategies that Japanese learners reported using when they were engaged in reading or listening tasks in EFL classrooms and testing situations. Three factors emerged from the test-taking strategy data: comprehension and monitoring strategies, compensatory strategies, and strategies related to attention and task assessment.

In addition, Douglas and Hegelheimer (2007) investigated the strategies and sources of knowledge test-takers used to respond to New TOEFL listening test tasks. Results revealed four types of strategies for approaching the response task: recalling elements of the test input, reviewing the response options in order, making a hypothesis about the likely answer, and referring to notes before reviewing options. Furthermore, Chang (2008) examined the listening strategies of Taiwanese EFL college students with high and low levels of anxiety under four listening tasks. Results indicated that previewing questions had a greater impact on listening strategy use than the other types of support. Another study by Chang (2009) found that participants' listening performance had a strong correlation with the strategy used before the test-taking phase and that they were able to

adjust their strategy use based on the change in task situations. Recently, Wagner (2010) has examined how ESL test-takers interact with a video listening test. He found that the test-takers viewed the video texts less than half of the time, and there was a moderate negative correlation between viewing rate and test performance. Nikolov (2006) suggested that future research on test-taking strategies should also include listening tasks to explore similarities to and differences from other skills. Since there have been limited number of studies which investigate test-taking strategies in the EFL listening context, the current research aims to help fill this void by examining Taiwanese EFL listeners' test-taking strategies.

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

Participants in the present study were 104 college freshmen from a university in northern Taiwan. The participants, aged 18-20, had studied English formally in school for at least eight years. They needed to take a required course on English listening in the first year of university. Since the study took listening proficiency into account, the participants were divided into two groups, proficient and less proficient EFL listeners, based on their scores on the listening section of the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) intermediate level, described in the following section.

### Instrument

The instruments used in the present study included a listening test, a questionnaire on test-taking strategies, and an interview guide. The first instrument was the listening test of the intermediate General English Proficiency Test (GEPT). The GEPT of intermediate level is developed mainly based on the English ability of high school graduates in Taiwan. The listening test consisted of three parts: picture description, answering questions, and conversations. The test included 45 items, and the total test-taking time was approximately 30 minutes.

Another instrument was a strategy questionnaire on listening test-taking, which included 42 Likert-scaled items. The questionnaire was mainly based on the strategy questionnaires designed by Taguchi (2001) and Cohen and Upton (2007). The 42 items were divided into six categories: top-down, bottom-up, repair, affective, test-wise strategies, and difficulty elements (see Table 1). On a five-point scale ranging from "strongly agree (5)" to "strongly disagree (1)," participants circled the response which indicated what they did during the listening test. In addition, an interview guide was developed based on the questions in Cohen and Upton's (2007) study and Chang's (2009) study. There were five questions to further explore the participants' perceptions of their test-taking listening strategies.

**Table 1. Specifications of the Questionnaire**

| Strategies (42 items total) | Item Number |
|---|---|
| I. Top-down | 8, 12, 21, 24, 25, 34, 35 |
| II. Bottom-up | 6, 7, 11, 15, 17, 18, 23, 27 |
| III. Repair | 3, 10, 14, 22, 28, 29, 31, 33 |
| IV. Affective | 1, 2, 9, 19, 20, 26, 32, 36 |
| V. Test-wise | 39, 40, 41, 42 |
| VI. Difficulty Elements | 4, 5, 13, 16, 30, 37, 38 |

## Procedures

The study was conducted in the class hour of the required freshman course English Oral Practice. Before the test began, participants were instructed on how to take the listening test, and how to answer the strategy questionnaire. After the listening test was played, participants were asked to complete the questionnaire on listening test-taking strategies. They were reminded to think about the listening test they had just taken while responding to the questionnaire items. Finally, an interview was held with twelve of the participants to probe how they perceived their test-taking strategies.

## Data Analysis

The total score on the GEPT listening test is 120, and the average for the whole sample was calculated. Those who obtained scores above the mean were in the group of proficient listeners, and those who scored below the mean were the less proficient listeners. For the scoring of test-taking strategy questionnaires, the scale range for each item was 1–5. Frequency counting and a *t*-test were conducted to analyze participants' responses to the strategy questionnaire. As for participants' answers to the interview, they were not analyzed statistically, but were transcribed and categorized according to the five main questions in the interview guide.

## RESULTS

### Analysis of Participants' Use of Test-Taking Listening Strategies

The main purpose of the current study was to systematically investigate the test-taking strategies used by EFL listeners in Taiwan. Based on the frequency count for each item, the results of the test-taking strategy questionnaire completed by participants are described below. First, Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the five strategy categories used by the participants. Among the five strategy categories, "test-wise" had the highest average frequency. Following in order were "top-down," "repair," and "bottom-up." "Affective" had the lowest average frequency.

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Listening Test-Taking Strategies**

| Category | N | K | Mean | SD | Min | Max | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Top-down | 104 | 7 | 3.55 | 0.51 | 1.86 | 5.00 | 2 |
| Bottom-up | 104 | 8 | 3.38 | 0.51 | 1.50 | 4.75 | 4 |
| Repair | 104 | 8 | 3.46 | 0.31 | 2.50 | 4.25 | 3 |
| Affective | 104 | 8 | 3.28 | 0.53 | 1.88 | 4.50 | 5 |
| Test-wise | 104 | 4 | 3.97 | 0.55 | 2.50 | 5.00 | 1 |

K: number in each strategy category

In addition, Table 3 lists the five strategies most often used by the participants among the 42 listening test-taking strategies. Results show that "I used the process of elimination" was the most frequently used strategy, and next was "When I didn't understand something, I guessed at the meaning from the context" followed by "While listening, I guessed at the meaning from the vocabulary I knew."

**Table 3. Five Listening Test-Taking Strategies Most Often Used by Participants**

| Category | Test-Taking Strategy | Rank |
|---|---|---|
| Test-wise | I used the process of elimination. | 1 |
| Repair | When I didn't understand something, I guessed at the meaning from the context. | 2 |
| Repair | While listening, I guessed at the meaning from the vocabulary I know. | 3 |
| Test-wise | I used clues from other items to answer an item under consideration. | 4 |
| Bottom-up | While listening, I tried to listen for familiar vocabulary. | 5 |

Finally, Table 4 lists the five strategies least often used by the participants among 42 listening test-taking strategies. Results indicate that "When I didn't understand something, I lost my concentration and couldn't hear the rest of the conversation" had the lowest average frequency, and next to last was "While listening, I did something special to relax," preceded by "During the test, I tried to forget I was taking a test."

**Table 4. Five Listening Test-Taking Strategies Least Often Used by Participants**

| Category | Test-Taking Strategies | Rank |
|---|---|---|
| Repair | When I didn't understand something, I lost my concentration and couldn't hear the rest of the conversation. | 42 |
| Affective | While listening, I did something special to relax. | 41 |
| Affective | During the test, I tried to forget I was taking a test. | 40 |
| Bottom-up | I focused on the grammatical structures. | 39 |
| Repair | When I didn't understand something, I gave up trying to comprehend. | 38 |

## Difference in Test-Taking Strategies between Proficient and Less Proficient Listeners

One of the purposes of the study is to examine the difference between proficient and less proficient EFL listeners in their use of test-taking strategies

(see Table 5). Among the five categories of test-taking strategies, proficient EFL listeners used significantly more top-down and affective strategies than less proficient listeners did. Furthermore, both groups had approximate use of test-wise strategies while less proficient listeners employed slightly more bottom-up strategies.

**Table 5. *t*-test Results for Test-Taking Strategy Categories of Proficient and Less Proficient Listeners**

| Strategy Category | Proficient | | | Less Proficient | | | Mean Difference | *t* | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | Mean | SD | N | Mean | SD | | | |
| Top-down | 52 | 3.67 | 0.45 | 52 | 3.44 | 0.55 | 0.23 | 2.32 | 0.02* |
| Bottom-up | 52 | 3.33 | 0.57 | 52 | 3.42 | 0.46 | -0.09 | -0.88 | 0.38 |
| Repair | 52 | 3.46 | 0.33 | 52 | 3.45 | 0.30 | 0.03 | 0.20 | 0.85 |
| Affective | 52 | 3.48 | 0.50 | 52 | 3.09 | 0.49 | 0.39 | 4.00 | 0.00** |
| Test-wise | 52 | 3.97 | 0.39 | 52 | 3.70 | 0.38 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Difficulty | 52 | 3.88 | 0.39 | 52 | 3.70 | 1.12 | 0.38 | 2.40 | 0.18 |

$*p < .05$   $**p < .01$

Moreover, Table 6 indicates that there were significant differences in six strategies between proficient and less proficient listeners. Among them, the average frequencies of five strategies used by proficient listeners were significantly higher than those used by less proficient listeners. On the other hand, there was only one strategy adopted significantly more often by less proficient listeners than by proficient listeners: "I used Chinese partially (e.g., for word translation)." The test-taking strategy with the highest significant difference was "While listening, I did something special to relax."

**Table 6. *t*-test results for Individual Test-taking Strategies of Proficient and Less Proficient Listeners**

| Strategy | Proficient | | | Less Proficient | | | Mean Difference | *t* | *p*-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | Mean | SD | N | Mean | SD | | | |
| B3 | 52 | 3.19 | 1.22 | 52 | 3.65 | 1.10 | -0.46 | -2.02 | 0.04 |
| A1 | 52 | 3.96 | 0.68 | 52 | 3.58 | 0.80 | 0.38 | 2.63 | 0.01 |
| A4 | 52 | 3.00 | 0.91 | 52 | 2.31 | 0.90 | 0.69 | 3.91 | 0.00 |
| A5 | 52 | 3.84 | 0.89 | 52 | 3.31 | 1.02 | 0.56 | 2.98 | 0.00 |
| A6 | 52 | 3.27 | 0.93 | 52 | 2.67 | 1.08 | 0.60 | 3.02 | 0.00 |
| A8 | 52 | 3.21 | 1.26 | 52 | 2.73 | 1.12 | 0.48 | 2.06 | 0.04 |

B3: I used Chinese partially (e.g., for word translation).
A1: During the test, I kept encouraging myself.
A4: While listening, I did something special to relax.
A5: I kept saying to myself, "I can pass the test."
A6: Before the test, I did something to relax.
A8: I listened to English before the test in order to get mentally prepared for the test.

## DISCUSSION

In the current study, results indicate that "test-wise" had the highest average frequency among the five categories of test-taking listening strategies. Based on

Allen (1992), test-wise strategies refer to the strategies for using knowledge of test formats and other peripheral information to answer test items without going through the expected linguistic and cognitive processes. Amer's research (1993) found that the experimental group of EFL students who were taught test-taking strategies outperformed the control group. The research suggests support for training EFL teachers to provide instruction in test-taking strategies. No doubt, among the 42 listening test-taking strategies, the participants adopted most often the test-wise strategy "I used the process of elimination" and very often employed the strategy 'I used clues in other items to answer an item under consideration." This most frequent use of test-wise strategies implies that the participants tended to be more strongly motivated in a testing situation and are concerned about the accuracy of their listening comprehension. As a result, regardless of their EFL listening proficiency levels, both the proficient and less proficient listeners chose to employ the most time-efficient test-wise strategies.

In addition, in terms of the "difficulty" category in the questionnaire, the item "It was difficult to keep up with the speed of the tape" was the second most common difficulty for the participants when they took the listening test. This result is in accordance with previous research (Flowerdew & Miller, 1996; Hasan, 2000; Teng, 2002) which proposed speed of delivery as a significant factor for L2 listening comprehension. L2 listeners find it difficult to understand well if speakers speak too fast. When encountering breakdown during the process of listening comprehension, they often hope that the speakers could speak a bit more slowly.

Among the five categories of test-taking strategies, proficient EFL listeners used significantly more top-down and affective strategies than did less proficient listeners. The results confirm Taguchi's (2001) findings, which revealed a significant difference between proficient and less proficient listeners in their use of top-down strategies. Moreover, the current study found that proficient listeners employed significantly more affective strategies. Before and during the listening test, they kept encouraging themselves, did something special to relax, and listened to English in order to get mentally prepared for the test. On the other hand, the only test-taking strategy adopted significantly more often by less proficient listeners was the bottom-up strategy "I used Chinese partially." With deficient English linguistic knowledge, these participants chose rely heavily on their L1, Chinese. These findings add to the limited body of existing literature by suggesting that top-down and affective strategies might be factors contributing to effective EFL listening test performance.

With regard to participants' interview responses, they answered that they would scan the questions first so that it was easier to predict what the speaker would say. This result supports Chang's (2008) study, which proposed that previewing questions had a greater impact on listening strategy use than the other types of support. Douglas and Hegelheimer (2007) also found that the New TOEFL listening test-takers approached the response task by making a hypothesis about the likely answers. The study results confirm the facilitating effect of question preview on taking EFL listening tests. By previewing the questions first, L2 listeners can focus on *wh*-words, then listen carefully for the possible answers and activate their background knowledge to make assumptions to see if the answer is appropriate and reasonable.

Finally, all interviewees considered test-taking listening strategies to be useful. Test-taking strategies made them feel more relaxed, and they could answer questions more quickly because they knew the test formats. When they took the listening test, they adopted some strategies to reduce their listening anxiety, and they had more confidence in the process of listening. Therefore, it seems that test-taking strategies can offer L2 listeners such affective benefits as the sense of security and comfort, in addition to encoding and retaining functions.

## CONCLUSION

Results of the current study show that "test-wise" has the highest average frequency among the five categories of test-taking listening strategies. The strategy most often used by the participants among the 42 test-taking strategies is "I used the process of elimination." Proficient EFL listeners used significantly more top-down and affective strategies than less proficient listeners did. In participants' opinions, test-taking listening strategies benefit them a lot. Their listening anxieties are reduced, and they are more confident when they take the listening test. Through the research findings, the study can provide empirical descriptions for the research literature of test-taking listening strategies by investigating the test-taking strategies used by EFL listeners. The study can also help college students effectively improve their performance in EFL listening tests through the understanding of their test-taking strategies. Last but not the least, since practice makes perfect, Taiwanese college students who want to get high scores on EFL listening tests need to practice test-taking strategies more by themselves.

## THE AUTHOR

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# A Content Creation Tool for SLA: An Introduction to Machinima

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Machinima, the use of video games to create cinematic productions, is still a largely untapped medium to most educators. The negative stereotype that using video games in class is unsuitable for the classroom conceals the advantages such tools have in a learning environment. When correctly used, machinima can readily become a cost-efficient and adaptable tool in many educational settings. Furthermore, machinima holds some benefits over traditional video production. By utilizing a few general tools for video production and several specific to machinima production, an educator can begin making machinima without much difficulty. The entire machinima experience revolves around the game an educator works with. As a result, educators need to consider key factors for choosing games for use in machinima with regard to curricular and educator contexts.

## INTRODUCTION

Machinima, a combination of the words "machine" and "cinema," refers to the making of cinematic works with video games. Initially, machinima started out as "largely demonstrations of gameplay made by recording actual matches" of the video game DOOM (Lowood, 2006, p. 29). Players used these videos to better their performance in the game by viewing how skilled players played. Despite its origins, machinima has evolved so that not only gameplay footage but also movies, serialized dramas, and other creative genres are common. Though machinima has not always been widely popular, the medium has gained considerable attention due to the release of several popular, well-made videos, such as *Red vs. Blue*, and the availability of tools to create these.

Despite machinima's successes as a medium, use of machinima in the classroom is still limited. Chik (2011) notes that, despite researchers' calls for adoption of video games in learning, educators may feel reluctant to use such content due to a concern for its appropriateness in an educational context or to a lack of knowledge about the games. According to Van Eck (2006), most research has focused on the potential effectiveness of games in education rather than on how to use games effectively and integrate them into the classroom. Indeed, "the current lack of guidelines and availability of best practice recommendations for educational use of virtual worlds [...] hinders wider implementation" (Barwell, Moore, & Weller, 2011, p. 765). In contrast, educators recognize the usefulness in the classroom of video sources like YouTube or movies to convey lesson points, and scholars have given clear guidelines about the best types of films for learning

and methods for classroom integration (Bueno, 2009). Educators may struggle to find a video that perfectly meets curricular requirements and best-practice guidelines so it may prove more expedient and effective to create their own video for class using machinima. This paper does not argue that one method among the many video production methods or video content services is wholly superior to the others, but rather it seeks to describe tools, practices, and considerations necessary to ensure machinima is a viable and strong option for educational video production. Machinima offers educators a powerful and flexible way to make video for their specific teaching context when they consider carefully some criteria for selecting games and the available resources.

## COMPARISON WITH STANDARD VIDEO PRODUCTION

Production of machinima does have several benefits that more traditional approaches lack. Understanding the strengths of machinima-making can yield insights into how to make and use it effectively in the classroom. However, it is important to note that the benefits rely on game selection, which is a central consideration for making video with games.

Machinima affords easier access to settings and props than traditional video methods. Commercial off-the-shelf games have a significant amount of variety even among similar genres. The Grand Theft Auto series uses realistic cities; Skyrim has a fantasy themed environment; and Fallout New Vegas takes place in a barren desert. The wide variety of props and settings allow an educator to make videos beyond the constraints of their immediate environment. By simply opening the game, the educator has access to otherwise expensive or unattainable resources. With traditional video methods, the educator can only use the nearby environment, limiting the potential setting. Similarly, the educator would have to buy or borrow props, potentially wasting a lot of time and money, or risk the sparse environment affecting clarity or interest.

Depending on the game chosen, machinima-makers can work alone or in groups. One person could possibly produce an entire scene or film alone. Identifying which scenes necessitate group work means that an educator can make individual scenes quickly while group scenes get created at convenient times for the whole group. In fact, one can modify the game content to bolster the ability to produce scenes individually. Voice actors can record dialogue at their convenience, separately, and producers can place the dialogue into the video. In order to create a good quality video using traditional methods, educators need people to act a part, record the scene, hold a boom microphone, and perhaps perform other roles, leading to an increased group size.

After finishing video production, machinima offers a far easier ability to revise than video made with traditional methods. Given the aforementioned access to the props and the flexible grouping, getting the necessary items to recast a scene in the game with the appropriate actors should be easy. If the educator thought some dialogue too hard for students, only the target actor's dialogue would need rerecording, not the entire scene. A downside of machinima is that often the mouths of characters don't move. However, this same limitation avoids having to worry about characters' mouths synching up with the sound. Rerecording dialogue

for a traditional video runs the risk of the mouths not syncing with the language. Also, by saving a game and labeling the saves appropriately, one can maintain the scene and all necessary props in place rather than having to reset them at the same time under the same conditions.

## TOOLS

Making machinima requires several key tools. Educators must use a screen capture program to record the game from their computer or console. The screen capture program will record the events happening on the screen as the educator interacts with the game world. Some games, such as the Sims or Halo 4, have their own capture function in the game, but other games necessitate the use of an outside program like Fraps, a common and free capture program. Once an educator captures game footage, they need a video editor to assemble, transition between, and add effects to the video clips. Pinnacle VideoSpin, Windows Movie Maker, and iMovie are free alternatives to programs that cost between 210,000-525,000 KRW (200-500 USD), yet they still have the core functionality necessary to make a decent machinima. An audio capture program like Audacity can assist with recording sound files, which the educator can place with the corresponding video clip in the video editor.

For those who prefer more functionality or control over the product, professional-grade programs offer more options that can produce higher-quality machinima. While a simple video editor may offer basic transitions, sound control, or text features, more advanced programs like Adobe Premiere Pro give near complete control over a project to the educator who knows how to use the program. However, advanced programs require a longer time to learn with more possibility for unintentional errors to occur. If one approaches Premiere Pro with the same mindset as a free alternative, one may inadvertently ruin their project by using incorrect settings or using the program incorrectly. Whether or not an educator uses traditional or machinima video methods, the complicated use of a video or sound editor does not differ much. However, working with the game engine, the set of programmed rules that run a game, or the character models may prove a challenge unique to machinima. Programs like SourceForge or Gary's Mod allow for manipulation of the animations that happen within a certain time frame among other things. The time to learn advanced programs allow for greater control over the project at a cost of a steep learning curve.

## GAME SELECTION CRITERIA

While price and control may guide selection of general tools, one must select a game for machinima production with attention to multiple criteria. The game is the central component of the machinima making process. In selecting a game, the educator chooses not only the basic look and feel of the video but also the possible production methods. Games with particular characteristics lend themselves to certain production methods. Aside from these concerns, educators must also consider the curricular ramifications of using a particular game,

especially if students themselves will use it. The video game chosen will have to maintain students' attention as well as display the content necessary to educate the audience. Also, satisfying the needs of the learning context and machinima makers' preferences may prove difficult because both vary with each project. Eight criteria, each a critical consideration, can help an educator select an appropriate game.

## Single Player and Multiplayer

The number of players in a game has an important effect on the workflow of the machinima making process. Having one player, such as in the Fallout series, means that a player must manipulate camera angles while engaging in the scene's movement or action. Similarly, in order to get more characters in a single-player system, producers must use the non-playable computer characters in the game or make multiple accounts. While this individual production process increases the difficulty of making machinima, it shows a unique feature in that one person could make complex films alone. However, many machinima-makers prefer to collaborate because making machinima is a multidisciplinary endeavor that involves design and production elements (Fosk, 2011). Multiplayer games allow for more participants to take on the diverse roles of actors, camerapersons, and builders. This separation drastically simplifies the work individuals have to do and allows for the production of far more complicated scenes, yet this group work also requires more coordination and more people following the same schedule.

## Hardware Requirements

The educator must also consider the hardware requirements the games demand. Games and the aforementioned tools for making machinima have minimum and optimum hardware guidelines to run well, with better and more powerful hardware leading to better performance. For example, a computer with a powerful graphics card could run higher graphics settings with less lag, slowing due to a lack of memory or CPU processing power. Resource-intensive games demand a lot of computer hardware power. Users who want to run a resource-intensive game on a computer without a lot of processing power may need to use low settings. In extreme cases, an educator could rewrite some of the game's files. (Note that doing so could result in serious problems with the game or even the computer and should only be done with guidance from or by those who understand what the code means.) Selecting a game that can run at desired settings on the intended computer is the best choice, but doing so will limit the game choices.

## Game Rating

The game rating can help educators judge the game's appropriateness for a given population of students. Various countries have national games ratings boards: there is the Game Rating Board in South Korea, the Computer Entertainment Rating Organization in Japan, or the Entertainment Software Rating Board in northern America. These rate many games, and titles often

display those ratings prominently on their packaging or on the game's website. The rating system uses categories with descriptors that point out key information about a game, such as violent content or crude language (Computer Entertainment Rating Organization, n.d.; Entertainment Software Rating Board, n.d.; Game Rating Board, n.d.). When students work with machinima or games in general, the appropriateness of the game is a definite concern. When the educator alone makes machinima, they could use any game, despite the rating, and selectively craft scenes with appropriate content. Still, though, an educator may want to avoid associations with risqué games in an educational context. Additionally, educators should attend to student perceptions of a game because students may well object to a game they feel is too childish for their age. Minecraft, a versatile game that is easy to learn, affords machinima-makers a lot of opportunity but may appear too elementary for high school or college students. Again, educators must take into account student, parental, and administrative attitudes and background to determine what will be most appropriate for them.

## Learning Curve

Learning a game can take a considerable amount of time, so an educator must consider the difficulty when choosing a title. Most games have a tutorial or teach players how to use the game early on. Websites, manuals, or strategy guides can assist in mastering a game without discovering its finer points through play. However, in many open world games where players move through the story at will in a nonlinear way, players have a variety of options for play style customization and world interaction that still could take time to truly understand even with assistance. A game that students can easily learn and function in could allow for an immediate start to collaborating on a project. However, a more complicated game where students must work together to understand or solve problems could encourage more discussion and interaction. The learning curve affects how much scaffolding the curriculum needs and what kinds of interactions will occur in the classroom.

## Setting/Environment

Every game has its own setting, lending it towards certain machinima. Games need to create a cohesive environment in order to truly immerse players in the world. The inherent design behind levels and even the graphic display (realistic, cartoonish) pushes a game towards a certain experience. A futuristic game like Halo would not be an appropriate game for a classic western machinima. Fallout series games, taking place in a dystopian, post-nuclear war world, may prove good for horror machinima or rugged survival stories but not a fantasy story. Choosing a game that best matches the desired setting will ensure less work preparing scenes. Similarly, educators should attend not only to the world-level environment but also to the small details of props that fill the bigger world. Some games may have props available to interact with while others forgo such accessories.

**Player Control**

Players use input devices like controllers or keyboard and mouse to control characters. Regardless of personal preferences, if one lacks proficiency with a certain control, they will struggle to use a game for machinima-making that often requires precise camera angles and well-timed action. While learning commands is part of the learning curve, choosing a game that closely adheres to a comfortable method of control helps efficiency. Also, the cost of providing controllers or certain hardware to a classroom of students could prohibit the use of some games. Additionally, different games afford various levels of control over characters. Some games have many animations for characters while others only have a few. Comparing the original Super Mario Bros, where a character can move left/right and jump, to newer games like Grand Theft Auto, where the main character can walk and run in 3D, sit, jump, open doors, and hold various items, reveals the wide spectrum of control that games can afford players. Indeed, the control over a virtual character determines what actions can take place in a machinima series.

**Price**

Machinima makers may want to consider the price to ensure they get their money's worth. Newer commercial off-the-shelf games from major publishers generally cost around 63,000 won (60 USD) while indie games from small groups may start around 21,000 won (20 USD). When buying a new title, one pays for improvements upon lessons and trends from past games. Developers try to push the boundaries with new titles, making things better, arguably, than earlier versions or games. Hype about next generation graphics or revolutionary game mechanics often surrounds new titles. Though educators may want to pick up the latest hit game, doing so could constrain machinima production to a particular setting and play style when, instead, buying several cheaper games could allow for more choice. Additionally, the novelty of a game degrades as other new titles come out and the former "new" titles age. Sales throughout the year can help educators get games for cheap if they can wait for them. However, if the project requires multiple actors/actresses, then price could still exclude some games from consideration.

**Modability**

A second form of control over the game comes from modding. Whereas player control refers to controlling the character, modding relates to the machinima producer's ability to change almost every aspect of the game. Modding refers to using third-party files to enhance the game with additional functions or features not available in the original release or official updated versions of the game. Indeed, modding gives players more control over everything from the basic game mechanics to the environment. Assuming the game lacks desired items or one just wants a different setting, an educator can often find a mod that adds props or even new locations, including whole towns or expanded maps. Mods can also make existing items in a game have higher resolution graphics for better realism.

They can even give some added functionality to assist with machinima-making, such as adding a green screen room or changing camera controls.

Despite these advantages, mods can ruin a game. To use a mod, one must install its files to the game and assign it to the correct load order, the order files are opened when the game starts. Due to the added strain as the computer reads the extra files, adding too many mods can severely slow down a game. As the number of mods increases, the chance for error-causing conflicts between mods grows as well. Unless educators have proficiency in making mods, they must rely on modders who have their own agenda in modifying a game, likely not for an educational machinima. Though mods are an invaluable resource for machinima, educators must use them with caution.

## CONCLUSION

When deciding whether or not to use machinima, educators need to plan how often they will use the videos in the classroom and what the curricular needs for the videos are to determine a proper workflow for the project. While educators creating machinima can create and adapt their videos to specific needs efficiently, the initial investment in learning the necessary programs and games should be weighed in as well. In general, educators should choose a game that fits their level of gaming experience. Educators who generally do not have a great deal of experience should choose games without a harsh learning curve, while those who do have video game experience could expand to more complicated games with additional features. Regardless of experience, using basic programs can be a good way to try out machinima and see its effectiveness in the teaching context, before investing time into advanced programs. Additionally, knowing the workflow early will allow educators to identify scenes that require multiple players or those that can be done alone.

Above all, the curriculum must drive the development of machinima in the classroom. Van Eck (2006) points out that integrating media into a classroom requires a "careful analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the media, as well as its alignment with instructional strategies, methods, and learning outcomes" (p. 30). The educational effectiveness of machinima relies on the educator's discretion about what is relevant to the teaching context, the gaps the machinima can bridge, and the possibilities it can open up. Flashy game play, irrelevant content, fancy graphics, or the like are nothing more than flair for the course if the machinima is not viewed and created as an educational resource. Identifying goals and objectives that the content can assist with as well as specific activities and supporting resources that go with the machinima will help the final product integrate well into the course.

Any activity that could use a video could benefit from machinima, but the real power of machinima is that it allows an educator to make a video tailored to his or her specific teaching context. A machinima about a poorly worded sentence or logical problem in writing could help illustrate the problem and allow for discussion on solutions. A serialized machinima spread over a course could help teach narrative structure and language, including plot, transitional words, and description. As a homework assignment, students could watch machinima that

prompt for a written or spoken response. Additionally, students could be in charge of making machinima as a way to demonstrate their understanding of a certain set of skills or as a way to collaborate in English. Regardless of the possibilities for activities, educators thinking of using machinima should consider how to use the medium's strengths. For a scene where the educator's head fills the majority of the screen and talks, a talking head-making machinima could be difficult and unnecessary, especially if one wanted to animate the mouth, compared to making the same type of video with a smart phone.

Machinima can be a powerful tool to create materials and activities to enhance the curriculum when careful consideration is given to the creative tools, workflow, and curricular goals. Educators have a lot of flexibility in terms of price and complexity when choosing tools for making machinima. However, special care should be exercised when selecting a game for use because it affects not only the effectiveness and enjoyment for students but also the entire production sequence. The making of machinima for the language class must be informed by a specific purpose and use for the classroom. Compared with traditional video production methods, machinima affords educators an efficient and affordable way to bring highly tailored content aligned to curricular goals and objectives into the classroom.

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# Relative Impact of Pronunciation Errors in Non-native Speech on Native Listeners' Perceptual Judgments

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Research in second language pronunciation has often focused on listeners' accent judgment and factors that affect their perception (Munro & Derwing, 1995). The effects of specific segmental and suprasegmental errors in listeners' perceptual judgments, however, has not been widely investigated. The current study provides empirically based evidence in this area by identifying both segmental and suprasegmental features that contribute to native English listeners' judgments of accented speech. Fifty native English listeners, including Americans, British, Australians, and New Zealanders, rated Vietnamese accented speech for intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness. The results suggest that native English listeners were affected by different phonetic errors in their judgments of intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness in accented speech. Suggestions are made for English as a foreign language instructors for effective pronunciation teaching.

## INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation plays an important role in language instruction and particularly influences the degree of intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness in a second language (L2) speech (Derwing & Munro, 2005). Two facets of pronunciation, segmentals and suprasegmentals, have been identified in the literature as having an influence on foreign accent, intelligibility, and comprehensibility in the speech of a non-native speaker (NNS). Segmental features are minimal units of sound (vowels and consonants) defined in phonetic terms (Crystal, 2003), while suprasegmentals refers to "a vocal effect which extends over more than one sound segment in an utterance, such as a pitch, stress or juncture pattern" (Crystal, 2003, p. 446). Listeners' judgments are often divided into three constructs: intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness. Intelligibility is defined as the extent to which a listener understands the intended message, comprehensibility as a listener's perception of how difficult it is to understand an utterance, and accentedness as a listener's perception of how different a speaker's accent is from that of the first-language community (Derwing & Munro, 2005). These three constructs were employed in this study to identify phonetic features that had an impact when native English listeners rated accented speech in English.

For a long time, segmentals have been the focus of many pronunciation programs because segmental errors contribute greatly to a foreign accent and have detrimental effects on second language comprehension. However, over the last two

decades, several researchers have found evidence that suprasegmental errors affect foreign accent, L2 perceived comprehensibility, and intelligibility more seriously than segmental errors (Derwing & Munro, 1997).

A number of studies have investigated different aspects of suprasegmental and segmental errors that affect L2 perceived comprehensibility, foreign accent, and intelligibility. In terms of consonant and vowel errors, Brennan, Ryan, and Dawson (1975) indicated that the frequency with which segmental substitutions were noted in short excerpts of speech produced by NNSs was highly correlated with native speaker (NS) judgments of accentedness. With regard to word stress, Field (2005) examined the relationship between lexical stress features of nonnative speech and native speakers' intelligibility judgments and found that when native English speech was manipulated to include incorrect lexical stress, the ability of both NS and NNS listeners to locate words in connected speech was seriously affected. As for sentence stress, NNSs from many linguistic backgrounds, such as Chinese, Thai, Japanese, Spanish, or Vietnamese, have difficulty mastering stress patterns in English. The problems are "misplacing primary stress (often stressing given information instead of new) and stressing all words in an utterance more or less equally, without one prominent stress" (Hahn, 2004, p. 204). Obviously, the failure affects comprehension abilities and prevents NNSs from successful communication.

Although many studies have investigated the effects of segmental features (phonemes) and suprasegmental ones (stress, rhythm, or intonation) on intelligibility, comprehensibility, and foreign accent, there is little empirical evidence regarding a direct comparison of the relative contributions of segmental and suprasegmental errors to native English listeners' judgments. This study, therefore, attempted to provide empirically based evidence in this area. The study addressed the following research questions:

- What is the relative impact of segmental and suprasegmental errors on native English listeners' judgments of intelligibility in accented speech?
- What is the relative impact of segmental and suprasegmental errors on native English listeners' judgments of comprehensibility in accented speech?
- What is the relative impact of segmental and suprasegmental errors on native English listeners' judgments of foreign accent in accented speech?

# METHOD

## Participants

This study consisted of 50 native speakers of English as participants: 15 Americans, 12 Australians, 19 British, and 4 New Zealand native speakers participated as listeners. The fifty raters (27 males and 13 females) were volunteer teachers of English at the University of Danang and at the Danang Unions of Friendship Organizations, and teachers of English at Apollo English Training Center. Their age range was 18 to 45 (M = 17.30, SD = 5.60).

## Materials

A conversation excerpted from O'Connor and Fletcher (1989, p. 47) that included sentences with problematic sounds produced by Vietnamese speakers of English was chosen as the stimulus material. The conversation had 24 sentences: 6 sentences with consonant errors, 6 with vowel errors, 6 with word stress errors, and 6 with sentence stress errors. The selected errors were initial consonant substitutions (/p/ vs. /b/; /s/ vs. /ʃ/), final consonant cluster deletions (/st/, /ts/), and mispronounced vowels (/i:/ vs. /ɪ/; /u:/ vs. /u/), as Vietnamese speakers do not often release those consonants in an initial position, or they substitute those sounds with others (Hwa-Froelich et al., 2002). Suprasegmental errors investigated in this study include errors in word (lexical) stress and sentence (primary) stress.

## Procedure

The listeners were instructed to listen to each utterance in the conversation and to write out in standard orthography exactly what they heard. As soon as the intelligibility task was completed for the entire 24 sentences, listeners were given another opportunity to listen to each of the speech samples for their ratings of comprehensibility and accentedness, which were based on a 9-point Likert scale (1 = hard to understand, 9 = easy to understand; and 1 = has a strong accent, 9 = has no accent, respectively). They assigned rating scores according to each of these two rating constructs for each sentence. After the raters finished assigning the rating scores for comprehensibility and accentedness, they listened to the whole speech again and assigned one score for global comprehensibility and one score for global accentedness.

After the listeners completed their ratings, they took part in 5- to 10-minute interviews answering questions such as "When you listen to accented speech, to what pronunciation errors do you react to most sensitively (e.g., vowels, consonants, word stress, sentence stress)? Why?"

## FINDINGS

To answer the first research question, a multiple regression was run. Table 1 shows the mean scores of intelligibility ratings in four different categories of pronunciation errors. As can be seen from Table 1, intelligibility scores appeared generally lower in utterances with suprasegmental errors compared to those with segmental errors. When the speech had consonant errors, sentences were transcribed 62% correctly, whereas the listeners' intelligibility scores decreased with speech that had suprasegmental errors (27% correct for sentence stress and 35% correct for word stress). Multiple regression results showed statistically significant differences in the intelligibility ratings: $F(4, 49) = 36.21$, $p < .00$, Adjusted $R^2 = .44$.

**Table 1. Mean Scores of Intelligibility in Different Categories of Pronunciation Errors**

| Variable | Mean (%) | Standard Deviation (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Consonant | 62.00 | 10.00 |
| Vowel | 41.00 | 11.00 |
| Word stress | 35.00 | 11.00 |
| Sentence stress | 27.00 | 10.00 |

Note: Intelligibility scores: the percentage of words exactly matching the original transcription

To answer the second question, multiple regression was completed. Table 2 shows mean scores of comprehensibility ratings in different categories of pronunciation errors.

**Table 2. Mean Scores of Comprehensibility Ratings in Different Categories of Pronunciation Errors**

| Variable | Mean (M) | Standard Deviation (SD) |
|---|---|---|
| Consonant | 5.05 | 1.20 |
| Vowel | 3.53 | 1.59 |
| Word stress | 3.50 | 1.07 |
| Sentence stress | 3.14 | 1.90 |

Note: Comprehensibility measure: 1 = hard to understand; 9 = easy to understand

Listeners found Vietnamese speech generally hard to understand, as shown in mean scores lower than Likert scale-point 5 in three categories. The listeners reacted sensitively to sentence stress (M = 3.14), word stress (M = 3.50), and vowels (M = 3.53), but consonant errors were the least influential factor for their comprehensibility judgments (M = 5.05). Simultaneous multiple regression was conducted to investigate the best predictors of the global comprehensibility rating. The combination of variables to predict the accentedness rating from consonant, vowel, word stress, and sentence stress was statistically significant, $F(4, 49)$ = 59.32, $p < .00$. The beta coefficients are presented in Table 3. Note that except for consonant errors, all the categories of vowel, word stress, and sentence stress errors significantly predicted the comprehensibility rating when all four variables were included. The adjusted $R^2$ value was .39. This indicates that 39% of the variance in the comprehensibility rating can be predicted from the combination of all four variables. The categories of vowel, word stress, and sentence stress errors were the best predictors of the global comprehensibility ratings ($\beta$ = .30, $p$ = .00; $\beta$ = .33, $p$ = .00; $\beta$ = .49, $p$ = .00, respectively), whereas consonant errors did not affect the global accentedness ratings ($\beta$ = .05).

**Table 3. Multiple Regression of Contributions of Segmental and Suprasegmental Variables to Global Comprehensibility Ratings**

| Variable | Standardized Coefficients ($\beta$) | $p$-value |
|---|---|---|
| Consonant | .05 | .56 |
| Vowel | .30 | .00 |
| Word stress | .33 | .00 |
| Sentence stress | .49 | .00 |

$F(4,49)$ = 59.32, $p$ = .00, adjusted $R^2$ = .39

A similar pattern was found for the results of accentedness ratings. As shown in Table 4, the listeners found the speech samples relatively accented, with mean scores of 4 or lower on the 9-point Likert scale. The listeners reacted less sensitively to consonant errors (M = 4.05) than to other pronunciation errors: vowel, word stress, and sentence stress (M = 3.73, 3.50, and 2.41, respectively) in their accent judgments.

**Table 4. Mean Scores of Accentedness Ratings in Different Categories of Pronunciation Errors**

| Variable | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| Consonant | 4.05 | 1.02 |
| Vowel | 3.73 | 1.50 |
| Word stress | 3.50 | 1.92 |
| Sentence stress | 2.41 | 1.36 |

Note. Accentedness measure: 1 = has a strong accent, 9 = has no accent/native-like accent

Multiple regression results, as shown in Table 5, revealed that all comparisons of rating scores for each of the pronunciation error categories were statistically significant: F (4, 49) = 38.34, $p <$ .00, adjusted R2 = 0.29. According to the test results, the listeners located the speech as less comprehensible when there were vowel, word stress, and sentence stress errors in pronunciation, while they did not have trouble with consonant errors in pronunciation ($\beta$ = .01).

**Table 5. Multiple Regression of Contributions of Segmental and Suprasegmental Variables to Global Accentedness Ratings**

| Variable | Standardized Coefficients ($\beta$) | $p$-value |
|---|---|---|
| Consonant | .01 | .40 |
| Vowel | .33 | .00 |
| Word stress | .57 | .00 |
| Sentence stress | .59 | .00 |

F(4,49) = 63.21, $p$ = .00, Adjusted $R^2$ = .29

# DISCUSSION

The central findings of this study are that listeners' judgments are closely correlated to stress errors and vowel errors. In general, the results of multiple regression analyses indicated that sentence stress was the most salient predictor of the perceptual judgments for native English listeners, followed by word stress and vowels. What is more, the findings are at a significance level of $p$ = .00, which means that the outcome here is noteworthy for the fact that other potential factors that might affect the significance of the result have been almost completely removed.

For addressing the first research question, multiple regression was run, and the results revealed that stress and vowel errors were the features that best predicted the intelligibility judgment scores on L2 speech. The findings agree with the results of the study by Hahn (2004), who found that misplaced stress caused

reduced intelligibility in accented speech. The current findings also provide further evidence of the benefits of teaching both segmentals and suprasegmentals in a pronunciation curriculum (Derwing & Munro, 1997) and the fact that correct stress "seems to be crucial as safeguards of mutual intelligibility in interlanguage talk" (Jenkins, 2002, p. 96).

For addressing the second research question, a simultaneous multiple regression was conducted to determine the variables most greatly affecting the ratings of comprehensibility. The results of the regression models revealed that sentence stress was the feature that best predicted the comprehensibility judgment scores for L2 speech, followed by word stress and vowels. Native listeners considered non-native speech the least comprehensible when they listened to non-native speech with sentence stress errors. This current study is in line with Field's (2005), in which incorrect placement of word stress contributed much to the low level of comprehension. A mis-stressed word or sentence can lead to misunderstanding of the whole sentence, and thus it is crucial to include these features in the pronunciation curriculum. Vowels also had a great effect on the comprehensibility ratings in this study.

As regards consonant errors, the most frequent consonantal substitution types experienced by NNSs and according to Catford (1987), such as /p/ - /b/ and /s/ - /ʃ/, were chosen for this study. The findings in this study showed that consonant errors did not impact the rating outcome. The results do not support evidence from Munro and Derwing's (2005) findings, which revealed that high functional load consonantal errors had significant effects on the listeners' comprehensibility ratings. It is likely that it is easier for listeners to guess about consonant errors when they are in a specific context such as in a conversation. Therefore, when consonant errors are found in conversations, as in this study, the context might provide a clue for listeners to guess the meaning, so this did not much affect NSs' understanding of non-native speech.

A similar pattern was found for the accentedness ratings, which revealed a great influence of sentence stress on the ratings, followed by word stress and vowels. This indicates that the listeners found non-native speech more accented when they heard stress and vowel errors, and less accented with consonant errors. The findings of the accent judgment scores are in line with Derwing and Munro's (1997) study, which mentioned that "accent ratings are harsher than perceived comprehensibility ratings" (p. 11). This current study agrees with Derwing and Munro because in this study the raters' scores for accentedness were lower than the comprehensibility scores.

In general, the results of multiple regression analyses indicated that sentence stress was the most salient predictor of perceptual judgments by native English listeners, followed by word stress and vowels. The high correlation between the overall intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness scores and prosody features has been well documented (e.g., Anderson-Hsieh et al., 1992; Field, 2005; Kang, 2010; Munro & Derwing, 1995). This study also added the further finding that segmental deviance, especially vowels, also affected the perceptual judgments of native English listeners. Interview responses gathered from each of the 50 respondents supported this tendency: more than 67% of the listeners addressed suprasegmental-related issues (stress, especially) and above 30% addressed segmental ones (vowels, especially); i.e., stress and vowel features were their main

concerns, not consonant errors. This study also supports the use of the pronunciation article by Peterson (2001) to teach segmental features, especially vowels, and of books such as that by Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) to teach suprasegmental features.

## IMPLICATIONS

Using the five-stage model by Celce-Murcia et al. (2010), teachers can use different methods in teaching vowel sounds as well as stress. Their five-stage model is a progression from raising awareness of pronunciation, to practice, and then to production, including description and analysis, listening discrimination, controlled practice, guided practice, and communicative practice.

First, in the description and analysis stage, teachers can use vowel charts or organs of speech to show students when or how a phonemic feature occurs as well as an activity such as "Bridging Word and Sentence Stress" (Celce-Murcia, et al., 2010) to teach stress. Activities for listening discrimination can be contextualized minimal-pair practice, nursery rhymes, and jazz chants, which work well both as a diagnostic tool and as listening practice.

Controlled practice, guided practice, and communicative practice focus more on practice and production. In controlled practice, form should be most emphasized. As for guided practice, information gap activities are ideal for providing students with practice in both listening discrimination and spoken production. Also, guided practice for stress may include information exchange activities.

Finally, communicative practice focuses on both form and meaning and helps develop students' conversational abilities through such activities as storytelling, role-plays, debates, interviews, or drama.

## CONCLUSION

This study is important in the research literature in directly comparing the effects of two segmental features (consonants and vowels) and two suprasegmental features (word stress and sentence stress) on native English listeners' judgments of the degree of intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness of non-native speech. The findings of this study provide support for both a suprasegmental and segmental focus in pronunciation teaching (Derwing & Munro, 2005; Hahn, 2004). From this study, it is suggested that teachers should balance teaching segmental and suprasegmental proficiency in order to improve NNSs' perceived intelligibility and comprehensibility, and to reduce accentedness.

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# From Learner Autonomy in Practice to Language Proficiency in Theory

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This research explores the following question: do language study plans designed autonomously by the learners and self-reported amount of time spent on each of the four skills contribute to greater language proficiency in the respective skill sections of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test (IELTS, 2013)? To consider this query, the results of pre- and post-tests of 20 EFL volunteer university students in Japan at an English resource center were assessed and compared with the students' autonomous learning practices. The volunteers met in small seminars for one weekly, ninety-minute, learner-conducted session for 23 weeks, with reflection-question prompts, where their peers, and (to a lesser extent) their instructor, provided language advice. The data included the students' self-reported reflections on their learning, the time spent studying, an exit survey, the instructor's notes, and the pre- and post-IELTS test scores. Despite limitations, the findings reveal that learners who studied language skills for enjoyment for an average of 6.5 to 8.5 hours per week made language proficiency gains.

## INTRODUCTION

An ongoing mantra for learner autonomy has been that learners take control of their learning; the learning process increases with consequential engagement in the language where the teacher steps back and the control shifts to the learner (Holec, 1981). This development encourages the learners to conceptualize more clearly their learning goals and identities; however, what about the learners' improvement in using the English language? The reason for the aforementioned question is that, while data from numerous learner autonomy studies are available, these focus on practice, and autonomy studies measuring language proficiency are few and far between (Gardner, 2002; Gardner, 2007; Kurugöllü, 2013; McCarthy, 2014). According to Benson (2011), in the past ten years a greater importance has been placed on socially and/or contextually situated approaches for facilitating autonomy, and there is a growing tendency for the subject to blur with similar fields of study in language education, such as motivation, self-directed learning, and learner identity (p. 4). However, there has not been an increase in autonomy research related to the development of language proficiency in English education, yet many learners wish to improve their language ability for personal and professional reasons. A notable example of the previously mentioned is in the series *Learner Autonomy*, which will be reviewed in detail in the section that follows. Stated briefly here, in the ten volumes published with 59 chapters, only two studies measure English language

proficiency gains (Gardner, 2002, 2007); one chapter mentions it (Ushioda, 1996); and a narrative study shows that one learner increased her language proficiency by her own language learning practices rather than in a taught course (Murray & Kojima, 2007).

This led to the author of this study questioning how she could foster learner autonomy in students because one of her workplace teaching objectives is to encourage the learners to improve their performance on norm-referenced English tests at the tertiary level. This study was designed to examine the following question: *Do language study plans designed autonomously by 20 Japanese and international university learners at an English resource center and their self-reported amount of time spent on desired learning skill(s) (listening, reading, writing, and/or speaking) contribute to greater language proficiency on the IELTS level bands in the respective skill section(s) of the test?*

## RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Researchers in language education have investigated autonomy theory for the past 30 years, and healthy signs of the research about autonomy-in-practice have emerged (Benson, 2001, 2011; Holec, 1981; Little, 1991). It has been noticed that few autonomy studies measure language proficiency (Kurugöllü, 2013; McCarthy, 2014), yet it can be argued that a number of learners wish to improve their English norm-referenced test scores for personal and professional reasons. Additionally, though careful analyses have been made on the process of learner autonomy, which highlight that reducing learner frustration and helplessness increases learner control over the content of language learning (Graves & Vye, 2011; Vye, 2009; Vye, Barfield, & Anthanasiou, 2010), measuring English improvement while facilitating learner autonomy had not been considered by the author of this study. Therefore, it seemed essential that research be done into the development of learners' English language skills in the context of this study, and that its results, shared with a wider research community in autonomy in language education and language learning, deserve attention.

The foremost example of research illustrating language proficiency in the field of autonomy is represented by a notable series of books in the field, *Learner Autonomy,* published by Authentik. In the ten volumes in the series to date, which include 59 chapters, there are merely four studies (Gardner, 2002; Gardner, 2007; Murray & Kojima, 2007; Ushioda, 1996) that measure or at least mention English language proficiency gains. To get a better grasp of language proficiency gains related to learner autonomy, the differences and similarities of these four accounts were compared to inform this research study.

The first account (Ushioda, 1996) describes assessment within the context of motivation and learner autonomy. In it, Ushioda emphasizes that instructors would do well to foster their learners' sense of a stronger self-perception of language competence by defining learner goals and advocating the value of assessment to individual students. This seems very relevant to learners at the tertiary level, such as those in Ushioda's research, although the participants in the study defined their own language goals rather than having these set by the instructor. Furthermore, Ushioda suggests that language instructors should avoid

comparing test scores with the students, which adds competition and is de-motivating; and absolute performance criteria assessment (criterion-referenced tests and rubrics) is preferred over norm-referenced tests that create competitive classrooms. The Ushioda study is different because there was neither a classroom with grades nor was it feasible to design criterion-referenced language tests. Nevertheless, the participants had their test scores explained individually for privacy, including bilingual explanations of the IELTS bands.

The second account of learner autonomy and test assessment was Gardner's (2002) research, which provided a loose parameter of guidelines for larger self-access centers (SACs) that kept in mind the particular needs of the individual language center context. Regarding language assessment, he argues that centers and classrooms do not carry the same functions. Language proficiency is not easy to measure in centers because the learners work independently, the duration and intensity of the learning varies from person to person, and tests are difficult to schedule; therefore, increased language proficiency may not occur until years after the learners stop attending the center. In the Gardner study, the pre- and post-IELTS tests were not easy to schedule in the center because it was challenging to confirm participants and to assist some to get passports, or renew them in a few cases (a current passport is required for each IELTS test candidate). However, the IELTS representatives in Japan were very supportive, which alleviated the stress. Additionally, the learning context in Gardner's large SACs is different than the learning center in the present study's context, which has fewer staff, so learners tend to collaborate in groups and pairs, with less individualized work able to be provided. Moreover, language proficiency gains in the present study were complex and problematic to measure, as well, in the short nine-month duration of time provided; however, because the center is small, standardized language tests were possible to administer.

Third, in a more recent needs-analysis study of a SAC by Gardner (2007), Gardner proposed (with some hesitation) that language proficiency in pre- and post-assessment English language tests revealed the areas that the learners placed a high importance on for their own learning goals. On an encouraging note, in the post-test of the grammar assessment, all 314 students improved their scores, for the most part by large margins. This was encouraging research to note because it was hoped that, as in the Gardner study, the participants' in this study would also improve their grammar scores, as well as their scores in their desired language proficiency skill areas.

The fourth and final account in the learner autonomy series (Murray & Kojima, 2007) details a longitudinal narrative study that revealed that language proficiency gains could be made, without learning, in a taught class or center, through the utilization of communicative activities such as shadowing and self-talk. Moreover, similar unpublished results to those in the Murray and Kojima (2007) study were found that suggest that shadowing greatly contributed to getting a score of 900 out of 990 on the TOEIC test (H. Tomita, personal communication, September 27, 2007). As a result, a counterargument is that language proficiency gains are obtainable without the support of an institution. The findings were significant, as desired autonomous language practices seem to be relevant in language proficiency, and it would be beneficial if more studies of this kind were made available.

## METHODS

All of the learners in the study voluntarily signed a bilingual consent form in English and Japanese, which the instructor signed as well to agree to protect the privacy of each learner. Of the 20 university learners, eleven were female and nine were male. Sixteen of the 20 were Japanese and the remaining four were foreign nationals: three from Malaysia, and one from China. These foreign nationals chose not to have the consent form translated into their own languages and professed that their Japanese and English were proficient enough, claiming it would make too much work for the instructor. The participants met for 90 minutes once a week for 23 weeks between November 2011, after their IELTS pre-test, and July 2012, after their IELTS post-test. 19 of the 20 participants had experiences studying in another country where English was a subject being taught. Seven Japanese participants had previously studied abroad, eight Japanese participants were preparing to study abroad for two semesters as English exchange students, and the four foreign nationals were currently studying abroad in Japan.

The learners, from various faculties, who voluntarily attended the language center, were asked to individually and collaboratively design language study plans during the IELTS pre- and post-test period. They met once a week for 23 weeks in small study-group seminars with four to seven learners in each seminar. The IELTS Test of English was chosen because it tests the learner's reading, writing, listening, and speaking abilities, which seemed to make it the best assessment tool for the participants in this study. Hughes (2002) describes the IELTS as an effective language exam because it considers the learners' spoken performance in terms of accuracy, range, and complexity. Of the communicative assessment tests available, "the IELTS criteria reveal the greatest explicit focus on accuracy and on quantifiable data" (p. 86). Equally important to the characteristics of the test is that the IELTS test suits the learning environment of the center because it measures speaking (with an interviewer rather than a computer) and listening, which are the two features these participants wanted to improve the most. Moreover, these participants could take the IELTS test directly on the campus of the university, because of a joint association with the British Council and Eiken Testing services on campus, which made the application of the IELTS convenient for the participants and the instructor.

At the onset of the study it was discovered that these participants were already engaged in their English learning and they were proficient in English, with overall IELTS scores ranging from 4.5 to 7.5. These two factors in the sessions led the instructor to focus on assisting these learners so they might discover more from within to carry on learning English with increased confidence, thereby making more informed choices and guiding their own learning paths with the support of their peers. In other words, reducing the learner frustration that some reported having could increase learner empowerment and the collaborative setting would help them feel less alone. Using a collaborative group-based learning situation was advantageous for learners, giving them the opportunity to share their rich ideas while studying together, rather than navigating their learning on their own. Therefore, in each session, strategies for language learning were rarely suggested by the instructor unless requested, for the reason that the

participants came up with plenty of learning strategies that they shared with each other, including "cool" listening links on the Internet and resources in the center, meeting up with friends and hanging out in English, studying Japanese culture to prepare for the onslaught of questions people living in the study abroad exchange country might ask them, and extensive reading, particularly with some kind of reading aloud or shadowing component. After the post-test concluded, any areas of improvement in their language proficiency from the IELTS pre- and post-test were compared with the learners' written reflections of the language study they reported they did by themselves and with friends outside the university setting, and compared with the instructor's reflection notes.

## PRIMARY RESULTS

The learners designated what English they were studying individually that best suited their needs and recorded how their language learning developed by themselves, including approximately how many hours per week they engaged in each activity. Then they shared with their seminar classmates what they were learning, to generate ideas and get feedback on the experience. The various ways of studying English and the duration of engagement in the subject also varied amongst the participants. Comparing the IELTS post-test with their first attempt at the test, eight learners improved their overall IELTS scores, two by +1 and six by +0.5; 11 learners' scores stayed the same, and one learner's score decreased by -0.5, although she said she had stopped studying English outside of the seminar in order to make time to study German.

The overall scores revealed that individual IELTS four-skill band scores needed to be considered for further analysis of individual proficiency gains compared with the participants' learner reflections as to which of the four skills they preferred to focus on outside the seminars; their exit survey, including the self-reported time spent on their learning activities of choice; and the instructor's notes from the seminars. The following are six results that have emerged from the data described above, along with the results of the IELTS pre- and post-test scores:

1. Listening proficiency results: 18 of the 20 participants stated that they did listening activities on their own for personal pleasure, using online listening videos, podcasts, and DVDs. Ten of them received a +0.5 increase in their listening scores, while four remained the same. A common theme was that if their listening duration over the nine months of engaging in activities they enjoyed was an average of 7.5 hours per week or more, then their scores improved or remained the same, suggesting merit for extensive listening for pleasure.

2. Reading proficiency results: Regrettably, the duration of reading time outside the seminars could not be calculated due to the increased amount of assigned English extensive reading in both the participants' majors and elective courses. These courses were taught primarily in Japanese, while the students enrolled in the courses were assigned readings in English. Therefore, measuring the time spent engaging in increased reading in English was something that the instructor did not account for, nor could the reading results be compared with

their reading scores on the IELTS test.

3. Writing proficiency results: 15 participants chose to develop English writing proficiency on their own with social media, emails, and/or essay-writing practice for pleasure. One participant received an increase of +1.5, three of +1, and five of +0.5. A mutual feature of these nine learners was that their writing duration was an average of 6.5 hours per week or more.

4. Speaking proficiency results: 18 participants practiced speaking on their own via shadowing or with friends and acquaintances. The speaking scores improved (sometimes greatly) of those 10 who spoke for at least 8.5 hours per week. Three earned an increase of +1.5, two of +1, and five of +0.5.

5. Studying abroad results: Previously study abroad or preparing to study abroad in the target language was significant for 19 of the 20 participants, which is an unexpected finding and strikingly different from the general student population that attends the language center at the university.

6. The urge-to-travel-abroad results: When the participants shared stories about travelling abroad, including joining exchange programs and/or volunteering for non-profit organizations (NPOs) in other countries, it created a natural travel bug; 13 of the 20 participants visited 16 different countries during the research period. This suggests that the socially situated nature of the learner-generated themed discussions in the seminars influenced their personal lives beyond language learning, greatly contributing to their increased frequency of travel abroad.

## CONCLUSION

The results above are guardedly compared to any areas of improvement in the participants' English language proficiency, to attempt to distinguish whether their (autonomously created) language study plans, including the self-reported duration spent on their preferred learning skill(s) of listening, reading, writing, and/or speaking, were a factor in obtaining further language proficiency gains on the IELTS level bands of the corresponding skill sections of the exam. The limitations of the study were significant, particularly because there were a limited number of participants; and a brief duration of only nine months, where further longitudinal language gains might have been more readily achieved if the duration of the study had been longer. In addition, in this study, the four skills are linked with each other and cannot be perfectly isolated; and the participants were fairly autonomous in determining their study foci and the time and techniques they would spend on these. Nonetheless, the results point toward these participants making language proficiency gains by actively engaging in self-selected language encounters for fun, if they partook in at least 6.5 to 8.5 or more hours per week in the language area or areas they wanted to improve the most.

It is suggested that further studies be conducted to test the connections between language proficiency gains and learner autonomy, since learners ask for language support on their own terms, and various international educational institutions are looking for improved language proficiency in their language curriculums. As increased engagement in the language is being made in the learning process, the more the control shifts from the instructor to the learner,

thereby providing greater spaces for the conceptualization of their learning goals and for their identities to be internalized more clearly and confidently, in regard to not only learner autonomy, but also language proficiency gains.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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# Getting Students to Speak on Topics of Interest

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Past learning paradigms of both the instructor and students influence the present in terms of expectations of what should happen in class. This paper addresses how the process of speech giving can be broken down into four steps, which allow students to expand their English use comfort zones. The goal is to enable students to freely speak in English through developing their fluency, creativity, and confidence on topics that are of interest to them. Recognizing the influence of past learning paradigms allows instructors to develop a pedagogy that assists students to develop an autonomous learner mentality while recognizing their cultural second language learning norms.

## INTRODUCTION

The phrase "Japanese are not good at speaking English" is commonly heard in Japan. This has seemingly been acknowledged by the Japanese Education Ministry in their ever-changing English as a foreign language (EFL) policies to enhance the communicative English abilities of Japanese students (MEXT, 2011b; 2003). Before World War II, educational policies on English teaching in Japan focused on grammar and British English (Liddicoat, 2007). After the war, these educational policies changed to a focus on American English and communicative abilities (Liddicoat, 2007). This last point is important because it suggests that an economic and political force, the U.S., is behind the change in English focus, not necessarily an educational force. The constant ideology behind these policy changes is that having knowledge of English will encourage the Japanese to be more international in their outlook (MEXT, 2011a). With this ideology, English is habitually seen as a part of the internationalization of Japan.

These changes in foreign language learning in education policies stress the need to leave traditional methods of language teaching behind and focus on a communicative approach. However, these policies present a problem for instructors preparing students to enter senior high school and university because of the entrance examination system. These are principally translation-based exams, and so they thwart pedagogical changes to communicative English classrooms at the grade school level of education (Hagerman, 2009). The effect is as Clarke (as cited in Stewart, 2009) aptly summarizes: "the bureaucrats plan to solve this problem by giving us more of what caused the problem" (p. 9). In other words, as long as the English component of Japanese university entrance exams continues to focus primarily on grammar, translation, and reading abilities, EFL language education in Japan is unlikely to change. As the university entrance exam is the primary criterion for acceptance, at the junior high and high school

levels, EFL instructors focus on what their students need to know in order to successfully pass the examination. This leaves little opportunity for students to develop sound EFL communication skills.

What seems to be playing here is that while the ideology underpinning English language education in Japan is changing, the structure for policy changes has not changed. This situation then limits the effectiveness of any policy change. As competence in a second language takes time, unless structural changes with regard to the testing of English in the university entrance examinations are implemented at the junior and high school level, students will not have the time needed to gain communicative competence at the university level. Orbach (1978) states that when the goal is one that individuals did not create themselves, and the objects of this goal repeatedly change, it is impossible for those individuals to reach that goal. Accordingly, the official stance on language learning is at odds with the examination process. This makes it necessary for instructors of EFL to address both the goals and structure of EFL learning within their classes in order to bring about the desired effects that the current policies mandate, enabling the changes in EFL learning to become effective. It is this situation which challenges EFL communication classes at the university level. Finding a balance between students' perceived need for English communication, their actual communicative abilities, and their goals for English use is of importance. This paper addresses how this situation is further complicated by cultural differences in the language learning of both foreign EFL instructors and their Japanese students. In recognition of the importance of cultural influences on language learning, an analysis of cultural differences of the Japanese student and their foreign EFL instructor will first be addressed. This will then lead to a discussion of the implications of culture on EFL teaching in Japan and how the instructor could use this information to encourage learner autonomy. The discussion will then conclude with specific examples using the ideology behind developing student autonomy through the pedagogy of one-minute speeches. This will exemplify how learner autonomy can be developed in the Japanese situation while promoting the development of oral communication skills.

## PAST PARADIGMS

It is important for foreign EFL instructors to recognize the learning paradigms that both they and their Japanese students have grown out of. Understanding the learning paradigms students are used to, and using this as a base to which other learning techniques can be integrated, will allow students greater opportunities for their repertoire of learning skills and EFL to develop. However, the EFL instructor must also acknowledge how their own learning past shapes their expectations of how students should behave in a learning situation. An understanding of how the two overarching learning paradigms are similar and where points of contention are would allow an empathetic learning environment to evolve; a failure to do so could allow past experiences to become stumbling blocks.

A common pedagogical paradigm that many native English speaking EFL instructors grew up with is a constructivist paradigm. Typically, EFL instructors

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have informal relationships with their own instructors. As students, they generally acknowledge that their instructors are the "experts" in their fields. However, they are encouraged to politely question this knowledge or present counter arguments. In this situation, as students, the EFL instructors were encouraged to act independently and to figure problems out for themselves. They were expected to be active in their learning.

In contrast, Japanese students have primarily experienced a combination of collectivist and behaviorist learning paradigms. In the collectivist ideology, interdependence, respect for authority, hierarchical roles and relationships, and group consensus are promoted. In this light, the group itself is the facilitator of knowledge expansion and accruement. In the collectivist ideology, students work together in small groups to help understanding, discover points of misunderstanding, and to raise possible explanations for questions posed by their instructors. Similarly, the behaviorist learning paradigm promotes hierarchical roles and, for the Japanese student, this is most apparent in rote learning. Students, particularly in the junior high and high school levels, experience this methodology with the looming entrance examinations of high school and university. These examinations are an obstacle for the communicative EFL classroom as they lead to a focus on grammar translation skills. As long as entrance examinations focus on grammar translation skills, students are not going to be given the time required to develop their communicative abilities. If these exams had a listening/speaking component, and most do not, then communicative abilities would likely receive more emphasis in the EFL classroom at the grade school level, in order for students to do well on the communicative abilities component.

## THE CURRENT LEARNING SITUATION

Currently in Japan, the focus of English as a foreign language policies are on the communicative classroom. By nature, a communicative classroom should equate a learner-centered approach that is a combination of collaboration and learner autonomy (Kojima, 2012). It is important to define what autonomy means in the Japanese language classroom. Recognizing that many Japanese students grew out of learning paradigms that emphasize collaboration, autonomy here would equate to the "capacity of the learner" (Holec, as cited in Benson, 2011, p. 14) to take charge of their own learning. This implies a degree of interdependence. In any learning situation, individuals make personal decisions based on their social context. Their decisions are based on their autonomous ability in deciding what they will do *and* how they perceive their decisions will affect others. Thus, there is some interdependence: as they have the capacity to choose to do something, but in a collaborative situation, they must work well with others and try to effectively resolve conflicts, so their decisions might be influenced by their group work. In the Japanese setting, where the influence of the group is very strong, students feel pressure to maintain a healthy social connection to this. Working collaboratively in small groups can allow individuals to, perhaps tentatively at first, express different opinions to test out their reception with other group members. As instructors, we might encourage students

to present differing opinions as part of the group work, which would allow students an avenue that they might not have outside of the classroom. However, the instructor must recognize that the language learning policy is at odds with the practice of entrance examinations. These grammar-translation examinations hinder the development of the communicative language classroom. Upon entering university, students have had few opportunities to actually freely speak and think in English, and therefore they are unlikely to be outgoing, quizzical, or talkative in English. Thus, the importance of building upon past learning experiences is necessary to develop students' confidence in experiencing and expanding how they learn EFL.

# ONE-MINUTE SPEECH ASSIGNMENT

The purpose behind the weekly one-minute speech assignment is twofold. First, in response to the lament of students' poor spoken abilities in English, the purpose of the speech assignment is to give students the opportunity to develop their spoken English abilities with a focus on topics that interest them. Secondly, in terms of understanding cultural learning ideologies, the design of the speech-giving methodology incorporates the need to slowly develop speech-giving skills by allowing students to first work within the collective embrace of the class, and over a period of weeks, slowly step away from this embrace to autonomously give their speeches. In this way, students can slowly overcome their fears of speaking publically in English, and as their fluency in spoken English develops, so will their confidence.

Students' learning abilities vary vastly, and as stated above, learning cultures differ. These differences are further influenced by the region, the type of institution, and the subjects students are majoring in as well as their past experiences. In utilizing the one-minute weekly speech activity, it is important to recognize that students' EFL abilities will dictate how many speech-giving development levels students complete or the speed with which students are able to complete a level (described in the following session). While students with lower EFL abilities may only be able to complete the first two development levels, and students with higher EFL abilities may rapidly reach level four, what is important for the instructor to remember is that the purpose of this activity is for students to develop their EFL skills in topics of interest to them. In their past, many Japanese students have had few opportunities to speak freely in English and to talk about topics they chose; weekly one-minute speeches allow students to develop these skills.

## Stages of Development

The process of speech-giving development is broken down into four main stages to allow students to improve their spoken fluency of English. Speaking to a group also allows students to increase their self-confidence in speaking English, which has the cyclical effect of increasing the quality and quantity of what they say. Ideally, each stage should be completed in three to four weeks. However, differences in students' language ability, their level of foreign language anxiety,

and the length of the course may alter this. In a conversation class, and in recognition of maintaining motivation so that students develop English in the way most suited to their own needs, students should have the freedom to choose any topic for their speech. However, if students feel uncomfortable choosing their own topic, the instructor can also provide suggestions each week, based on the topics covered in students' textbooks. Classes which focus on a specific theme in English could direct speeches to this theme, aligning the learning purpose. When delivering their speeches, students are provided with a microphone. This allows the speech to be amplified, thereby enabling the presenter to focus on their speech, without worrying about audibility. The microphone allows students to monitor both their own and others' speeches. Furthermore, it may foster a feeling of satisfaction at completing a task of considerable importance.

Over the period of the course, students are guided through developmental stages in speech-giving that allow them to slowly separate from the collective and become autonomous speech-givers. At all levels, students prepare their one-minute speeches as homework and use the microphone when giving their speeches.

Level One: At the beginning of class, students give their speeches. Students stay in their seats and read their speeches to the class.

Level Two: Students stand beside their desks and read their speeches to the class.

Level Three: Students move to the front of the classroom. While standing in front of their classmates, they read their speeches to the class.

Level Four: Students again are standing at the front of the classroom. Unlike in the other stages, students are now required to memorize their one-minute speech. This allows them to develop other presentation skills such as making eye contact, using natural hand gestures, and body language as well as practice focusing on intonation while giving their speeches.

## Final Presentations

While one-minute speeches foster oral communication skills, an end-of-term PowerPoint presentation encourages communications skills and creativity. The use of a PowerPoint presentation allows students to further their communicative skills. Using images in their presentations, students can convey greater meaning than through a speech alone. Throughout the term, students have worked individually on their one-minute speeches, but also collaboratively through listening and giving moral support to their classmates. Conversely, in their final presentation, students have the option of working together or on their own. Wenger (2009) discusses the importance of engagement when building a learning community. Two points he makes concern the alignment of standards for that learning community and being accountable to the community. When working collaboratively, it is not always possible to achieve these two points (Ryberg & Larsen, 2008). Some students simply do not want to work with others. However, students do often choose to work in teams. While this might be because they feel they need the support of a group for the presentation, it could also be because they realize they could make more effective presentations working collaboratively. Considering Ryberg and Larsen's (2008) notion of trust, other students do not trust that their classmates will put the necessary effort into the final project and perhaps feel they could get

a better grade on their own. As the goal here is developing confidence in speaking English, it is important to allow students the opportunity to choose to work alone or in groups. This allows students to work at a stage in their EFL development that they are comfortable with: either independently or co-dependently, depending on their language building needs. In giving their PowerPoint presentations, students again work on the physical elements of speech giving: eye contact, intonation, and body language, as well as the creative elements of the slides. In today's technologically enhanced world, PowerPoint presentations are becoming a life skill. Giving students opportunities to practice this skill at university will assist students in preparing for their future.

## SUMMARY

The overarching learning orientation will ultimately influence how students study and how they function cognitively when interacting with new materials (Beaty, Gibbs, & Morgan, 1997). Students' learning orientations will develop and change in tandem with their perspectives. As instructors, we need to be aware of the skills our students need for their future success. Students also need to be aware of how their present decisions impact their futures, and this would necessitate that they address their past and current study approaches.

Taking students from a learning paradigm where the instructor has a high degree of control to one where the students are in control of their learning requires that the instructors encourage students to reflect on the content being presented. Dividing one-minute speeches into four levels allows students to slowly disengage from being dependent members within the collective group to being autonomous members of the group. This process encourages students to challenge themselves and self-reflect on their speaking skills. It should be acknowledged that students who have come from a learning orientation where instructor control is high will need time, patience, and support from their instructor to allow this skill of self-control in learning to develop. While one-minute speeches foster oral communication skills, an end-of-term PowerPoint presentation encourages communication skills and creativity. Throughout the term, students have worked individually on their one-minute speeches, but also collaboratively through listening and giving moral support. Each stage is designed to expand students' comfort zones and to encourage confidence in their own English communication skills, thus enabling learner autonomy to develop within the Japanese context. In turn, this gives students a chance to spread their wings and go their own way in their EFL learning. If students believe in their ability to develop cognitively through their effort and instruction, this could have great potential for other areas in their learning careers.

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# Conference Overview

## Presentations of

# The 21st Annual KOTESOL International Conference

### *Exploring the Road Less Traveled: From Practice to Theory*

October 12-13, 2013, Seoul, Korea

The 2013 Korea TESOL International Conference Committee gratefully recognizes the following individuals for presenting research papers, conducting workshop sessions, and leading discussions at the 21st Annual Korea TESOL International Conference.

### Plenary Sessions

| | |
|---|---|
| Dick Allwright | Theorising "Down" Instead of "Up": The Special Contribution of Exploratory Practice |
| Graham Crookes | What Does "From Practice into Theory" Look Like for Philosophies of Language Teaching and Critical Language Pedagogy? |
| Thomas S. C. Farrell | I Feel I Have Plateaued Professionally . . . Gone a Little Stale: Reflective Practice for Professional Development |

### Featured Sessions

| | |
|---|---|
| Charles Browne | Maximizing Vocabulary Development with Online Resources |
| Charles Browne | The New General Service List: Celebrating 60 Years of Vocabulary Learning |
| Beverley Burkett | Developing a Personal Theory of Teaching Practice: The Role of Reflection |
| Gabriel Diaz Maggioli | Supervisors with Supervision |
| Gabriel Diaz Maggioli | Teacher Education at the Crossroads: The Role of Theory and Practice |
| Sue Garton | Dealing with the Transition from Elementary to Secondary School |
| Sue Garton | Developing Theories from Practice: The Role of Materials Development and Use |
| Jihyeon Jeon | English for Global Communication: What Matters? |
| Curtis Kelly | How Preschool Might Save the World: Executive Function and Success |
| Curtis Kelly | Solving Classroom Problems with Neuroscience |
| Bill Littlewood | Developing Principles and Strategies for Communication-Oriented Language Teaching |

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| Bill Littlewood | Using Collaborative Learning Techniques to Encourage Participation in Classroom Interaction |
| Bill Littlewood | Using Students' Metaphors to Explore Perceptions of Second Language |
| Annamaria Pinter | A Road Less Travelled: Children as Co-investigators in Classrooms – How Does It Work? |
| Willy A. Renandya | Strategies That *Really* Work in the L2 Classroom: From Practice to Theory |
| Willy A. Renandya | The 5 Ts of Motivation in the Language Classroom |
| Lillian L. C. Wong | Exploring Innovation and Change in English Language Education for Professional Development: Theory to Practice, Practice to Theory |
| Lillian L. C. Wong | Innovation and Change in English Language Education – Using Technologies to Support Autonomous Learning: From Practice to Theory |

### Invited Speaker Pecha Kuchas

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|---|---|
| Dick Allwright | Exploring Learning and Teaching Lives |
| Charles Browne | Corpus Linguistics for Dummies |
| Gabriel Diaz Maggioli | I'm Still Here! |
| Sue Garton | 10 Reasons Not to Introduce English into Grade 1 (or: How to Ensure Your Elementary English Policy Fails) |
| Curtis Kelly | I Deal in Drugs! |
| Bill Littlewood | Don't You Want to Shake Hands? Well . . . Yes and No |
| Jun Liu | From ESL Student to TESOL Professional: My Journey |

### Pecha Kuchas

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|---|---|
| Julien McNulty | 8 Grapes, Tin Geese: History of the English Language |
| Leonie Overbeek | The Two-Way Street: Practice to Theory and Back Again |
| David Shaffer | Believe It – or Not: Korean Misconceptions in ELL |
| David Shaffer | KOTESOL – 20 Years: Its Birth, Growth, and Maturation |
| Suzanne Yonesaka | Global Citizenship Through Disaster Education: The Ishinomaki Tsunami Manga Project |

### Featured Colloquium

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|---|---|
| Andy Curtis | Exploring the Practice-Theory Nexus |
| Rod Ellis | Exploring the Practice-Theory Nexus |

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| Jun Liu | Exploring the Practice-Theory Nexus |
| Denise Murray | Exploring the Practice-Theory Nexus |

## IATEFL YLT-SIG

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| Gemma Fanning | A Multisensory Approach to Learning to Read |
| Jooyoung Lee | The Meaning of "Good EFL Textbooks for Young Learners": Reading with Young Learners |
| Hans Mol | Extensive Reading Practice in the Teenage Classroom: Using the R.E.A.D.I.N.G. System |
| Annamaria Pinter | L2 Reading for Children: 10 Lessons Learnt from Research |

## 2013 Presentations

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|---|---|
| Faridah Abdul Malik | Utilising Metacognitive Strategies in the ESL Listening Classrooms |
| Joshua Adams | Learning and Teaching English in North Korea: Interviewing a Defector |
| Dumrong Adunyarittigun | Washback Effects of O-NET on EFL Teaching Practices in a Secondary School Study |
| Eunsook Ahn | Pathways for Overcoming Intercultural Barriers in EFL Language Program Development |
| Toben Alexander | The Social Network: Encouraging Engagement in Language Learning |
| Bryan Alkema | Monologue + Monologue ≠ Conversation |
| Gabriel Allison | Five Fun Activities to Build Listening Skills |
| Rheanne Anderson | Intelligibility and Comprehensibility: Towards a Definition for Pronunciation Research |
| Matthew Apple | Motivational Attributions of Japanese Science and Engineering Students |
| Matthew Apple | The Current State of Language Learning Motivation in Japan |
| Ian Baddon | Using Collaborative Writing (CW) in an EFL Context |
| Jyun Bang | ESP Needs Analysis and Course Design for Business Professionals |
| Samuel Barclay | Fostering the Use of Monolingual Learner's Dictionaries |
| Samuel Barclay | Providing Level-Appropriate L2 Input |
| Samuel Barclay | Using a Rubric to Encourage Active Participation |
| Casey Barnes | Organize It, Teach It, Write It, Present It: The iPad Helps Everyone Work Smarter Not Harder! |

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|---|---|
| Casey Michael Barnes | Say It, Show It, Act It . . . Tell Me a Story! |
| Doug Baumwoll | Write Right: A Simple Recipe for the Structured Paragraph |
| David Bezuidenhout | The Dream and Deliver Project: A Practical Application with Theoretical Implications |
| Allison Bill | Lesson Planning 101: Planning Engaging, Effective Lessons |
| Allison Bill | Professional Advancement Through Online Doctoral, Master & Certification Programs in TESOL |
| Robert Black | Student-Led Rubric Creation: Scaffolding for a Student-Centered ELT Pedagogy |
| Robert Black | Technology-Assisted Socio-Emotional Language Learning |
| Andrew Boon | Here We Are: Now Motivate Us |
| Adam Boothe | Digging In: Non-native Teachers and Learner Language Analysis |
| Ian Bosiak | Why Tablets Should Replace Textbooks: The Case for a Technology-Based Language Class |
| Paul Bournhonesque | Pathways for Overcoming Intercultural Barriers in EFL Language Program Development |
| Nicholas Bovee | Motivating Students with Original Animated Videos |
| Gunther Breaux | Conversation-Based English: How to Teach, Test, and Improve Speaking |
| Gunther Breaux | How to Quickly Measure Speaking Ability, Without a Speaking Test |
| Carla Bridge | Pushing the "Task": Activities to Maximize Post-task Learning in EAP |
| James Broadbridge | Read All About It! Small Group News Discussions 101 |
| Ian Brown | Action Research and Curriculum Change |
| Ian Brown | Web 2.0 Internet Activities for Lower-Level Learners |
| Pete Burden | Teaching Style Insights and Learning Attitudes of Japanese Tertiary Students |
| Peter Burden | Antecedent Beliefs and Learning Motivation in Tertiary Education |
| Tyler Burden | Student-Centered Course Assessment: Collecting More Meaningful Feedback |
| Chrissy Burns | Korean University Students: Their Learning Styles, Your Teaching Style |
| Geoffrey Butler | Development of Teacher-Created Curriculum at a South Korean University |

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|---|---|
| Setyo Prasiyanto Cahyono | Teaching Narrative Writing Through Narrative Learning Media (NLM) |
| Peadar Callaghan | Formative Assessment of Student Writing |
| Brian Carlstrom | Data-Driven Learning Made Easy |
| Billunta Carter | Assigning Reading Roles: Building Better Habits |
| Alexander Chirnside | Extra-curricular Support for TOEFL and TOEIC Test-Takers |
| Alexander Chirnside | Toward a Test-Specific Self-Access Speaking Center |
| Koun Choi | The Problem of Teaching Only American-Accented English in Korea |
| Sujeong Choi | Language Anxiety in Second Language Writing |
| Wendy Collins | Maximising Mentoring: Rethinking ELT Teachers as Mentors |
| Jamie Costley | The Potential Advantages or Disadvantages of Group Activities |
| Jamie Costley | The Potential and Limitations of Corrective Feedback |
| Selwyn Cruz | Discourse Markers in the Spoken Utterances of Manila-Based Korean Students |
| Dexter Da Silva | The Current State of Language Learning Motivation in Japan |
| D. Malcolm Daugherty | Extra-curricular Support for TOEFL and TOEIC Test-Takers |
| Sara Davila | Creative Thinking Techniques |
| Gerald de la Salle | Blueprint for a Writing Class |
| Kyle Philip Devlin | Extensive Reading Interviewing Practices to Lower Students' Affective Filters |
| Kyle Philip Devlin | Korean Students' Perceptions of Reading Culturally Familiar Extensive Reading Books |
| Jason Di Gennaro | The Changing Face of Professionalism in Korean Public Schools |
| Evelyn Doman | Error Analysis, Teachability Theory, and Using Grammatical Consciousness-Raising for Overcoming Errors |
| Ayla Duman | Using Online Tools for an Effective EFL Writing Class |
| Serdar Duman | Using Online Tools for an Effective EFL Writing Class |
| Roger Dupuy | Introducing the New Format TEFL Certificate and TEFL Internship at University of California, Irvine |
| Estele Ene | Role of Reflection in a SLW Course and Implications |
| Joseph Falout | Motivational Attributions of Japanese Science and |

|  | Engineering Students |
| --- | --- |
| Tom Farrell | What Is Reflective Practice? Why Should I Care About It? How Can I Do It? |
| Sara Farzaminejad | Effect of Two Kinds of Higher-Order Thinking on Writing Ability |
| Terry Fellner | Developing Effective Presentation Skills with Low-Level English Speaking Students |
| Terry Fellner | The Current State of Language Learning Motivation in Japan |
| Rebecca Fletcher | Developing Networking Skills for Language Success |
| Rebecca Fletcher | Help Your Students Communicate with Confidence |
| Rebecca Fletcher | Step-by-Step to Academic Writing Success! |
| Roger Fusselman | Guided Teacher Reflection for Busy Teachers |
| Upul Priyantha Gamage | Eloquence in First Language as an Enabling Factor of Speaking Second Language: Case of English Language Learning in Sri Lanka |
| David Gatrell | All in the Game: Digital Game-Based Learning |
| David Gatrell | Redefining Learning: Integrating iPads in the Classroom |
| Henry Gerlits | Exploring the Intersection of Government and Classroom Policy |
| Petra Glithero | Co-teaching: Practical Applications for Public School Teachers in Korea |
| Danny Graves | The Dream and Deliver Project: A Practical Application with Theoretical Implications |
| Alex Grevett | English as a Lingua Franca: From Theory to Pedagogy |
| Brian Grover | Experience as a Catalyst for Student-Centered, Conversation-Enabled Learning |
| Sara Gu | Extensive Speaking in Korean EFL |
| Katie Halet | In-class Anxiety Experienced by Experienced ESL Teachers |
| Feifei Han | Speed of Lexical Access and Strategic Processing in FL Reading |
| Sarah Harrison | Word Association: Exploring the L2 Mental Lexicon of Korean EFL Learners |
| Lauren Harvey | Engaging University EFL Students in Group Work |
| Lauren Harvey | ESP Needs Analysis and Course Design for Business Professionals |
| Martin Hawkes | Investigating the Use of Task Models as Pre-tasks in TBLT |

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| Thomas Healy | Making It Visual: Maximizing the Potential of Your Projector |
| Neil Heffernan | The Road to a Successful Curriculum: How Theory Feeds Practice |
| Scott Henderson | Encouraging Noticing in the Classroom |
| Duane Henning | Self-Regulation: Moving Students Away from Seat-Filling |
| Lindsay Herron | Ten Tech Tools Teachers Should Know About |
| Simon Heslup | Development of Teacher-Created Curriculum at a South Korean University |
| Glen Hill | Motivational Attributions of Japanese Science and Engineering Students |
| U-Teng Ho | Teaching Collocations in Asia: Does Lexical Approach Work? |
| David Holmes | Raising Sociopragmatic Awareness of Email Requests in Academic Contexts |
| Chris Hughes | The Social Network: Encouraging Engagement in Language Learning |
| Chris Hughes | Using Corpus Tools to Inform Genre-Based Writing Pedagogies |
| Ryan Hunter | e-Portfolios for Pre-service and In-service Teacher Training and Professional Development |
| David Hutchinson | Teaching Strategies for Autonomous Learning |
| Julie Hwang | Empowering Students to Think Critically and Succeed Academically |
| Julie Hwang | Making Learning Meaningful and Memorable with Oxford Primary Courses |
| Julie Hwang | The Building Blocks of Literacy: Engaging Activities Using Oxford Phonics World |
| Anne C. Ihata | Linking Thinking on Reading in English: Vocabulary and Phonemic Awareness |
| Karen Jamieson | Your Survival Guide to Teaching IELTS |
| Dadan Jauhara | GBA to Teaching Writing Exposition in Indonesian EFL Contexts |
| Trevina Jefferson | Effective Writing Development Tools for Teachers/Professors and Peer Feedback |
| Trevina Jefferson | Leadership and Professional Development That Demands a Raise, Title, and Respect |
| Robert Kienzle | Negotiation: Teaching It and Using It as a Tool for English |

| | Lessons |
|---|---|
| Keita Kikuchi | Exploring the Motivation Theories Reflecting EFL Learners' Viewpoints |
| Cassie Kim | Learning and Teaching English in North Korea: Interviewing a Defector |
| Chee-won Kim | Scholastic Reading Inventory and Scholastic Reading Counts: Assessing and Monitoring Progress in Reading Comprehension |
| Jae-young Kim | How to Maximize the Benefits of Theme-Based CBI |
| Jeong-ryeol Kim | Continuity Issue of Elementary and Secondary School English Education |
| Namhee Kim | EFL Students' Perceptions on Different Types of Feedback and Timed-Writing in an ESP Writing Course. |
| Soyeon Kim | Exploration of Needs and Wants of Korean Students |
| Jennifer Kreisz | Dear Professor: Construction of Polite Email Requests Based on Issues in Cross-cultural Pragmatics |
| Lara Kurth | Development of Teacher-Created Curriculum at a South Korean University |
| Chris Lange | The Potential Advantages or Disadvantages of Group Activities |
| Roderick Lange | Using a Rubric to Encourage Active Participation |
| Marc LeBane | A Study of Ubiquitous Technologies in Higher Education in Hong Kong |
| Chongrak Lianpanit | Teachers' Reflection on Teaching Vocabulary in EFL Thai Contexts: Practice to Theory |
| Jonathan Loh | A Content Creation Tool for SLA: An Introduction to Machinima |
| Mike Long | Introducing OSTER: Online Short Text Extensive Reading for University Freshmen |
| Nico Lorenzutti | Beyond the Gap Fill: 9 Dynamic Activities for Teaching Song |
| Nico Lorenzutti | Do In-service Teacher Training Programs Impact Language Teacher Conceptual Change? |
| Matthew Love | Through the Learner's Lens: The Culture of English Education in the Republic of Korea |
| Damian Lucantonio | Teaching the Research Paper |
| Stafford Lumsden | Google and the Korean Language Classroom |
| Shu-Ying Luo | A Corpus-Driven Approach to the Wordlists in Testing and |

Textbooks

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|---|---|
| Kevin Maher | Neural Connections: SLA Theory, Neuroplasticity and Implications for EFL Classrooms |
| Kevin Maher | The 5-Minute Student Presentation: Student Preparation and Teacher Assessment |
| Sean Mahoney | Japan's First Steps in Primary-Level English Classes: National Survey |
| Amanda Maitland | Adapting Personality Tests for Use in the TESOL Classroom |
| Behdokht MallAmiri | Effect of Two Kinds of Higher-Order Thinking on Writing Ability |
| Daniel Malt | Distance MA and PhD Study at the University of Birmingham |
| Shaun Manning | Tasks in Context: Examining Student Learning in Interactive Task-Based Talk |
| Mai Matsunaga | Training Sessions on Classroom English for Pre-service Teachers in Japan |
| John McDonald | Overcoming Common Academic Writing Mistakes in a Korean Classroom |
| Rachelle Meilleur | Creating e-Portfolios for Autonomous Learning |
| Joe Milan | Introducing OSTER: Online Short Text Extensive Reading for University Freshmen |
| Richard Miles | Reflecting on and Learning from Presentations |
| Elizabeth Molyneux | Crafting Critical Thinking in the EAP Classroom |
| Daniel Moonasar | Using Action Research to Develop Student-Centered Curriculum |
| Jana Moore | Off the Cuff: Applications of Speaking on Your Feet |
| Ken Morrison | Lights! Camera! Wait! Wait! Wait . . . Student Video Project Management |
| Terry Nelson | Fostering Agency and Belonging in a Group Learning Experience |
| Cory Olson | Blend to Transcend the Classroom with Touchstone Second Edition |
| Kevin Ottoson | Returnee and Non-returnee Narratives for Intercultural Understanding |
| Leonie Overbeek | The "Be Game": Grammar Practice Painlessly Accomplished |
| Phil Owen | Jigsaw Activities: Controlled Conversations in Teams |

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| Catherine Peck | It's a Cultural Thing . . . |
| Brian Pfeifer | Gamification: Level Up Your Language Teaching |
| Maura Pfeifer | Gamification: Level Up Your Language Teaching |
| Maria Teodora Ping | Dialogic Reading 101: Concepts, Strategies, Practices, and Possible Innovations |
| Mario Podeschi | On, At, In: Methodologies for Abstract Prepositions |
| Fahrul Pradhana Putra | Teaching Narrative Writing Through Narrative Learning Media (NLM) |
| Michael Rabbidge | Approaches to Using Short Stories in the EFL Classroom |
| William Rago | Digging In: Non-native Teachers and Learner Language Analysis |
| Ian Done D. Ramos | English Majors' Expectations, Experiences, and Potentials in the Realities of English Communicative Environments: Basis for Curriculum Development Training Program Towards Korea's Globalization |
| Mark Rebuck | Updating Dictation: New Uses for an Ancient Activity |
| Robin Reid | "Staging" Language Development with Theatre Projects |
| Eric Reynolds | Extensive Speaking in Korean EFL |
| Eric Reynolds | Learning to Deal with Adolescent Exuberance in ELT |
| Davis Rian | Six Important Ideas from Linguistics and Psychology Put into Practice |
| Cassidy Riddlebarger | Role of Reflection in a SLW Course and Implications |
| Cameron Romney | Teach Bilingually or Monolingually? Teacher Use of the Student's L1 |
| Jack Ryan | Authentic Materials: Support for Non-English Majors at a Japanese University |
| Jack Ryan | The Role of Language Education Centers in a University Curriculum |
| Edward Sarich | The Role of Language Education Centers in a University Curriculum |
| Daniel Sasaki | Extra-curricular Support for TOEFL and TOEIC Test-Takers |
| Daniel Sasaki | Toward a Test-Specific Self-Access Speaking Center |
| Allan Schwartz | A Multimodal Platform for English Learning: An Integrated Solution of Text, Web, and Mobile |
| Fatiha Senom | The Native Speaker Mentors and the Novice Teachers' Professional Development |

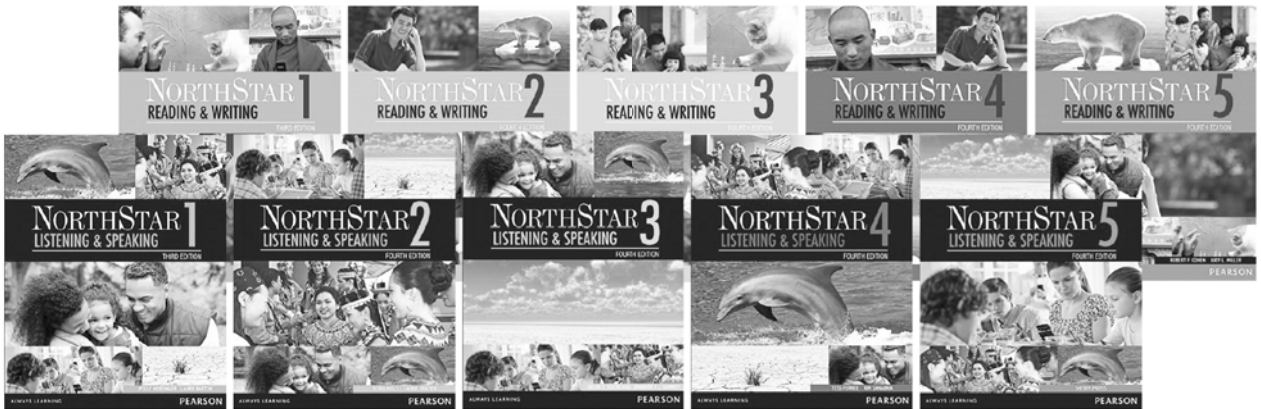| | |
|---|---|
| David Shaffer | Putting Punctuation Practice on a More Traveled Road: An Exploration |
| Mark Sheehan | The Role of Language Education Centers in a University Curriculum |
| Aaron Siegel | Beyond the Test: Five Activities to Promote Real-World Reading Comprehension at Upper-Secondary and Tertiary Levels |
| Aaron Siegel | Comics to the Rescue: Solving the Riddle of Introducing Comics to the EFL Classroom |
| George Skuse | Opportunities for Learning: An Analysis of Teacher-Student and Student-Student Interaction Within an Information Gap Task |
| Iain Stanley | Turning Writing and Grammar into a Practical, Autonomous Peer Review |
| Kyoko Sunami-Burden | Teaching Style Insights and Learning Attitudes of Japanese Tertiary Students |
| Shannon Tanghe | Collaborative Co-teaching in South Korea: Teachers' Positioning |
| Herwindy Maria Tedjaatmadja | A Movie a Day Keeps the Listening Problems Away |
| Huei-Chun Teng | Analysis of EFL Learners' Task Strategies for Listening Comprehension Test |
| Simon Thollar | Motivating Low-Level L2 Students with Humorous One-Point Videos |
| Gregory Thompson | A Content Creation Tool for SLA: An Introduction to Machinima |
| Lewis Thompson | Helping Young Children Speak in the English Classroom |
| Tory Thorkelson | Leadership IQ: The Missing Link for Training Leaders in ELT |
| Peter Thwaites | Conversation Tennis: Practice in Search of a Theory |
| Chia-ti Heather Tseng | "You Must Let Me Pass This Course, Please!": An Investigation of Email Request Strategies by Taiwanese EFL Learners |
| Mizuka Tsukamoto | Essay Writing Skills: A Process Approach |
| Rie Tsutsumi | Investigation of University English Teachers' Motivation in Japan |
| Hiroki Uchida | Meaning-Focused Vocabulary Teaching |
| Fiona Van Tyne | Reaching Full Potential: NET's and the Lack of Utilization |

|  | Within EPIK |
| --- | --- |
| Thanh Son Ca Vo | Relative Impact of Pronunciation Errors in Non-native Speech on Listeners' Perceptual Judgment |
| Thi Hoang Yen Vo | Relative Impact of Pronunciation Errors in Non-native Speech on Listeners' Perceptual Judgment |
| Michelle Huey Fen Voon | Promoting Active Participation in Conversation Among ESL Learners Through Dialogue Writing |
| Stacey Vye | From Learner Autonomy in Practice to Language Proficiency in Theory |
| Jeffery Walter | Making Better Groups: Theory and Practice |
| Joe Shih-Ping Wang | A Corpus-Driven Approach to the Wordlists in Testing and Textbooks |
| Sherry Ward | Practical Paths to PBL: Prescriptions for Problems |
| Andy Webster | Teaching EFL Online from Theory to Practice |
| Fiona Wiebusch | Increasing Teacher Talk? Enriching Professional Learning Communities Through Social Media |
| Fiona Wiebusch | Pushing the "Task": Activities to Maximize Post-task Learning in EAP |
| Joseph E. Williams | Practical Paths to PBL: Prescriptions for Problems |
| Anupong Wongchai | The Needs Analysis in ESP Course Design: A Case Study of English for Computer and IT in Buriram Rajabhat University |
| Tiranun Wongwiwat | Washback Effects of O-NET on EFL Teaching Practices in a Secondary School Study |
| Jon Wrigglesworth | Student Writing: What Should We Write or Say About Student Errors? |
| Judson Wright | Winging It |
| Soo Ha Yim | Ideology, Power, and Pedagogy in English Textbooks Produced in North Korea |
| Seth Yoder | When Textbooks Fail: New Materials to Motivate a University Classroom |
| Elizabeth Yoshikawa | Getting Students to Speak on Topics of Interest |
| Darunee Yotimart | The Needs Analysis in ESP Course Design: A Case Study of English for Computer and IT in Buriram Rajabhat University |
| Tae-Young Yun | The "Be Game": Grammar Practice Painlessly Accomplished |
| Siwei (Bryan) Zhao | Using the Native Language: Help or Hindrance? |

## Poster Presentations

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|---|---|
| Sukyoung Chon | The Effect of Bilingualism in Third-Language Learning |
| Juanita Hong | Bilingual Program for Adult Learners Within Their Own Work Environment |
| Sungho Park | Pragmatic Approaches to Language Learning: Convergence and Divergence Within Speech Accommodation |
| Zeeshan Qureshi | Explaining the Effectiveness of Podcasting as a Tool of Language Learning |
| William H. Turner | Poster Presentation Title Unavailable |
| Barry Welsh | Using Blogs to Teach Metacognitive Awareness of Writing Strategies |

# BRINGING LANGUAGE & LIFE SKILLS TO UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

## Open Mind new edition

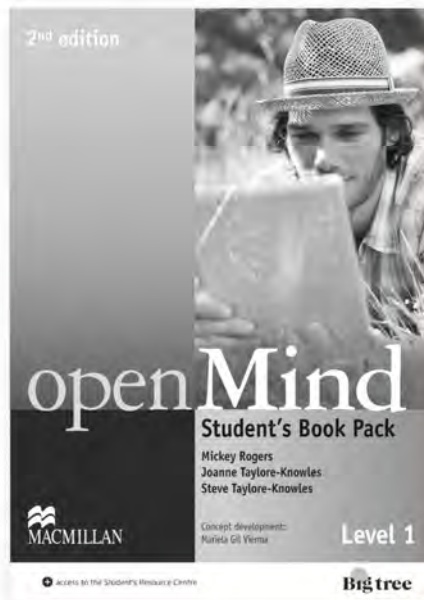*DEVELOPS COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL USE*

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